

A Sermon from Deuteronomy 22:5

Preached at a Baptist Church in Wisconsin
Expanded and Adjusted with Some Further Exegetical Notes

Introduction: Growing up in San Francisco, sometimes I would see transvestites, men dressed like women, or women dressed like men. After the Lord saved me, and I joined Bethel Baptist Church in the area, I went with some of the brethren in the church every year to the Gay Pride Parade (that is, Sodomite Filth Parade) to pass out tracts and evangelize the sodomites. There I saw all kinds of perversions of the natural manner of dress. Pastor Brandenburg mentioned that men's skirts were being sold there, so that some of the sodomites would buy them and wear them. Does the thought of a man wearing a skirt make you sick to your stomach, like it does me? Why is this? Does Scripture say anything about men not wearing women's clothing, or women wearing men's clothing? When men want to look like women, they wear skirts. What do women wear when they want to look like men? They wear pants. When you need to use the restroom, how do you know that you are going to the right one? The stick figure for the men's room has pants on, and the stick figure for the woman has a dress on. What does God think about men wearing women's clothing, like a skirt, or women wearing men's clothing, like pants? Please turn in your Bible to Deuteronomy 22:5.

The woman shall not wear that which pertaineth unto a man, neither shall a man put on a woman's garment: for all that do so are abomination unto the LORD thy God (Deuteronomy 22:5).¹

In Deuteronomy 22:5 God reveals through Moses a simple and significant regulation relating to clothing or appearance. God commands men and women to maintain distinctions in dress. The verse seems easy to understand, and yet it has spawned great controversy, especially in light of omnipresent feminism. Careful examination of the words, the grammar, the application, the history, and the practice of this verse will evince its proper significance. This verse is often attacked or ignored, so we will look at it very carefully and in great detail.

The Words and Grammar of Deuteronomy 22:5

A hyper-literal, word-for-word translation of Deuteronomy 22:5 in its Hebrew word order reads, “Not must be article of a man on a woman, and not must put on a man a garment of a woman, because an abomination to Jehovah thy God [are] all who do these things.” In this verse there are two regulations and one consequence of a violation of either of them. Both of these regulations are negative, one for the woman and the other for the man. Let us go through the verse carefully.

¹ לא־יִהְיֶה כָּל־גָּבָר עַל־אֲשֶׁר וְלֹא־יִلְבְּשׂ גָּבָר שְׁמִילָה אֲשֶׁר כִּי תֹּעֲבָת יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵיכֶם כָּל־עַשֶּׂה אֲלֹהָה:

The first Hebrew word in the verse is *lo'*, “not.” (In English, it is there in “The woman shall NOT wear that which pertaineth unto the man.”) Since it is the first word in the sentence, the negative is the emphasis of the verse. When one communicates something negative to someone and starts with the word “no,” it definitely must not be done. The word appears a second time in the verse, translated in the KJV as “neither.”

Shall Wear

The second word in the sentence in Hebrew is the verb, *yihyeh* (Qal, imperfect, 3rd person, singular, masculine, from *hayah*, “to be, become, exist”), essentially meaning “must be.” Since clothing is in context, the KJV renders this as “shall wear,” so that we have “the woman SHALL NOT WEAR,” etc. The masculine noun “that which pertaineth” (*keli*) is clearly the subject of this verb. The “must [NOT] be” refers to the thing which pertains to a man. The being verb communicates a state of existence. The nature of a person or thing is involved with a state of being verb. The noun “man” (*geber*) is in a construct state with *keli* (“that which pertaineth,”) so the two nouns are connected. This verse relates to the nature of the male or female clothing or accessories and to the nature of the man and the nature of the woman. God is giving a command: “It shall not be that a woman shall wear that which pertains to a man.” One could say the command is: “It will not be so at any time that a woman should wear what pertains to a man.”

That Which Pertaineth Unto

The third Hebrew word is *keli*, a Hebrew noun denoting the things appropriate to a given service or occupation. These are things that distinctly pertain to a man, that is, are designed for a man. By looking at the parallel regulation in the second half of the verse here, the command clearly refers to clothing. Some extend this to implements, tools, weapons, and utensils, but in this context this appears to be pressing too hard and extrapolating beyond what is intended.²

“Pertaineth” (translated from *keli*) has the sense of “relating” and “fitting.” Some garments are suitable only for men and others relate only to women. Some articles of clothing are not distinctly male or female. A straw man raised against distinct dress for men and women is that both men and women wear undergarments. The fallacy in logic lies in the conclusion. Because men and women have some similar garments does not mean that they have none that are distinct. Another erroneous argument brings in some historical context. The argument is that since both men and women wore robes in that day, today men and women can wear the same articles of clothing as long as they have minor differences or look different somehow. This ignores the language of the verse. Even if men and women both wore robes (which they did), to obey this verse, a godly culture would design distinct differences in each of the robes that would differentiate

² W. L. Alexander, *Deuteronomy: The Pulpit Commentary*, (eds. H. D. M. Spence and Joseph Exell. London: Kegan Paul, Trench, 1882), 355. The *keli* is “upon” (‘al) the woman in the verse, so clothing is in view.

them.³ In Old Testament times, men's robes and women's robes were very, very clearly differentiated.⁴ One could easily tell from a distance by the type of robe if one was looking at a man or a woman. Furthermore, a variety of garments were uniquely male or female; for example, the “mantle” (**אֲפָרָת**; Gen 25:25; Josh 7:21, 24; 1 Kings 19:13, 19; 2 Kings 2:8, 13–14; Ezek 17:8; Jonah 3:6; Zech 11:3; 13:4) is only mentioned on men in Scripture, while various items of clothing are only mentioned on women, such as the “coverings of tapestry” (**מִרְבָּדִים**) of Proverbs 31:22; (cf. 7:16), the “vail” (**רְדֵיד**) of Isaiah 3:23; Song 5:7, or the “attire” (**מִשְׁעָרִים**) of Jeremiah 2:32; Isaiah 3:20).⁵ It is interesting to note that “breeches” (**אַכְנָפִים**), a split garment like trousers, one that is *περισκελής*, going around the legs (cf. Ex 28:42; 36:35; Lev 6:3; 16:4; Ezek 44:18; Sir 45:8, LXX; also Philo, *On The Life of Moses* 2:143), are only found on men (specifically on the priests) in Scripture (Exodus 28:42, 39:28; Leviticus 6:3; 16:4; Ezekiel 44:18).⁶

³ Thus, while “[w]omen lik[e] [men] . . . wore inner and outer garments . . . the differences in appearance [were] . . . noticeable since wearing of clothes of the opposite sex was strictly forbidden (Deut. 22:5). The undergarments [for women] were loose-fitting or baggy apparel (Prov. 31:24), and the outer robes were more flowing” (pg. 312, *Holman Illustrated Bible Dictionary*, ed. C. Brand, et. al. Nashville, TN: Holman, 2003.).

⁴ While it can be established that gender-distinct garments were worn by the godly, out of obedience to Deuteronomy 22:5, from the time that the verse was revealed by God to Moses, it is not necessary to find out the specific and meticulous details of how 15th century Jewish culture obeyed Deuteronomy 22:5 to know that distinct garments were worn—the exegesis of the passage itself guarantees this truth. God promised to preserve His Word, not historical documents or sketches on clay tablets of what Jews wore 3,500 years ago. While archaeology is interesting and valuable, one can know what the Deuteronomy 22:5 requires from exegesis alone; the command to live by every word that proceeds out of the mouth of God (Matthew 4:4) is not abrogated by a lack of archeological evidence.

Other gender-distinct clothing related words are numerous. For instance, only men “gird” (**אָזַר**) themselves in Scripture (1 Sam 2:4; 2 Sam 22:40; 2 Kings 1:8; Is 8:9; 45:5; 50:11; Jer 1:17; Psa 18:33, 40; 30:12; 65:7; 93:1; Job 30:18; 38:3; 40:7—thus, twice God commands Job: “Gird up now thy loins like a man” (Job 38:3; 40:7). (In contrast, **תְּגִיד** is employed for both men and women, e. g., 1 Samuel 17:39; Proverbs 31:17.) Only men wear the ‘*avnet*, **תְּנִבָּא**, “girdle” (Ex 28:4, 39–40; 29:9; 39:29; Lev 8:7, 13; 16:4; Is 22:21); only men wear the **חֶשֶׁב** (Ex 28:8, 27–28; 29:5; 39:5, 20–21; Lev 8:7); only men wear the **אֲזֹר** (2 Kings 1:8; Is 5:27; 11:5; Jer 13:1–2, 4, 6–7, 10–11; Ezek 23:15; Job 12:18); the **תְּגִיד** (1 Sam 18:4; 2 Sam 20:8; Ezek 23:15; Prov 31:24), and the **מִזְוֵה** (Psalm 109:19); only women wear the “wimple” (**מִטְפָּחָת**, Isaiah 3:22; Ruth 3:15), etc. Furthermore, the fact that some Hebrew and Greek words indicating a variety of garments were employed for both genders does not deny the existence of definite distinctions between such garments on men or women, any more than the English words “outerwear” or “underwear” for both male and female garments indicate that no gender-distinct outer or under garments exist in the English language or that male and female outerwear is identical. It should also be noted that while Scripture does indeed only employ these and other words relating to garments of solely one gender or the other, some of the words are not used frequently, and small sample sizes of use must be kept in mind. It does appear, according to the *International Standard Bible Encyclopedia*, that archaeology has confirmed that the “tinkling ornaments” (**עֲכֹת**, 3:18), the “headbands” or sashes (**קְשִׁירִים**, 3:20), the “mantles” (3:22, **מִעְטָפָה**, an “outer garment,” KB) and the “vails” (**רְדִיד**, 3:23) of Isaiah 3 were exclusively women’s articles, while others among the listed words were employed for items worn by both men and women (pg. 407, *International Standard Bible Encyclopedia*, vol. 2, rev. ed., G. W. Bromiley).

⁶ In addition to the pant-like garment in the Bible being found only on the man, Qumran sectarian texts likewise mention “breeches” on men alone, possibly on priests (1QM 7:10; 4Q491 f1_3:18). The Mishna does not appear to restrict such “breeches” or “trousers” to priests, but does still keep them on men alone (Yoma 7:5; Sukk 5:3; Tamid 5:3; Kelim 27:6).

“That which pertaineth unto a man” translates only two Hebrew words, *keli* and *geber*, which are attached by a *makkeph*, a small horizontal line used to join words which are connected in thought or utterance. The understanding of *keli* and *geber* together in this context is: “an article of clothing designed distinctly for a man.” This regulation does not tell a woman “not to look like a man,” but not to have on a garment that is distinctly designed for a man.

A Man

The Hebrew word for “man” here is *geber*. Both times it appears in this verse, “man” is *geber*.⁷ As distinct from one of the general words for “man,” *'adam* or *ish*, this word relates specifically to a male at the height of his powers. The usage of this word is not primarily a military one, although the Brown, Driver, and Briggs Lexicon defines it: “man as strong, distinguished from women, children, and non-combatants whom he is to defend.”⁸ It depicts a man operating at his most competent and capable level. Another word, *gibbor*, uniquely means “warrior.” *Geber* is not *gibbor*. These words are used entirely differently. Those who interpret this verse to prohibit women from wearing military armor argue their view by alleging that this word “man” is the word for “warrior.” Certainly, God could have used the word *gibbor*, because He did use that word c. 160 times, speaking of heroes or champions. *Geber*, “man,” communicates man in his strength, emphasizing his masculinity or manliness.⁹ Especially parallel with the second regulation and the use of the word “garment,” *geber* is not talking about a warrior and his armor. Anyone who says that the word here means “warrior” either has not looked closely enough or is depending on the ignorance of his audience to slip past them a more culturally acceptable interpretation. Most people still oppose women in hand-to-hand combat (infantry), but they have long since stopped disputing women wearing men’s clothes. Of course, if they are not “wearing the pants” in a household, they will also not be in the military.

A comment on that statement’s comment: Just as “a man’s garment shall not be on a woman” is interpreted in light of the second half, so “a man shall not wear a woman’s garment” is in light of the first half.

Woman

This Hebrew word is *ishah*. *Ishah* is the typical word used for “woman.” It appears twice in this verse—once in each of the clauses, and each time last. In looking at the KJV, one might think that “woman” is the subject of the first part of the sentence. Since the verb is masculine, the male implement (*keli-geber*) is the subject. One should view this placing of *ishah* last in word order as intentional as a matter of emphasis. God places responsibility for gender distinction in dress upon the man.

⁷ The second use in the verse will not be examined later.

⁸ Francis Brown, S. R. Driver, and Charles Briggs, *Hebrew-Aramaic and English Lexicon of the Old Testament*, finished in 1906 and based upon several of the works of Wilhelm Gesenius (and editors), dated 1833, 1854, 1858, and 1895. Electronic edition was generated by and is owned by International Bible Translators (IBT), Inc., 1998-2000.

⁹ Oswalt, “*Gabar*,” 148, 149.

Shall Put On

In the second regulation the verb is *yilbash*, “shall put on” (Qal, imperfect, 3rd person, singular, masculine, from *labash* “to put on a garment, to be clothed). This verb is identically paresed and parallel the verb in the first regulation, and is likewise an imperfect of prohibition, expressing God’s command and wish that man must not put on a woman’s garment.

Garment

The Hebrew word is *simlah*. This is a distinctively female garment, a feminine noun accompanied by the noun “woman.”¹⁰ The connection to the word “woman” shows that this garment is distinctively feminine: it is a “woman’s garment,” specifically, an outer garment.¹¹

Abomination

“Abomination” translates the Hebrew word *to’ebah*, meaning “abominable custom or thing.” A woman putting on a garment that pertains to a man, or a man wearing a woman’s garment, is an “abomination,” that is, it is “detestable, loathsome, a thing of horror,” to the Holy One, the great God of heaven. This is what He thinks about it, whether we do or not.

Deuteronomy 22:5 says that disobedience in this is an abomination to God. The issue is not only one of testimony or stumbling-block. Someone stumbles away from God and a bad testimony misrepresents God. Both of these concern God. Just as praise, whether public or private, is directed to God, gender distinct dress for the glory of God continues both in public and in private.

Sometimes things are said to be abominations to a specific group; something may be an abomination to a Jew, for example, or, like Genesis 43:32 states, “the Egyptians might not eat bread with the Hebrews; for that is an abomination unto the Egyptians.” That the Egyptians find something detestable or loathsome does not mean it is sinful. But what about things that are abominable to Jehovah, like Deut 22:5 mentions? Abominations to Jehovah are always moral law, always evil. These are the sins that Scripture says are an abomination TO THE LORD (there are other verses where the sins below are called abominations, but these are the categories):

Idolatry and false worship:

¹⁰ *Simlah* can mean a male garment (e. g., 2 Samuel 12:20, on David), however, accompanied by the noun “woman” (*ishah*), in Deuteronomy 22:5 it is the “garment of a woman” (תְּפִלָּה נְשָׁנָה).

¹¹ Since the *simlah* is a “outer garment” (KB), a “wrapper, mantle . . . usually [a] square piece of cloth worn as outer garment” (BDB), Deuteronomy 22:5 specifies that men and women will have at least one or more gender-distinct outer garments. It is not possible to be honest with the verse and affirm that a particular form of underwear is the gender-distinct garment today, so women can wear pants.

Deut. 7:25 The graven images of their gods shall ye burn with fire: thou shalt not desire the silver or gold *that is* on them, nor take *it* unto thee, lest thou be snared therein: for it *is* an abomination to the LORD thy God. (cf. 1 Ki 14:23ff; Deut 17:1)

Stealing:

Deut. 25:13 Thou shalt not have in thy bag divers weights, a great and a small.

Deut. 25:14 Thou shalt not have in thine house divers measures, a great and a small.

Deut. 25:15 *But* thou shalt have a perfect and just weight, a perfect and just measure shalt thou have: that thy days may be lengthened in the land which the LORD thy God giveth thee.

Deut. 25:16 For all that do such things, *and* all that do unrighteously, *are* an abomination unto the LORD thy God.

Seven sins here listed:

Prov. 6:16 These six *things* doth the LORD hate: yea, seven *are* an abomination unto him:

Prov. 6:17 A proud look, a lying tongue, and hands that shed innocent blood,

Prov. 6:18 An heart that deviseth wicked imaginations, feet that be swift in running to mischief,

Prov. 6:19 A false witness *that* speaketh lies, and he that soweth discord among brethren.

The worship of a wicked man:

Prov. 15:8 The sacrifice of the wicked *is* an abomination to the LORD: but the prayer of the upright *is* his delight.

Adultery:

Deut. 24:4 Her former husband, which sent her away, may not take her again to be his wife, after that she is defiled; for that *is* abomination before the LORD: and thou shalt not cause the land to sin, which the LORD thy God giveth thee *for* an inheritance.

The occult:

Deut. 18:9 When thou art come into the land which the LORD thy God giveth thee, thou shalt not learn to do after the abominations of those nations.

Deut. 18:10 There shall not be found among you *any one* that maketh his son or his daughter to pass through the fire, *or* that useth divination, *or* an observer of times, or an enchanter, or a witch,

Deut. 18:11 Or a charmer, or a consulter with familiar spirits, or a wizard, or a necromancer.

Deut. 18:12 For all that do these things *are* an abomination unto the LORD: and because of these abominations the LORD thy God doth drive them out from before thee.

Rebellion:

Prov. 11:20 They that are of a foward heart *are* abomination to the LORD: but such as *are* upright in *their* way *are* his delight.

Human sacrifice:

Deut. 12:31 Thou shalt not do so unto the LORD thy God: for every abomination to the LORD, which he hateth, have they done unto their gods; for even their sons and their daughters they have burnt in the fire to their gods.

Homosexuality:

Lev. 18:22 Thou shalt not lie with mankind, as with womankind: it *is* abomination.

What separates an abomination from other forms of evil, at least in title, seems to be the personal offensiveness of the acts. As related to God, these deeds particularly offend Him in His fundamental nature. An abomination violates God and His attributes in the most extreme fashion. Deuteronomy 22:5 is in the Old Testament. Some hyper-dispensationalists dismiss anything in the Old Testament for someone living in this church age. Their contention would be that the Old Testament is just for Israel. Every usage of “abomination to the LORD” refers to a violation of moral law. One cannot say, “oh, Deuteronomy 22:5 was only valid in the Old Testament era, as a ceremonial law.” Are any of the abominations listed above “only ceremonial?” Is human sacrifice only prohibited in the Old Testament era? How about witchcraft, or worshipping idols? Deuteronomy 22:5—women putting on garments that pertain to men, and men wearing women’s garments—is something that is extremely offensive to God. It is just like these other sins that are listed.

The LORD thy God

The name of God here is *Yehowah ‘Elohecha*, “Jehovah your God.” “Jehovah” is the covenant name of God for His people. “Your God” speaks of the personal relationship of God with His people, but also that He is their Creator. ‘*Elohim*’ is the name of God as Creator in Genesis 1. By disobeying this verse, a man or woman personally offends God his Creator, by disregarding the male-female distinction He has ordained, as well as breaks his agreement with Him, and strikes against Him as his Creator and Deliverer. God’s people, in covenant relationship to Jehovah, who is their own God, need to obey Deut 22:5.

All

This is the Hebrew word *kol* (masculine noun). It includes every person who violates this regulation without exception.

Who Do

This is the Hebrew participle ‘oseh (Qal, participle, masculine, singular, and it means “to do,” as in “to perform a work.” “All is connected to who do.” There is no exception: All who do this thing are an abomination to Jehovah. If they think it is not a big deal, or if they don’t know, or if a man wears a skirt around “just for fun” for a game, or the boss at work says that a woman must wear pants, or culture says it does not matter, does not change anything. ALL who do this are an abomination, says the Lord!

The Syntax of Deuteronomy 22:5

The words used, their order, and the parallel nature of the regulations found here make this verse relatively easy to understand. Articles of clothing that were designed distinctly for men were never to be on a woman. Men were to never wear a garment distinctly designed for women. Although the two parts are parallel, the prohibition on the woman is more specific: not anything that pertains to a man is to be on her. The woman especially should not have a male clothing item on her. God knows that the primary abuse of designed distinctions occur with the woman’s role of submission. The preponderance of violations occur with women putting on the clothing designed for men. History shows us that God-honoring cultures have designed distinctly male clothing and accessories and fashioned specifically female garments as well. An obedient society will clearly mark its items of differentiation.

The second half of the verse makes this clearly about clothes. The word translated “pertaineth” in the first regulation refers to particular items worn. Neither of these are only about looking like a man or a woman. Certainly, since wearing the clothing of the opposite gender can make one look like the other gender, these issues are related. However, the point is that specific articles of clothing are out-of-bounds. Even with men’s clothes on, women often still look like women. Also, neither of these regulations exclude articles of clothing that are not designed to distinguish between genders. However, to honor God’s original demands of two unique genders, male and female, certain clear distinctions must be maintained. A violation of either of these regulations is an abomination to God, something detestable to Him.

The Context of Deuteronomy 22:5

The Context of God’s Original Design

The context of God’s original design gives more evidence for the position that Deuteronomy 22:5 is moral law. The designed differences between male and female thread their way through the entire Bible, beginning in Genesis 1. The initial separate designations of “male” and “female” in Genesis 1:26 mark a God-designed difference. A heart desiring to adhere to the perfect arrangement of His Maker instinctively conforms

to the outward manifestations of His will. God created man and woman different, so to attempt to look the same, or to start to do so, would reveal a faithless insubordination to His obvious plan. At the heart of God's law was the foundational doctrine of "I am the LORD your God" (Lev. 19:2, 3, 4, 10, 12, 14, 16, 18, 25, 28, 31, 32, 34, 36, 37). The will of God cannot be separated from His work. The background painted for all of God's laws is His work of creation. He constituted His work to reflect His orderly, perfect nature. God is insulted by moves to "tweak" what He did. He requires conformity to His design as an expression of thanksgiving, a humble declaration of His great work. God's gracious work on man's behalf mandates more than mere capitulation to commandments. The negative "thou shalt not steal" (Ex. 20:15) expects the positive "work hard and earn what you own" (1 Thess. 4:11). "Male and female created he them" (Gen. 1:27) assumes cooperation with more than fundamental aspects of what make male and female different. The genuine believer wants to visibly agree with God's creative act. Deuteronomy 22:5 does not shock those literate in creation. The regulations of this verse mesh with previously understood truth written on the heart, adopted instinctively from docile submission to the clear design of God.

The Context of the Rest of the Bible

Many points of teaching in Scripture are clearly and often intimated. The name of God does not appear in the book of Esther, but the providence of God is its obvious theme. The distinctions between men and women surface effortlessly through Scripture. Even as the Bible does not "try" to prove the existence of God, God's Word infers the differences between genders. Jehovah tells Job in 38:3 and 40:7, "Gird up thy loins now like a man." No explanation is given. It is just understood. Proverbs 31:22 states of the virtuous woman, "She maketh herself coverings of tapestry; her clothing *is* silk and purple." Nowhere in Scripture is this specific description employed for the dress of a man. Psalm 45:13,14, "The king's daughter *is* all glorious within: her clothing *is* of wrought gold. She shall be brought unto the king in raiment of needlework: the virgins her companions that follow her shall be brought unto thee." These are uniquely feminine descriptions of clothing.

The expected differences in appearance are clearly manifested in the typical wedding. The instinctive understanding of the differences allow for easy understanding of Revelation 21:2, "And I John saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down from God out of heaven, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband." The bride and the groom look night-from-day differently, indicative of the separate God-ordained roles that God intended. 1 Corinthians 11:3-16 tells us that God also designed that "if a man have long hair, it is a shame unto him . . . But if a woman have long hair, it is a glory to her: for *her* hair is given her for a covering." Other passages of Scripture support a difference in appearance and clothing between men and women.

The Application of Deuteronomy 22:5

The Application in the United States and the Rest of the World

Clearly designed distinctions in dress between men and women were the norm during the colonial period and first one hundred fifty years in United States history. Today these distinctions have largely disappeared. Two hundred years ago, the nation at large maintained differences, but now even churches do not maintain these God-ordained standards, at least for the woman—even the great majority of ungodly people in America would not stand for their sons prancing around in skirts, but they do now tolerate their daughters wearing pants). The primary and perhaps sole designated and distinguishing factor in America and most of the rest of the world between male and female appearance has been the dress or skirt-like article for the female and the pant or trouser item for the male.

Experts on fashion agree. Kidwell and Steele write:

In analyzing gender identities, we use the term gender conventions to refer to the social and cultural expectations of behavior, clothing, and images that have divided men and women into separate spheres. . . . [T]he existence of these behavioral standards has always been an integral part of our social structure. . . . When we examine how clothes define an individual, we must also set the man or woman within the context of [his or her] place and time. . . . The full impact of these gender conventions on fashion is only revealed when the two sexes in fashion history are examined side by side. It then becomes obvious that historically clothing has served to separate men and women. . . . Consider the image of a woman dressed in pants. It is a clothing symbol laden with gender meaning. . . . The most obvious division in clothing today is between trousers and skirts. . . . In Europe, over the centuries, flowing robes became associated with femininity and tailored trousers with masculinity. . . . Women in Europe did not wear trousers because the garment had acquired such strong masculine connotations.¹²

In the same volume, an advertisement was shown from Harper's Bazaar in 1960 showing a woman, first in a black shirtwaist dress and again in a white (bifurcated) jumpsuit, with the caption, "First we stole his shirt . . . now we steal his overalls," indicating that both the button-down shirt and trousers were still regarded as masculine items of clothing no matter how long women had worn them.¹³ Allison Lurie, in *The Language of Clothes*, writes:

Real trousers took much longer to become standard female wear. It was not until the 1920s that women and girls began to wear slacks and even shorts for sports and lounging. The new style was greeted with disapproval and ridicule. Women were told that they looked very ugly in trousers, and that wanting to wear The Pants—in our culture, for centuries, the symbolic badge of male authority—was unnatural and sexually unattractive. . . . This freedom, however was limited to the private and informal side of life. Wearing slacks to the office or to the party was out of the question, and any female who appeared on a formal occasion in a trouser suit was assumed to be a bohemian eccentric and probably a lesbian. . . . At Frick Collection library in New York (in the 1960s) women [were] not

¹² Kidwell and Steele, 2-14.

¹³ Kidwell and Steele, 15.

admitted unless they [were] wearing skirts; a particularly ancient and unattractive skirt [was] kept at the desk for the use of readers ignorant of this rule.¹⁴

The article of clothing distinctly designed for the man was the pants. Since pants were uniquely male dress, pants also were the external symbol of male headship. “Wearing the pants” was to say, and still is, that one is in authority. The skirt or dress distinguished the female as a woman. The culotte, the divided skirt, has also been a uniquely female article of clothing. As exclusively female dress, the skirt, dress, or culotte has externally symbolized the woman’s submission. Clothing distinction represents the Biblical truth of male headship and female submission, even as 1 Corinthians 11:3 states that “the head of the woman is the man,” and Isaiah 3:12 says it is a curse when women are in charge and are ruling.

Ann Hollander, anything but supportive of dress distinctions between men and women, writes:

Trousers for respectable women were publicly unacceptable except for fancy dress and on the stage, and they were not generally worn even invisibly as underwear until well on in the nineteenth century. At that period the common adoption of underpants by women seems to represent the first expression of the collective secret desire to wear pants, only acceptably brought out on the surface with the bicycling costumes of the 1890’s, and only finally confirmed in the twentieth century with the gradual adoption of pants as normal public garments for women. . . . Pants were still a forbidden borrowing from the male, so unseemly that they could only be generally hidden until their time finally came.¹⁵

Kidwell and Steele clearly state the application of gender distinctions in the United States when they write, “Among the most powerful of these gender symbols in America have been skirts, trousers, and hair. Men have traditionally worn trousers, women skirts.”¹⁶ People who have nothing at stake with this issue are more than willing to boldly and truthfully talk about the history of gender distinction in the United States.

The movement away from gender distinct dress has been termed the “unisex movement.” This movement was a purposeful erasing or blending of the delineating lines between male and female appearance. An article in the 1970 *Compton Encyclopedia Yearbook* states:

Paris couturer Jacques Esterel states that “identification of the sexes in terms of clothes will become a thing of the past.” He designed an identical tunic and pants outfit for father, mother, and child . . . unisex clothes.¹⁷

In *Life* magazine, January 9, 1970, Rudi Gernreich writes:

¹⁴ Lurie, 224.

¹⁵ Hollander, 53.

¹⁶ Kidwell and Steele, 144.

¹⁷ “The Pantsuit: Hemline Controversy,” *Compton Encyclopedia Yearbook*, (Chicago: F. E. Compton, Inc., 1970).

When proposing his vision of the future of fashion in 1970, he predicted that the traditional apparel symbols of masculinity and femininity would become obsolete, “women will wear pants and men will wear skirts interchangeably.”¹⁸

The pant-skirt controversy is a male-female role controversy. Kidwell and Steele write:

Controversial fashion changes such as women adopting trousers can only take place after women’s roles in society have altered. The mass acceptance of a style may accompany a change in public opinion, but does not precede it. Dress reformers were correct in seeing the connection between women’s roles and their clothing, but erred in believing that by changing the costume, changes in gender conventions would automatically follow.¹⁹

Offending God is serious, but even in a practical way, the dismissal of gender distinction is an attack on the roles of men and women. The overwhelming majority of the violations of the God-ordained standard occur with the woman wearing the clothing of the male. This occurs, as Scripture asserts in 1 Corinthians 11:3-16, when a woman asserts herself above male headship and the man abdicates his God-given authority. The admonitions of female submission repeated in the New Testament (Ephesians 5:22-25; 1 Peter 3:1,2; etc.) come because of the sinful tendency of the woman to rebel against male authority either actively or passively.

With the common removal of the skirt and addition of the pants, the designed gender distinction has ostensibly been alleviated in the United States and other societies. This has not been a movement of God-fearing, prayerful leaders. This custom started with wicked rebels against God that wanted the differences eliminated.²⁰ At first this change was opposed by all of society, then by much of society and all of the Scriptural churches, then by some of society and most of the Scriptural churches, and now by essentially none of society and few of the churches. Churches even preach against the standards of delineation as if erasing these differences has offered a higher level of righteousness to America.

A particular culture practices these regulations of dress by specifically differentiating between articles of appearance that are male and that are female. If the culture does distinguish between genders (and still fulfills the other characteristics of godly appearance) in specially designated articles, then the males should put on only the male clothing and the females only the female garments. Some articles will likely be the

¹⁸ Rudi Gernreich, *Life* (January 9, 1970).

¹⁹ Kidwell and Steele, 144.

²⁰ Wearing pants originated with the early women’s suffrage movement, especially with the extreme suffragettes. The suffrage movement initially paralleled other social movements, adding legitimacy to it (abolition, urban housing, child labor, prohibition of alcohol, etc.). A pioneer for pants was Amelia Bloomer, inventor of the “bloomers,” a kind of a “poofy” long undergarment to the woman’s skirt that was pant-like. Ultimately, the skirt was removed and just the bloomers themselves were worn. In a magazine, *The Lily* of May, 1851, Amelia Bloomer writes, “Nature never intended that the sexes should be distinguished by apparel.” Kidwell and Steele write on p. 144, “When members of one sex defied tradition by appropriating one of these [gender] symbols for themselves, the reaction was immediate. The Bloomer Costume of the 1850s and long hair in the 1960s are two of the most vivid examples of this phenomenon. Women bobbing their hair in the 1920s, women wearing their trousers to work in the 1970s (sic).”

same and not be cause for gender distinction. Those would be understood within the society. The society or church that prepares to obey Deuteronomy 22:5 will know what the distinguishing articles are.

What gender distinction has been designed to replace the skirt on the woman? There is none. Certainly there are various articles that are more typically female, and some colors that are rarely worn by men but most often by women. If the command was only to distinguish men from women, not to have distinct garments, some of this discussion would be rendered insignificant, but that is not what the Deuteronomy 22:5 teaches. The designed difference has been removed and not replaced. Some have contended that men's and women's pants are different. However, about the only difference is that women's pants are usually tighter to draw the attention of men to parts of their body that they should not be thinking about, and they don't have a zipper. Tight pants on women do not bode well as an argument for women's pants among those desirous of godly living. The real truth about this "difference between pants" argument is that it is not an argument, but a vindication in hindsight for those who wish to justify a desired behavior.

One cannot tell the difference from the distance beyond the visibility of the store label. Pants, which pertained to men alone, began to be worn by women between 1880 to 1920 in this country.²¹ At the time, the point was to eliminate the distinction. Churches argued against it for the Scriptural reasons advocated in this chapter. If there were a designed difference between male and female pants, one would be hard pressed to know what it was (color? placement of zipper? (Should we be looking at where the zipper is?) There is no designed difference between pants that men and women wear.

A corollary to the "difference in pants" argument is the "they both wore robes" argument. This is an argument by professing believers to eliminate the designed gender distinctions. No specific Scripture verse says, "They both wore robes." They did (2 Sam. 13:18; Exodus 28:4), but Scripture does not say that the robes were the same. In fact, 2 Sam 13:18 shows specifically that there were different robes for men and women. God's Word admonishes mankind to maintain designed differences. "Same robes" is not about maintaining designed differences, but about erasing them. The Scriptural point would be that the robes were designed to look differently, not that men and women can dress essentially the same today because in Bible times they both wore robes.²² The purpose in designing differences is to agree with God's creative work. God made male and female, and by retaining the external symbolism, the roles are taught, preserved, and God is praised for His perfect design. Erasing the designed distinctions is an "abomination" to God. The other abominations to God in Scripture that have already been mentioned are nothing to be confused with anything morally borderline. They are

²¹ 1920 was also the year that the United States added the 19th Amendment to the Constitution, giving women the legal right to vote. Believers argued that the woman's vote usurped the authority of men. The vote enables a woman to cancel the vote of her father or husband. Scripture prohibits offering women opportunities to abdicate male headship (1 Timothy 2:9-15; 1 Corinthians 14:29-35).

²² *The Zondervan Pictorial Bible Dictionary*, by Merrill C. Tenney, says: "Among the Hebrews neither sex was permitted by Mosaic Law to wear the same form of clothing as was used by the other. A few articles of feminine clothing carried somewhat the same and basic pattern, yet there was always sufficient difference in embossing, embroidery, and needlework so that in appearance the line of demarcation between man and women should be readily detected." Merrill C. Tenney, *The Zondervan Pictorial Bible Dictionary* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Publishing House, 1981), 226, 227.

particularly offensive still today to most professing Christians. That this one abomination gets overlooked does not make it any less abominable. God is disgusted by the people that design, make, and wear these garments.

Historical Interpretation and Application among Commentators

This interpretation of Deuteronomy 22:5 is not a private one (2 Peter 1:20, 21). Historical theology evidences this point. When older commentaries written by conservative Bible scholars and teachers are relatively unanimous about a certain position, one ought to be careful in taking a differing viewpoint. When changes in doctrine follow massive alterations in practice, another occasion to look cautiously is provided. Change in interpretation for Deuteronomy 22:5 began occurring after changes in practice. The practice came first, and then the doctrine. The changes did not come from the doctrine, but the doctrine came from the changes. Doctrine was changed to conform to the errant practice. Older commentaries for purposes of this doctrine would have been written before 1960. Before 1960, women were rarely seen wearing pants in public and most of America disapproved the practice. Even after that time, many commentators are honest with the text and agree that it talks about gender-distinct clothing.

Barnes' Notes were published in 1884-1885, and on p. 312 of the commentary on Deuteronomy, states, “[D]istinctions between sexes is natural and divinely established, and cannot be neglected without indecorum and consequent danger to purity (cf. 1 Cor. 11:3-15).”²³

Keil and Delitzsch, foremost Hebrew scholars, wrote: “As the property of a neighbor was to be sacred in the estimation of an Israelite, so also the Divine distinction of the sexes, which was kept sacred in civil life by the clothes peculiar to each sex, was to be not less but even more sacredly observed. There shall not be man’s things upon a woman, and a man shall not put on a woman’s clothes.”²⁴

The *Pulpit Commentary* states, that this “is an ethical regulation in the interest of morality. . . . Whatever tends to obliterate the distinction between sexes tends to licentiousness, and that the one sex should assume the dress of the other has always been regarded as unnatural and indecent.”²⁵

Lange's Commentary reads, “The distinction between the sexes is natural and established by God in their creation, and any neglect or violation of that distinction, even in the externals, not only leads to impurity, but involves the infraction of the law of God.”²⁶

Joseph Excell wrote in 1849, as recorded in *The Biblical Illustrator: Deuteronomy*:

²³ F. C. Cook, *Barnes' Notes: Exodus to Esther* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book House, 1985), 312. This is a reprint of the 1884-85 edition published by Blackie & Son of London.

²⁴ C. F. Keil and F. Delitzsch, *Commentary on the Old Testament*, vol. 1, James Martin, trans. (Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1866; Peabody, Massachusetts: Hendrickson, 1989).

²⁵ W. L. Alexander, 361, 362.

²⁶ John Peter Lange, *Lange's Commentary on the Holy Scriptures* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1960), 164.

God thought womanly attire of enough importance to have it discussed in the Bible. Just in proportion as the morals of a country or an age are depressed is that law defied. Show me the fashion-plates of any century from the time of the Deluge to this, and I will tell you the exact state of public morals. Ever and anon we have imported from France, or perhaps invented on this side of the sea, a style that proposes as far as possible to make women dress like men. The costumes of the countries are different, and in the same country may change, but there is a divinely ordered dissimilarity which must be forever observed. . . . In my text, as by a parable, it is made evident that Moses, the inspired writer, as vehemently as ourselves, repreahends the effeminate man and the masculine woman.”²⁷

In a sermon entitled, “The Sinfulness of Strange Apparel,” Puritan preacher Vincent Alsop said in the mid 17th Century:

Nothing can justly pretend to be lawful ornament, which takes away the distinction which God has put between the two sexes.—That law, Deut xxii. 5, is of moral equity and perpetual obligation: . . . That which pertaineth, *keli*—The word signifies any “vessel, instrument, utensil, garment, or ornament,” military or civil, used for the discrimination of the sex: so Ainsworth (In *Pentateuchum*). . . . God therefore will have the distinction between the sexes inviolably observed in the outward apparel. . . . What particular form of apparel shall distinguish the one sex from the other, must be determined by the custom of particular countries; provided that those customs do not thwart some general law of God, the rule of decency, the ends of the apparel, or the directions of scripture.²⁸

By the way, God does care what we wear. Zephaniah 1:8 states, “And it shall come to pass in the day of the LORD’S sacrifice, that I will punish the princes, and the king’s children, and all such as are clothed with strange apparel.” God specifically says that He will punish you if you wear “strange,” that is, heathen, apparel, apparel not appropriate to the people of God. God does look at your heart, yes, but He also looks at your outside, and a sinful outside reveals a sinful inside.

The Jewish Publication Society Commentary: Deuteronomy, states:

“Put on a man’s apparel,” Literally, “a man’s *keli* may not be on a woman.” The translation “apparel” makes this clause synonymous with the second part of the verse; it is based on the fact that the plural of *keli* means “clothing” in rabbinic Hebrew. . . . The halakhah combines both views: women may not wear armor or clothing, hairdos, or other adornments that are characteristic of men, nor may men wear what is characteristic of women (what is characteristic of each sex is defined by local practice).²⁹

Walter C. Kaiser, who has a tremendous handle of the Old Testament law, writes concerning Deuteronomy 22:5:

²⁷ Joseph S. Excell, *The Biblical Illustrator: Deuteronomy* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book House, 1978), 405, 406.

²⁸ Vincent Alsop, *Puritan Sermons: 1659-1689*, “The Sinfulness of Strange Apparel,” Vol. 3 (Wheaton, Illinois: Richard Owen Roberts, Publishers, 1981), 498, 499.

²⁹ Joseph Reider, *The Holy Scriptures, Deuteronomy with Commentary* (Philadelphia: The Jewish Publication Society Commentary of America, 1937), 200.

The maintenance of the sanctity of the sexes established by God in the created order is the foundation for this legislation, and not opposition to idolatrous practices of the heathen. The tendency to obliterate all sexual distinctions often leads to licentiousness and promotes and unnaturalness opposed to God's created order. Such a problem can arise in contemporary culture when unisex fashions are aimed at producing the bland person in a progressive desexualization of men and women. Thus, this provision aims mainly at one's clothes as an indication of one's sex.³⁰

The *Baptist Commentary* says, "The text teaches that Israel was to maintain a clear-cut distinction between the sexes. It was, thus, necessary that clothing, as well as other things, which pertained to one, must not be utilized by the other."³¹

Fred H. Wright in *Manners and Customs of Bible Lands*, writes, "The law of Moses forbade a man to wear a woman's clothing and a woman to wear a man's clothing (Deuteronomy 22:5)."³² Merrill Unger says, "While the costume of men and women was very similar, there was an easily recognizable distinction between the male and female attire of the Israelites, and accordingly Mosaic law forbids men to wear women's clothes, and *vice versa* (Deuteronomy 22:5)."³³

These authors validate the historicity of this position and alleviate the possibility of a private interpretation. Volumes of published material passively and actively express designed differences between men and women in this country. People know this. Men wore pants and women wore dresses. Hints of eliminating differences met with widespread protest. Existing photography from the late nineteenth and early twentieth century portray the designed distinctions uniformly. Centuries of paintings reveal only clear variations in appearance. Disproving this would be akin to denying George Washington's presidency. For millennia people definitively thought it mattered that men and women kept their dress distinct. Bible commentators backed up the position with Scripture. Faithful Bible believers registered massive complaints upon minute changes being implemented.

To maintain credibility, the opposition to this position must provide documentation of Biblical exegesis underlying the alterations being executed. However, the unisex shift in this country and the world never followed a study in Scripture. The churches did not lead the movement away from designed distinctions. The world system began this change and the churches followed. Once churches folded into the world's fashions, their church leaders began formulating explanations to ward off the uncomfortable condemnation of God in Scripture. In order to create space for women's pants, they revised history, mutated words, constructed new meanings, hoisted straw men, and ignored centuries of belief and practice. All this having been accomplished, what was once complete unanimity for designed distinction has now become scattered oddity looked upon like southern snake handlers. The sheer numbers of modern professing believers who reject gender distinctions provide temporary comfort in the face

³⁰ Kaiser, 198.

³¹ Garner, 984.

³² Fred H. Wright, *Manners and Customs of Bible Lands* (Chicago: Moody Press, 1953), 98.

³³ Merrill F. Unger, *Unger's Bible Dictionary* (Chicago: Moody Press, 1980), 277.

of a future date at the judgment seat of Christ. Believers disobedient to God's way are warmed by the thought that so many people could not be wrong.

The Attacks on Deuteronomy 22:5

God wants believers to keep the truth (John 14:15,20,21), so Satan attacks it in many different ways (Gen. 3:1-6; Mt. 4:1-11). He attacks all Biblical doctrine by perverting it using the world system. Many would view dress as too unimportant to deserve Satan's attention. However, Satan has accomplished and can do much of his agenda by means of breaking down distinctions in appearance between men and women. The truth of this verse was established, believed and practiced. To make it nearly disappear required strong and varied opposition. The truth of Deuteronomy 22:5, once the normal practice of churches and a heavily Christianized society, has been attacked in several different ways in order to diffuse its impact. The opposition could be organized into six categories: Grammatical, Historical, Dispensational, Cultural, Straw-Man, and Personal.

The *grammatical attack* wrestles the words of the text into ambiguous, strained meanings. In this attack, "man" means "soldier," and "that which pertaineth unto" means either "weapons" or "armor." This reduces the verse to a rebuke against female participation in the armed forces. One other attack attempts to diminish its emphasis by saying that "wear" or "put on" merely mean "look like." Through this subtle alteration, the verse would only be informing men and women not to look like one another.

The *historical attack* attempts to reverse the clear teaching in light of newly advanced versions of history. One version of history says that the text was specifically treating a Canaanite worship practice of transvestitism. Another claims that the verse was an admonition to deal with a practice of women dressing like men to infiltrate men's gatherings for purposes of sexual fulfillment.

The *dispensational attack* dispels the entire verse by categorizing it as only the former will of God for Israel in another dispensation. The proponents of this approach call the text a work of the law that is no longer applicable today. They elaborate further by explaining that if it was something to be practiced today, then many other of the surrounding commands would also need to be practiced.

The *cultural attack* says that since both men and women wore robes at that time, the verse cannot be talking about designed differences, only about looking differently. The cultural application of this cultural interpretation is that men and women can wear the same articles of clothing as long as one can distinguish some difference between them.

The *straw-man attack* sets up a "straw-man," which is that men and women both wear socks and both wear underwear, and always have worn some of the same items of clothing, so this verse must not be talking about dressing differently. Of course, men and women both have heads, arms, and legs, but also have very specific differences that differentiate them considerably. Another straw-man is that people who preach against pants on women think that this standard is a determining factor for salvation and spirituality. They argue that since they do not want women to think that this is all that is important to being a Christian, they should not talk about it at all. One other straw-man says that since more important doctrines exist, emphasis on this issue risks distracting

from what is priority. Probably the most prominent straw-man usually comes in the form of questions that are something like these: “How can a woman wear a skirt when she goes skiing? Isn’t wearing a dress while skiing immodest?” This straw-man turns the issue of distinctions into an issue of modesty. Instead of being about not wearing pants, the issue is turned to modesty.

The *personal attack* contends that the teaching that men wear pants and women wear skirts originated among male chauvinists in the southern United States. In this picture, these chauvinists long wanted to keep male dominance in their homes and plantations, and they could maintain that authority by means of keeping women in skirts or dresses. These antagonists argue that since the southern U.S. is also the Bible belt, ignorant northern preachers assumed that this standard must be Scriptural. People who emphasize this teaching are either ignorant or male chauvinists. What was not long ago a unanimous position even in regular society has been relegated to a fringe belief of misinformed extremists.

Some will use every one of these attacks to cause doubt about the meaning and practice of Deuteronomy 22:5. Even if the attacks contradict each other in certain cases, all of them are offered as a means of casting doubt on the true teaching of the verse. In a court of law, this tactic is often referred to as the “scorched earth method” of defense. A person who wants to defend his position will often attempt to discredit the opposition in any way possible. Casting doubt on the truth is the goal. The one using the scorched earth method does not have to settle on any certain view. He must just assure that this historic and orthodox view is not the one received. In the present societal conditions, someone must believe strongly in designed distinctions to continue his practice. Just a little doubt is all a person will need to give up this position and take another one. When many people are not practicing it, it becomes even easier to explain away.

Opposition to designed distinctions does not derive any spiritual benefit from its attack. Standing against the distinctions does not result in a greater masculinity for men or femininity for women. The advantage of allowing pants on women is the lack of friction with the unsaved community, lost relatives, and worldly church members. Feminist leaning women will create less of a hassle, at least in the short term. Their husbands will have one less battle to fight. The people of the church will not have to be the “oddballs” at family reunions. The church will avoid the reputation as that “Amish church.” Essentially, it erases another area that a church or a believer will be different, allowing assimilation to the world.

Some will argue for the spiritual benefits in evangelism. “How can a Christian witness to an unbeliever when the unbeliever thinks he is so weird?” By taking away the offense of this particular dress standard, an unsaved person supposedly would be more likely to listen to the gospel. It is true that certain standards for living among Christians repulse the world. However, evangelism never has been a primarily human achievement. The gospel is the power of God unto salvation (Rom. 1:16), not the inventive strategies of even believing men. God performs a miracle by working through His Word by His Spirit in the human heart (cf. 1 Cor. 2:1-5). The differences from the world are Scripturally more important to successful evangelism of the lost. Men may not understand how Scriptural standards benefit evangelism, but their proper representation of God does more for the heart of the lost than compromise based on shallow human perceptions. “If the salt have lost his savor, wherewith shall it be salted? it is thenceforth good for nothing”

(Matthew 5:13). Satan will gladly use this foolish human reasoning to diminish the saltiness of God's children.

The Dangers of Disobeying Deuteronomy 22:5

Offending God

In a day of man-centered theology, much teaching even in churches has lost sight of the purpose for man's existence. A trip to the heavenly throne room reveals these lyrics as the content of celestial singing: "Thou art worthy, O Lord, to receive glory and honor and power: for thou hast created all things, and for thy pleasure they are and were created" (Revelation 4:11). Other passages echo this purpose for mankind:

Colossians 1:16, "For by him were all things created, that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether *they be* thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers: all things were created by him, and for him."

Romans 11:36, "For of him, and through him, and to him, *are* all things: to whom *be* glory for ever. Amen."

1 Corinthians 10:31, "Whether therefore ye eat, or drink, or whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God."

John 4:23, "But the hour cometh, and now is, when the true worshippers shall worship the Father in spirit and in truth: for the Father seeketh such to worship him."

2 Corinthians 5:9, "Wherefore we labour, that, whether present or absent, we may be accepted of him."

God created men to bring Him pleasure (Revelation 4:11). The essence of New Testament worship, communicated in Romans 12:1, is that believers might "present [their] bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God." The chief criterion deciding all issues is what will glorify God. Concerned men will look to the Bible to find the truth concerning what will please Him.

Deuteronomy 22:5 says that violators of designed distinctions "are an abomination unto the LORD [their] God." The man who disobeys this Divine ordinance becomes an abomination unto God. The person is the abomination rather than the dress because the offense rests in the person. The person has denied God's created order. This personally affronts God. Christians, more than any others, should appreciate the seriousness of even verging on this level of offending God. Some might think that a Christian could never be an abomination to God, whatever he does. However, the believer makes himself uniquely an abomination because of the greater responsibility he possesses with the Divine wisdom that God has imparted to him uniquely.

An unbeliever rarely considers God or the things of God. People unconcerned about spiritual death remain so because they do not think about spiritual things. Abomination is the way of life for the unconverted, never offering up an acceptable sacrifice, and not comprehending the vast chasm between them and a holy God.

Believers, however, characteristically mind the things of their Creator as partakers of the Divine nature (2 Pet. 1:4). They instinctively know what offends God and veer from the ignominious path out of innate respect for Him. When physical life ends and people stand before God at either the great white throne (Revelation 20:11-15) or the bema seat (2 Corinthians 5:10), the conveniences gained in a temporal world will melt away before the reality of Almighty God. The favor of a foolish world and stubborn personal concerns for comfort, with their silly rationales, will seem so trivial then. At that moment, all of the worldly concerns that crowded out the crystal clarity of the Lord's created design will shrivel under His penetrating glance.

Deterioration of God-Ordained Roles

God sent Adam on an assignment to name the animals in Genesis 2 (vv. 18-20), in part as a visual means of assessing his solitude. For the first time in Genesis, God said that something was not good (v. 18). However, God was not finished, as He took the rib from Adam and made a woman, a "help meet" for Adam. God designed Eve for Adam with a different and complementary role. Man would leave father and mother, cleave to his wife, and they would become one flesh. Man and woman differ in their innate natures. Throughout Scripture their roles are defined differently, and part of faith in and obedience to God is the fulfillment of each of those God-ordained roles. One might think that each gender, having been born distinct, would automatically grow into his or her unique role. Although a built-in tendency exists for each to behave within the parameters of the role, because of the curse the role also must be learned; hence, the regular appearance of instruction and admonition in this realm throughout the Bible.

Part of training up a child in the way he should go (Prov. 22:6) is training him in his God-ordained role. Children learn their roles to a great extent by means of outward example. The distortion of gender distinctions affects the training of children in their roles. When the appearance of distinctions is vague, a child neither sees roles clearly defined nor as important to keep distinct. The child grows up either ignoring the teaching of Deuteronomy 22:5 or hearing it perverted. The uniformity in male and female dress becomes the new norm, symbiotic with flesh naturally rebellious against God. This multiplied growth of gender congruity obliterates the desired, designed differences that God intends. Few to no examples remain as a basis for children learning their roles.

Learning the wrong roles results in wrong practice, which begets even more wrong practice. Role confusion abounds. Neither men nor women know what they are to do, nor whether anyone could know even if he wanted. The new majority classifies anyone who claims authority for role differentiation as denigrating the new standard. Criticism of uniformity is silenced and defined roles are lost. The new roles are subjective and eclectic, creatively defined by each social unit.

Evidence connects the loss of distinctions in dress and the loss of the roles themselves. Uniformity in appearance makes way for the change in roles. The rise of unisex dress precedes the increase of women out of the home into what was an exclusively male workforce. As more women wear pants, more fulfill traditionally male positions, such as the police force, governmental leadership, and corporate management. The cause and effect feed off each other. More men have become like women and women like men in the way they act, advancing the growth of first private and then open

homosexuality. Indistinct dress facilitates the ease with which sodomites can fit into society. The manly, lesbian-like woman has become acceptable. Perversion has become the norm.

God purposed or designed separate roles for the man and the woman. Operating differently than God's design affronts God directly, attacking His wisdom, righteousness, and love. Much obedient, godly living depends upon fulfillment of God-ordained roles. Submission to God and absence of roles are mutually exclusive. No kind of non-submissive obedience to God exists. Excusing or explaining away the violation of God's design ignores the greatness and majesty of God and cooperates with Satan's conspiracy against God. With the roles gone, one more reminder of God as Creator disappears.

Profaning The Church

The church has been the last institution to guard the sanctity of distinct appearance, to preserve this practice and pass it down to the next generation. As the final bastion of distinctiveness in appearance, much responsibility falls on the church to protect it. Because of this, the individuals most chargeable for the demise of these distinctions are the God-ordained leaders of the churches, the pastors. Pastors that allow pants on women or even preach in favor of pants on women are the ones most responsible for women wearing pants today. Two excuses church leaders often use for their silence on this issue are, first, "I'll let the Holy Spirit show them," and, second, "We don't want to offend the unsaved." The Holy Spirit already directed preachers to declare the whole counsel of God's Word, and avoiding truths from God's Word do not help anyone receive Christ. Actually, preaching only part of the counsel of God grieves the Holy Spirit, who is then definitely less likely to affect the miraculous work of regeneration. Many Scriptural truths that repulse unbelievers must be taught to church members. When churches stop resisting designed distinctions, no one will be left to continue their guardianship.

The understanding of holiness in Scripture, while having a major emphasis on righteousness and purity, also carries with it the concept of a majestic separateness. God is without sin, but He also is high and separate (Gen. 14:18-22; 49:25; Dt. 4:36; 2 Sam. 22:14; Ezra 1:2; Neh. 1:4,5; Heb. 7:26; etc.). Profanity contrasts with holiness and lacks an attachment to God, one that separates the believer and the church from the world, making them different. God communicates this truth in Leviticus 11:45, "For I am the LORD that bringeth you up out of the land of Egypt, to be your God: ye shall therefore be holy, for I am holy." God was their God, so He expected a godly difference between His people Israel and the surrounding pagan nations. God states the difference He expected of in Exodus 19:5, 6, "Ye shall be a peculiar treasure unto me above all people: for all the earth is mine: and ye shall be unto me a kingdom of priests, and a holy nation" (cf. Joshua 23:6-8; Nehemiah 13:23-29). Peter declares the same truth in the New Testament concerning believers: "But ye are a chosen generation, royal priesthood, a holy nation, a peculiar people; that ye should show forth the praises of him who hath called you out of darkness unto his marvelous light: Which in time past were not a people, but are now the people of God" (1 Peter 2:9,10). After returning to the land, Ezra was disturbed to hear that "the people of Israel, and the priests, and the Levites, have not separated themselves from the people of the lands, doing according to their

abominations” (Ezra 9:1). The “abominations” done appalled the godly leadership of Israel. Women wearing that which pertains to a man should outrage the godly leadership of churches, since the applicable text says that this is an abomination to God.

God expects the church to be different, to not fit into the world system. Changes in churches directly relate to the erosion of Biblical practice in the world. Women abstaining from pants was a Scriptural doctrine taught and practiced by every Bible believing and practicing church in the nineteenth century United States. The practice of women wearing pants started in the world. Rather than accepting this worldly teaching, churches should “mark them which cause divisions and offences contrary to the doctrine which [they] have learned; and avoid them” (Romans 16:17). Avoiding false practice stops it from spreading to others, especially in the church. The church should take into consideration the basis of compromise in doctrine and practice. Romans 16 says further (v. 18), “For they that are such serve not our Lord Jesus Christ, but their own belly.” The impulse of comfort and convenience, feeding fleshly appetites, motivates the alteration of godly appearance. Instead of considering God’s will even in a time of opposition to it, the easier way gets priority.

Now professing Christians abandon the difference that God desires, expects, and requires to act and look just like the unsaved. The world has hijacked modern “Christianity” with its pluralism and inclusiveness. This quest for the world’s approval is spiritual adultery characteristic of God’s enemies (James 4:4). Biblical truth contradicts the world’s values and runs antithetically to virtually everything the world admires. The Lord said the world would despise the church, and even though being hated is not the goal, the believer will not continually adjust his lifestyle or dress standards to suit worldly preferences. In the history of Christianity, churches have only made a significant impact when they have stood firm on the proclamation and practice of the truth. When shrinking away from God’s way, influence is invariably squandered. An indistinct Christianity really is not Christianity at all.

The relinquishing of Scriptural dress standards, dumbing down designed distinctiveness, reflects a postmodern society. Dogmatism about dress is deemed intolerant, and the standards are set aside for the sake of harmony. The popular view is that such things are characteristically unknowable. A church is the pillar and ground of the truth (1 Timothy 3:15). If there is anywhere the world should be able to find objective truth, it is the church, but instead, churches have taken the worldly tack of shaping truth to fit people’s preferences (cf. 2 Timothy 4:3-4). A church can only give up so much objective, Scriptural truth before it is a church no longer. Conceding one of them, even this dress standard, sends the church on a slippery slope toward a kind of moral relativism exactly like the world.

The Break-Down of a Society

A loss of roles comes from a lack of distinctiveness. Without God-given roles families break down, and when families collapse, society goes with them. Growing up without clear role models, children take on whatever role is convenient. Men do not work, women are not at home, and children are often left unattended and uninstructed. Without dad taking on his role of leader, provider, and protector, and mom taking on her

role of helper, nurturer, and household manager, the truth is left without adequate guardianship to pass it down unspoiled to the next generation.

Children learn to relate properly with God by learning to relate properly with their parents. The Lord Himself divided the ten commandments (Ex. 20) into two categories: the first half about how to treat God, and the second half about how to treat men. People will not know how to treat each other without understanding how to treat God, and they will not know how to treat God without understanding how to treat each other. Without parents fulfilling their God-given roles, children will learn the wrong relationship to all authority. Boys will not learn how to be men and girls will not learn how to be women. Boys will not understand how to head a home and girls will not learn how to submit to their husbands. Children will grow up rebellious, self-centered, or untrusting of authority, and, more often, unconverted. The lack of discipline and work ethic tend toward unemployment. If not resulting in a life of crime, the necessary tools for maintaining a civilized society will slowly erode. Bad parenting begets bad parenting. History has proven this.

The evidence of history from the twentieth century documents the following scenario. The divorce rate escalates, leaving single parent families and resulting in teenage child births out of wedlock, neglected children, illiteracy, rising drug use, murders, rapes, and other crimes. Sodomy multiplies privately and then publically. Sexual promiscuity abounds. Total lack of discernment in leadership results in bad and damaging decisions that contribute to further downfall. All of this can be traced back to role ignorance. Fathers and mothers not understanding their roles, and, not knowing what to do, tragically ruin their own children and then future generations. The steady increase of these indicators of cultural decline has corresponded to the breakdown of roles. Again, since roles are learned by example or appearance, the obliteration of the designed distinction in dress must be included as a root cause. The waterfall of societal degradation exploded from the steady stream of loss of roles partly generated by the trickle of pants on women. Women's pants offend God, and continued disobedience to Him tears down society.

CONCLUSION

1.) If you are a woman, and you wear pants, you should confess your sin, and determine that you will never wear them again. Obedience to God is not an option. You need to obey NOW. Today. From this day forward. Disobedience will greatly hurt your spiritual life—when you wear them, you make yourself an abomination. That is what God says.

2.) A church without a pastor should be sure to get a good man in who will fear God, not man, and who will therefore preach against women in pants, and after getting one, be overwhelmed with gratitude for his stand for righteousness and the honor of God in this area, against the tremendous pressure to give in here by our ungodly, Satanically controlled culture.

3.) Remember that God's way is best. You are not losing out on anything by following Scripture and not wearing clothing designed for the opposite gender. Rejoice that God has set up this distinction, and cheerfully follow it.

4.) If you are not saved, changing your clothes is good, but you need a new heart and nature. Mere outward change will not save your soul.

Appendix 1—Are what are called “woman’s pants” truly a “woman’s garment” (*שִׁמְלָה אֲשֶׁר*) something that does not “pertain to a man” (*כְּלֵי־נָבָר*), or the same “garment,”—pants—just cut a little differently?

The question of Deuteronomy 22:5 is: “What is the outer garment or garments (*simlah*)³⁴ that “pertain to” (*keli*) a man or a woman? As “man” and “woman” are generic nouns in the verse (versus individual nouns speaking of some particular, individual man or woman), so the verse indicates that a particular type or sort of garment “pertains to” a man and is the garment that is a woman’s garment, the garment of a woman, a garment that pertains to a woman. What, in modern Western society, is the type or sort of outer garment that pertains to a man and to a woman? What is the gender distinction that has been traditionally designed into modern Western society (and which, Deuteronomy 22:5 indicates, it is an abomination to God to remove)? The obvious answer is that pants “pertain to” a man as an outer garment, while skirts “pertain to” women as an outer garments.

There is no evidence whatsoever that the slight differences between pants that fit men and pants that are cut to fit women constitute a different garment, a garment that pertains to a woman, a *woman’s garment*, a *simlah ishah*, from the uses of the Hebrew word for “garment.”³⁵ By this sort of argument, a pair of pants on a fat man is a different type of garment from a pair of pants on a thin man, or on a tall man, or on a short man, or on a boy. For that matter, a pair of pants that shrinks in the wash has now become a different type of garment. The idea that cutting a pair of pants so that they fit on a woman’s body creates an entirely different type of garment is entirely invalid. The abomination of Deuteronomy 22:5 is not to put on a garment that does not fit because it is cut a little differently, but the donning of a distinct type of garment that pertains to the opposite gender. A pair of pants that is cut so that a woman can put them on is still a man’s garment, just a man’s garment cut to fit a woman, just as a dress that is cut to fit a man is still a woman’s garment, just one that has been cut to fit a man.

Furthermore, the broad use of the word *keli* in the prohibition that the woman puts on a *keli* of a man makes it very clear that the slight differences between pants cut to fit a man and pants cut to fit a woman do by no means constitute a sufficient distinction to avoid disobedience to Deuteronomy 22:5. The woman is not to have on her anything that

³⁴ The *simlah* is a “outer garment” (KB), a “wrapper, mantle . . . usually [a] square piece of cloth worn as outer garment” (BDB). Thus, the command for a distinct *simlah* in Deuteronomy 22:5 commands distinct outer garments. However, distinct undergarments would be included in the specification of the gender-distinct *keli*.

³⁵ Compare the complete list of OT *simlah* texts: Gen 9:23; 35:2; 37:34; 41:14; 44:13; 45:22; Ex 3:22; 12:34–35; 19:10, 14; 22:26; Deut 8:4; 10:18; 21:13; 22:3, 5, 17; Josh 7:6; Judg 8:25; 1 Sam 21:10; 2 Sam 12:20; Is 3:6–7; 4:1; 9:4; Prov 30:4; Ruth 3:3.

is broadly associated with masculinity;³⁶ the translation “that which pertaineth unto” in the KJV is very apt for *keli* in 22:5a. In terms of clothing,³⁷ a gender-distinct *keli*, a garment that broadly pertains to a man or to a woman, would be a distinct type of garment, as a *keli* of skin is a distinct skin garment or other thing of skin (Leviticus 13:49, 52, 53, 57, 58, 59). For a woman to put on her lower body what makes her not look like the woman on the bathroom door but makes her look like the picture of the man certainly is to place on herself the *keli* of a man. To affirm otherwise is to reduce the command of the living God to something that has just about no meaning—just about anything on gender distinction can be explained away if the pant/skirt distinction can be eliminated. It is not possible to affirm that the traditional symbol of masculinity—pants—can be denied any association with masculinity, can be said to not be “that which pertaineth unto” a man, a *keli* of a man, any more than a dress—the traditional symbol of femininity—can be denied any association with the feminine or said not to pertain unto a woman.

Appendix 2—Brief Notes on the Historical Interpretation of Deuteronomy 22:5 and Principles of Clothing

Ancient Jewish interpreters of Deuteronomy 22:5 recognized that the verse required distinct types of gender-distinct garment. The LXX translates the verse as a reference to different types of male and female garments.³⁸ The paraphrastic Targum

³⁶ While it is apparent from the second half of Deuteronomy 22:5 that clothing is the emphasis of the first half of the verse, the prohibition of the woman having on herself the man’s *keli* is, as an examination of the texts with the word indicates, a broad command. Note, for instance, the translation of *keli* as “thing” in Leviticus 15:4, 6, 22, 23, 26, or of *every keli* as “all that is made of” in Numbers 31:20. The complete list of texts is: Gen 24:53; 27:3; 31:37; 42:25; 43:11; 45:20; 49:5; Ex 3:22; 11:2; 12:35; 22:6; 25:9, 39; 27:3, 19; 30:27–28; 31:7–9; 35:13–14, 16, 22; 37:16, 24; 38:3, 30; 39:33, 36–37, 39–40; 40:9–10; Lev 6:21; 8:11; 11:32–34; 13:49, 52–53, 57–59; 14:5, 50; 15:4, 6, 12, 22–23, 26; Num 1:50; 3:8, 31, 36; 4:9–10, 12, 14–16, 26, 32; 5:17; 7:1, 85; 18:3; 19:15, 17–18; 31:6, 20, 50–51; 35:16, 18, 22; Deut 1:41; 22:5; 23:25; Josh 6:19, 24; 7:11; Judg 9:54; 18:11, 16–17; 1 Sam 6:8, 15; 8:12; 9:7; 10:22; 14:1, 6–7, 12–14, 17; 16:21; 17:22, 40, 49, 54; 20:40; 21:6, 9; 25:13; 30:24; 31:4–6, 9–10; 2 Sam 1:27; 8:10; 17:28; 18:15; 23:37; 24:22; 1 Kings 6:7; 7:45, 47–48, 51; 8:4; 10:21, 25; 15:15; 17:10; 19:21; 2 Kings 4:3–4, 6; 7:15; 11:8, 11; 12:14; 14:14; 20:13; 23:4; 24:13; 25:14, 16; Is 10:28; 13:5; 18:2; 22:24; 32:7; 39:2; 52:11; 54:16–17; 61:10; 65:4; 66:20; Jer 14:3; 18:4; 19:11; 21:4; 22:7, 28; 25:34; 27:16, 18–19, 21; 28:3, 6; 32:14; 40:10; 46:19; 48:11–12, 38; 49:29; 50:25; 51:20, 34; 52:18, 20; Ezek 4:9; 9:1–2; 12:3–4, 7; 15:3; 16:17, 39; 23:26; 27:13; 32:27; 40:42; Hos 8:8; 13:15; Amos 6:5; Jonah 1:5; Nah 2:10; Zech 11:15; Psa 2:9; 7:14; 31:13; 71:22; Job 28:17; Prov 20:15; 25:4; Ruth 2:9; Eccl 9:18; Esth 1:7; Dan 1:2; 11:8; Ezra 1:6–7, 10–11; 8:25–28, 30, 33; Neh 10:40; 12:36; 13:5, 8–9; 1 Chr 9:28–29; 10:4–5, 9–10; 11:39; 12:34, 38; 15:16; 16:5, 42; 18:8, 10; 22:19; 23:5, 26; 28:13–14; 2 Chr 4:16, 18–19; 5:1, 5, 13; 7:6; 9:20, 24; 15:18; 20:25; 23:7, 13; 24:14; 25:24; 28:24; 29:18–19, 26–27; 30:21; 32:27; 34:12; 36:7, 10, 18–19.

³⁷ Of course, clothing is the obvious matter in view in Deuteronomy 22:5. Both the parallelism in the two parts of the verse, and the fact that the man’s *keli* is not to be worn by, that is, be “upon” the woman (*תְּשַׁעַלְתָּה*), make this apparent. Deuteronomy 22:5 does not affirm that it is an abomination for, say, a woman to hold in her hand a sword or war-implement that is appropriate for soldiers and thus for men; rather, she is not to have a man’s *keli* upon her body.

³⁸ οὐκ ἔσται σκεύη ἀνδρὸς ἐπὶ γυναικί οὐδὲ μὴ ἐνδύσηται ἀνὴρ στολὴν γυναικείαν ὅτι βδέλυγμα κυρίω τῷ θεῷ σου ἔστιν πᾶς ποιῶν ταῦτα, “The apparel of a man shall not be on a woman, neither shall a man put on a woman’s dress; for every one that does these things is an abomination to the Lord thy God.” (Brenton’s LXX) Note that there are distinct masculine and feminine (γυναικείων)

Pseudo-Jonathan on Deuteronomy 22:5 points out one sort of particular male garment, reading (in part): “There shall not be a fringed cloak or tephilin on a woman, for they are the equipment of a man . . . it is loathsome before the Lord your God.”³⁹ In the first century, discussing and making reference to Deuteronomy 22:5, Josephus wrote: “Take care, especially in your battles, that no woman use the habit of a man, nor man the garment of a woman,”⁴⁰ and Philo noted:

18 But such great anxiety and energy is displayed by the law in attaining the object of training and exercising the soul so as to fill it with courage, that it has even descended to particulars in the matter of raiment, enjoining what men ought to wear, and prohibiting with all its might a man from wearing the garments of a woman, in order that no trace of shadow of the female may be attached to the male part of mankind, to its discredit; for the law, being at all times in perfect consistency and accordance with nature, desires to establish laws which shall be akin to and in perfect harmony with one another from beginning to end, even in those minute points which, by reason of their insignificance, appear to be beneath the notice of ordinary legislators. 19 For as it perceived that the figures of men and women, looking at them as if they had been sculptured or painted forms, were very dissimilar, and, moreover, that the same kind of life was not assigned to both the sexes (for to the woman is assigned a domestic life, while a political one is more suited to the man), so also in respect of other matters which were not actually the works of nature, but still were in strict accordance with nature, it judged it expedient to deliver injunctions which were the result of sound sense and wisdom. And these related to the mode of living, and to apparel, and to other things of that kind; 20 for it thought it desirable that he who as truly a man should show himself a man in these particulars also, and especially in the matter of dress, since, as he wears that both day and night, he ought to take care that there is no indication in it of any want of manly courage. 21 And, in the same manner, having also equipped the woman in the ornaments suited to her, the law prohibits her from assuming the dress of a man, keeping at a distance men-women just as much as it does women-men; for the lawgiver was well aware that when only one single thing in the proper economy of the house was removed, nothing else would remain in the same position as it ought and as it was in before.⁴¹

garments, according to the LXX, and the “attire [or] apparel” (Liddell-Scott, σκευή) of the one is not to be on the other.

וּבְאָנָפָוי לְאִיתָחֲמָאָה חֵיק נָשָׁא אַרְדָּם מֵחֶק קָרְבָּן חֹוא לְאַיְהוּן גָּוְלִיאַן דְּצִיצָה וְתְּפִילִין דְּהַנְּגָן תִּקְוָנִין גָּבָר עַל אִיתָא וְלֹא יְסִפְרֵגְבָּר שְׂחִיחָה וְעַרְיוֹתָה

⁴⁰ *Antiquities* 4:301 (4.8.43.301), Φυλάσσειν δὲ μάλιστα ἐν ταῖς μάχαις ὡς μήτε γυναικαὶ ἀνδρικῆ σκευὴ χρῆσθαι μήτ’ ἄνδρα στολῇ γυναικεῖ.

⁴¹ Philo, *On The Virtues* 18-21. 18 τοσαύτη δέ τίς ἔστι τῷ νόμῳ σπουδὴ καὶ φιλοτιμία περὶ τοῦ γυμνάσαι καὶ συγκροτῆσαι ψυχὴν πρὸς ἀνδρείαν, ὥστε καὶ περὶ ἐσθημάτων ὅποια ἔχρην ἀμπέχεσθαι διετάξατο ἀπειπὼν ἀνὰ κράτος ἀνδρὶ γυναικὸς ἀμπεχόνην ἀναλαμβάνειν, ἔνεκα τοῦ μηδὲν ἵχνος ἡ σκιάν αὐτὸν μόνον τοῦ θήλεος ἐπὶ λύμῃ τῆς ἄρσενος γενεᾶς προσάψασθαι: βούλεται γὰρ ἐπόμενος ἀεὶ τῇ φύσει τὰ οἰκεῖα καὶ συνφδὰ ἀλλήλοις ἄχρι τῶν ἐσχάτων καὶ δι’ εὐτέλειαν ἀφανεστέρων εἶναι δοκούντων νομοθετεῖν. 19 ἐπειδὴ γὰρ τύπους σωμάτων ἔώρα καθάπερ ἐπὶ πλάτους χαραχθέντας ἀνομοίους ἀνδρός τε αὖ καὶ γυναικὸς καὶ βίον ἐκατέρῳ τῶν εἰδῶν οὐ τὸν αὐτὸν ἀπονεμηθέντα τῷ μὲν γὰρ ὁ κατοικίδιος, τῷ δ’ ὁ πολιτικὸς προσκεκλήρωται, κἀν, τοῖς ἄλλοις ὅσα μὴ φύσεως μὲν ἔργα ἦν, φύσει δὲ ἀκόλουθα γνώμης ἀγαθῆς εὑρήματα, συμφέρον ἔκρινε διατάξασθαι ταῦτα δ’ ἦν τὰ περὶ δίαιταν καὶ ἀμπεχόνην καὶ εἴ τι ὄμοιότροπον. 20 ἡρενῶσθαι γὰρ τόν γε πρὸς

The Qumran community forbade the “interchange of garments between men and women (cf. Deut. 22:5).”⁴²

Ancient Christiandom also required gender-distinct clothing. Ancient Epitome XIII of the *Canons of the Council of Gangra* (c. A. D. 360) stated: “Whatever women wear men’s clothes, anathema to them.”⁴³ Hefele explained: “The synodal letter in its sixth article also speaks of this. Exchange of dress, or the adoption by one sex of the dress of the other, was forbidden in the Pentateuch (Deut 22:5), and was therefore most strictly interdicted by the whole ancient Church. Such change of attire was formerly adopted mainly for theatrical purposes, or from effeminacy, wantonness, the furtherance of unchastity, or the like. The Eustathians, from quite opposite and hyper-ascetical reasons, had recommended women to assume male, that is probably monk’s attire, in order to show that for them, as the holy ones, there was no longer any distinction of sex; but the Church, also from ascetical reasons, forbade this change of attire, especially when joined to superstition and puritanical pride.”⁴⁴ Thus, the view of “the whole ancient Church” was that gender-distinct garments were required by Deuteronomy 22:5, and putting on the garments of the opposite gender was “most strictly interdicted.” One consequently finds ante-Nicene patristic writers like Tertullian⁴⁵ affirming: “I find no dress cursed by God, except a woman’s dress on a man: for ‘cursed,’ saith He, ‘is every man who clothes himself in woman’s attire.’”⁴⁶ Chrysostom affirmed:

Symbols many and diverse have been given both to man and woman; to him of rule, to her of subjection: and among them this also, that she should be covered, while he hath his head bare. If now these be symbols, you see that both err when they disturb the proper order, and transgress the disposition of God, and their own proper limits, both the man falling into the woman’s inferiority, and the woman rising up against the man by her outward habiliments.

For if exchange of garments be not lawful, so that neither she should be clad with a cloak, nor he with a mantle or a veil: (“for the woman,” saith He, “shall not wear that which pertaineth to a man, neither shall a man put on a woman’s garments:”) much more is it unseemly for these (Deuteronomy chapter 22, verse 5) things to be interchanged. For the former indeed were ordained by men, even

ἀλήθειαν ἄνδρα κὰν τούτοις ἡξίωσε καὶ μάλιστα ἐν ἐσθῆμασιν, ἢ ἐπιφερόμενος ἀεὶ μεθ’ ἡμέραν τε καὶ νύκτωρ ὁφείλει μηδὲν ἔχειν ἀνανδρίας ὑπόμνημα. 21 κατὰ τὰ αὐτὰ μέντοι καὶ τὴν γυναικα ἀσκήσας τοῖς ἀρμόττουσι κόσμοις ἐκώλυσεν ἀναλαμβάνειν ἄνδρος ἐσθῆτα, πόρρωθεν ὡς ἄνδρογύνους οὕτως καὶ γυνάνδρους φυλαξάμενος: ἐνὸς γάρ, καθάπερ ἐν ταῖς οἰκοδομίαις, ὑφαιρεθέντος ἥδει καὶ τάλλα μενοῦντα οὐκ ἐν ὅμοιῷ.

⁴² *The Dead Sea scrolls in English* (Revised and extended 4th ed.), G. Vermes. Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1995.

⁴³ pg. 97, Schaff, P. (1997). *The Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers Second Series* Vol. XIV. Oak Harbor: Logos Research Systems.

⁴⁴ pgs. 97-98, *ibid.*

⁴⁵ Compare Clement of Alexandria: “What reason is there in the law’s prohibiting a man from ‘wearing woman’s clothing’? Is it not that it would have us to be manly, and not to be effeminate neither in person and actions, nor in thought and word?” (*Stromata*, II:18)

⁴⁶ *On Idolatry*, XV. Tertullian goes on to specify the toga as a distinctively male garment: “The toga, however, is a dress of manly *name* as well as *of manly use*,” since it was called the *toga virilis*, “the manly toga.”

although God afterwards ratified them: but this by nature, I mean the being covered or uncovered. But when I say Nature, I mean God. For He it is Who created Nature. When therefore thou overturnest these boundaries, see how great injuries ensue.

And tell me not this, that the error is but small. For first, it is great even of itself: being as it is disobedience. Next, though it were small, it became great because of the greatness of the things whereof it is a sign. However, that it is a great matter, is evident from its ministering so effectually to good order among mankind, the governor and the governed being regularly kept in their several places by it.

So that he who transgresseth disturbs all things, and betrays the gifts of God, and casts to the ground the honor bestowed on him from above; not however the man only, but also the woman. For to her also it is the greatest of honors to preserve her own rank; as indeed of disgraces, the behavior of a rebel.⁴⁷

Post-Reformation Baptists practiced church discipline because of clothing. John T. Christian describes 17th century Baptist practice:

The discipline of the churches was strict and persistent. “Their general conduct,” says Goadby, “their domestic life, their business, their connections in civil society, their recreations, and even their dress, were all deemed legitimate subjects for the strictest supervision.” . . . A certain Mr. Ingello, one of the early pastors of the Broadmead Church, Bristol, “offended divers members of his congregation with his flaunting apparel; for he, being a thin, spare, slender person, did goe very neate, and in costly trimm, and began to exceed in some garments not becoming ye Gospel, much lesse a minister of Christ.” He was accordingly dealt with. . . . The General Assembly of the Particular Baptists, 1689, answered the query: “Whether it were not necessary to take note of those excesses that were found in their members, men and women, with respect to their apparel,” affirmatively. Their sober reply was: It is a shame for men to wear long hair, or long perriwigs, and especially ministers (1 Corinthians 11:14), or strange apparel. That the Lord reproves the daughters of Zion for their bravery, haughtiness, and pride of their attire, walking with stretched out necks, wanton eyes, mincing as they go (Isaiah 3:16), as if they effected tallness, as one observes of their stretched-out necks; though some in these times seem, by their high dresses, to outdo them in that respect.⁴⁸

The necessity and importance of wearing garments that were gender-distinct and Scriptural in other ways is evidenced abundantly in history.

⁴⁷ *Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers* vol. 12, ed. Philip Schaff, Chrysostom, *Homilies on 1 Corinthians*, Homily 26.

⁴⁸ pgs. 279-280, *History of Baptists*, vol. 1, John T. Christian. Elec. acc. *Baptist History Collection CD*, ver. 1. Paris, AK: Baptist Standard Bearer, 2005.