



Articles and Sermons :: Should women wear veils today?

Should women wear veils today? - posted by bible4life (), on: 2010/12/19 21:34

Wearing Head Coverings in Corporate Worship (1 Corinthians 11:1-16) [Printer Friendly Version](#)

by Erik Wait

Introduction

There are a number of theological issues related to 1 Corinthians 11:1-16 which I could spend a great deal of time discussing. However, the purpose of this paper is to address Paul's instructions for women to wear head coverings in corporate worship. In doing so I will discuss what the "cover" refers to in 1 Corinthians 1:5 and 15 and whether his instructions are applicable to Christians today.

Not long ago the practice of women wearing a cover (a bonnet or a veil) on their head in corporate worship in the church was a common practice. But today this Biblical practice has for the most part fallen by the wayside. Some women refuse to wear head coverings because they are convinced by the feminist movement that such a practice was of a bygone oppressive patriarchal era. Others argue that this practice, while good and necessary in the first century, is no longer relevant for the church today. Yet there are others who argue that the practice was never a mandate of Paul but rather the custom of women wearing head coverings in post-apostolic times is the result of a misinterpretation of his instructions to the Corinthian church. In contrast to these notions I believe that Paul prescribes the wearing of a head covering by women in corporate worship, not a merely as a cultural convention but as a normative practice which is to be observed in the church in all ages.

1 Corinthians 11:1-16

"Be imitators of me, just as I also am of Christ. Now I praise you because you remember me in everything, and hold firmly to the traditions, just as I delivered them to you. But I want you to understand that Christ is the head of man, and the man is the head of a woman, and God is the head of Christ." (vv. 1-3)

The context of this chapter is within Paul's instructions to the church at Corinth on how to conduct orderly worship. In chapter 10:14-22 he discusses the Lord's Supper and he does so again in chapter 11:17-33 in which he states the context of his instructions is, "when you come together" (11:33). He then goes on in chapters 12-14 to discuss orderly and loving corporate worship. In fact, in verse 4 Paul establishes the context for the exhortation for he refers to prophesying with the head covered which is a corporate practice for nobody prophesies privately to oneself. Whether or not his instructions concerning head coverings apply to women praying privately is not stated and therefore I cannot be dogmatic on the issue. There are things that are permissible in private worship which are not appropriate in corporate worship. A woman may pray in her pajamas or a nightgown in the early morning at home whereas it would not be appropriate to do so in corporate worship. Also, there are often times when a woman may be driving in her car without a head covering and yet pray because of an immediate need. For example, if she were to see a car accident she may want to pray for the victims even though her head is not covered. In such cases the immediate need to pray outweighs the need to have one's head covered, unless one should argue that her head ought to always be covered. Likewise, a man who is a soldier in the heat of battle may want to pray a quick prayer for help. In such an emergency I don't think soldiers should remove their helmet in order to offer a quick prayer to God for help. Thus it may be permissible for her to pray without her head covered and for him to pray with his head covered in private or in emergency circumstances whereas in corporate worship it is not.

In this chapter Paul has two different meanings of the word head (kephale). One is a reference to the physical head, the skull, of the man and the woman. The other is a reference to the source and authority of Christ, the man and the woman. Using the same word with different shades of meaning in the same context is a common practice in the Bible. Throughout Scripture the writers often use a play on words (paronomasia) as a means of making a point. In doing so they can use the same word in both a literal and symbolic fashion. For example, in 1 Corinthians Paul uses the word "body" (soma) to refer to the physical body of Christ and as the bread in the Lord's Supper (11:24) as well as a reference to the entire church "now you are the body of Christ" (12:12-27). Thus the "body of Christ" can refer to that which arose from

the grave and is seated at the right hand of the Father, it can refer to the bread in the Lord's Supper, and it can refer to the entire Church as a whole which is made of many parts. Yet, these are not three unrelated meanings for they are all tied together. The unified corporate body of Christ (the Church) partakes together of the body of Christ (the bread) which signifies or symbolizes the physical body of Christ. Likewise, Paul's use of "head" (kephale) has a double meaning which ties the symbol (the head) with that which is signified (the authority).

The first meaning of "head" in verse 3 refers to the Christ as the head of man. There are two possible interpretations here. However, it cannot mean the literal physical head (the skull) for that would obviously be nonsense. Simon Kistemaker argues that it could either mean "source" or "authority":

"Commentators are divided on the meaning of the Greek word 'kephale' (head). Some interpret it to mean 'source,' while others maintain that it signifies 'authority.' Some scholars have examined the evidence and discovered that the Septuagint, the Greek translation of the Hebrew Bible, records a number of places where the term head figuratively means 'chief' or 'ruler.' Two examples are, 'You have preserved me as the head of the nations. People I did not know are subject to me' (II Sam. 22:44), and 'for the head of Aram is Damascus, and the head of Damascus is only Rezin.... The head of Ephraim is Samaria, and the head of Samaria is only Remaliah's son' (Isa. 7:8, 9). The accumulated evidence from the Septuagint, Philo, and Josephus is impressive. Still other scholars question whether the Hebrew word 'rosh' (head) metaphorically denotes 'chief' or 'ruler.' They state instead that 'kephale' means 'source' in Greek literature, and that the expression 'head' derives from the Greek usage that connotes 'source.' In fact, one writer asserts that 'there is simply no basis for the assumption that a Hellenized Jew would instinctively give 'kephale' the meaning 'one having authority over someone.'"

There are a few problems with this approach to determining the meaning of the word "kephale." First, so-called "scholars" often import meanings of Greek words from extra-Biblical sources without recognizing that the writers of the New Testament did not always use words in the same manner as Philo or Josephus. The New Testament writers often "baptized" Greek words with Hebrew thought. The Hebrew Bible which the apostles often quote is the Septuagint. Thus their meaning of Greek words such as "logos" (word), "baptizo" (baptize), "presbuteros" (elder), "ekklesia" (church) has a Jewish and not a Hellenist connotation. Therefore we ought to consider "kephale" from the Septuagint long before we consider the works of pagan philosophers or non-Christian historians of the first century. Second, Paul was Jewish Jew and not a Hellenized Jew (Philippians 3:5). Third, to draw a radical distinction between "source" and "authority" is unnecessary for who is our authority but the One who is also our source? Finally, just as "archae" can mean "beginning" (John 1:1) it can also mean "head" or "authority over" (Revelation 3:14; 21:6; 22:13). Thus the One who is the beginning of creation (not the first thing created) is the head or authority over creation. Likewise, Christ is the creator or source of man, thus He is the ruling authority over the Christian husband. Likewise, the woman (Eve) came from man (Adam) thus he is the source and authority over the woman. Of course, Adam did not take his own rib and create Eve but rather God created her from Adam. Consequently both the Christian husband and wife have Jesus Christ as their ultimate source and authority.

The hierarchical headship of the man over the woman is economic, not ontological. In other words, Christ is God but as the Son He is subordinate economically in redemptive history to the Father. Likewise, the wife is ontologically equal with the husband but she is economically subordinate to her husband in the household (Ephesians 5:22-24). Also, children are ontologically equal to their parents but economically they are subordinate to them, thus they are to honor and submit to them (Ephesians 6:1-3). In this same way lay people are ontologically equal to their elders but economically they are subordinate to them in the church (Hebrews 13:17). Note that this order is not the natural order as in verse 15. Rather this is the order in the Church for non-Christians do not have Christ as their head nor God as their Father. Rather they are children of wrath and have the devil as their father (John 8:44). Therefore, to combine what is of the natural order in verse 15 with that which is of the supernatural order in verse 5 is to ignore the context of the two different orders which Paul appeals to in order to make his case. Then he goes on to write:

"Every man who has something on his head while praying or prophesying, disgraces his head." (v. 4)

This verse is a little difficult to translate into English. If we were to translate it word for word it would say, "Every man praying or prophesying having down over his head shames his head." Gordon Clark takes this to refer to a man having long hair (cross referencing it with verse 15). However, if that were the case couldn't Paul simply say, "Man ought to have short hair"? He has no problem referring directly to women needing to have long hair in verse 15. In addition, as I shall argue later, if the cover is hair in this verse the following verse becomes nonsensical because he would be telling women without hair to cut their hair off. Marvin R. Vincent states that this phrase is:

“Referring to the tallith, a four-cornered shawl having fringes consisting of eight threads, each knotted five times, and worn over head in prayer. It was placed upon the worshipper’s head at his entrance into the synagogue.”

Many commentators make similar statements and discuss various customs of praying while wearing different apparel in the first century. Many of these customs are opposite of each other. The Romans have one practice, the Greeks have another. The Jews have one practice and now by apostolic instruction the church has another. This makes sense for Romans would want to distinguish themselves from Greeks and Jews would want to distinguish themselves from Gentiles. Also Christians might want to distinguish themselves from Jews who deny Jesus as the Messiah. However, this method of interpretation requires a sociological explanation which requires extensive material from outside the text to make one’s case for a proper understanding of the passage. I prefer to stick as close to the text as possible without having to make my case from extra-biblical sources.

There are two different ways we could understand “disgraces his head” in verse 4. Paul could be saying that for the man to pray with his physical head covered he dishonors his physical head, i.e. he disgraces himself. But given the context of headship from the previous verse and the symbolic tie between the physical head and the authoritative head I believe that he is stating very strongly that for a man to pray with his physical head covered he disgraces his authoritative head, Jesus Christ. However, it may not be necessary to draw a strong distinction between the two for his physical head is a symbol of his authoritative head (Christ) and signs are often spoken of as if they were that which they signify. Hence we can rightly say that the bread of the Lord’s Supper, mentioned later in this chapter, is the body of Christ. Likewise, the man’s physical head in the worship service is the authority of Christ. In symbolic language the sign and the thing signified are so closely related that they are spoken of as if they were one and the same.

For those who argue that the relevance of this text only applies to the culture of the first century, thus women are free not to wear head coverings in corporate worship, I have yet to hear anyone say that men are therefore free to wear hats in the corporate worship service of the church. Yet to maintain that women today do not need to wear a sign of authority in corporate worship is to succumb to the spirit of our age in which men are abandoning their husbandly duties and women are seeking to overturn the created order.

Given that man is not to have his head covered with a veil or yarmulke in corporate worship when he prays there are circumstances in modern society which Paul does not anticipate. For example, what if a man is naturally bald and decides to wear a toupee? Should he remove his toupee when he goes to church on Sunday? Or, what if a woman wears a wig? Should it be considered a head covering as prescribed by Paul? The answer to these questions is rather simple. The toupee and the wig are intended to be a replacement of what is usually provided by nature. The wig or toupee is expected to be thought of as natural (though I have yet to see a toupee that didn’t look like a road kill) and therefore they do not have any sort of symbolic meaning. Therefore the woman ought to have the symbol of authority over her wig and bald men are free to wear dead rodents on their head and pretend that they look like natural hair. Paul’s concern isn’t about wearing a head cover in and of itself but rather the symbol and message which is conveyed by it. Therefore, if the wife appears to not have her head covered, because it looks as if the wig is her natural hair, then she ought to wear a head covering over the wig as a symbol of her authoritative head. Paul then goes on to write:

“But every woman who has her head uncovered while praying or prophesying, disgraces her head; for she is one and the same with her whose head is shaved. For if a woman does not cover her head, let her also have her hair cut off; but if it is disgraceful for a woman to have her hair cut off or her head shaved, let her cover her head.” (vv. 5-6)

Following the same pattern as the previous verse the woman (wife) who prays with her physical head uncovered disgraces her husband, her authoritative head. Therefore she is to have her head covered. Paul asserts that a woman (wife) praying without her head covered is as disgraceful as a woman who is shaved bald. Here Paul is making a somewhat hyperbolic and sarcastic statement as he does in Galatians 5:11-12:

“But I, brethren, if I preach circumcision, why am I still persecuted? Then the stumbling block of the cross has been abolished. Would that those who are troubling you would even mutilate themselves.”

In other words, if these Judaizers think circumcision justifies they ought to go all the way and castrate themselves. Likewise, if the woman (wife) does not cover her physical head and thereby disgraces her authoritative head (her husband) she ought to go all the way and disgrace herself by shaving off that which is a glory to her (cf. v. 15). She is a glory to her husband, and her hair is a glory to her. Her hair is not a glory to her husband. Rather, she herself is a glory to her husband. Man’s hair is not a glory to himself or to Christ, but rather man himself is a glory (image) of Christ as he states in the next verse. If the cover referred to here is her hair, as in verse 15, then Paul is making a nonsensical statement for he w

ould be saying, "If the woman doesn't have her physical head covered with hair she ought to cut off her hair." Obviously if her head isn't covered hair she doesn't have anything to cut off. In addition, if Paul is merely insisting that women are to have long hair then why the qualification, "while praying or prophesying"? If his concern is merely that women are not to have a butch hair cut then stating the context of corporate worship is irrelevant for it would be a shame for to have a man's hair style at any time. However, his concern is more than just women having short hair, his concern is that they are to have their glory covered while praying or prophesying in corporate worship. Paul then goes on to write:

"For a man ought not to have his head covered, since he is the image and glory of God; but the woman is the glory of man." (v. 7)

It is clear that Paul is saying that the Christian husband is not to wear a head covering over his hair when he prays in corporate worship. If the cover is hair in verses 5-6 then for a man to pray with hair on his head disgraces Christ. Therefore, according to this interpretation (if it be maintained consistently) all men ought to have their head shaved before they pray or prophesy in corporate worship. But unless one is willing to follow this interpretation then we must conclude that Paul cannot be referring to hair as the cover in these verses as he does later in verse 15.

Man is image and glory of God and the woman (wife) as a derivative of the man is the glory of her husband, thus women are created in the image of God as well (Genesis 1:27). Then Paul states the reason why this is so:

"For man does not originate from woman, but woman from man; for indeed man was not created for the woman's sake, but woman for the man's sake." (vv. 8-9)

Paul explains here the reason why men ought not to cover their head and women ought to have their head covered when praying or prophesying in corporate worship. The appeal is not to cultural convention but rather to the created order in Genesis. However, there are at times cultural practices referred to in the New Testament such as the humble service of foot washing (John 13:5-14). Such practices are not based on the created order but they arise out of a practical need (sandals and dirty feet) and it was a very lowly task. To wash someone else's feet was the humble act of a servant. In some cultures to show someone the bottom of your foot is a great insult because of the association of what is on the foot. For those who insist that Paul is merely speaking of a cultural custom which symbolizes headship, where is their modern counterpart? I can easily demonstrate numerous counterparts to foot washing as a service of humility (like changing someone's baby's diapers) But where is their modern cultural counterpart to head covering?

Paul discusses symbols in 1 Corinthians 10-11, the Lord's Supper and the head coverings. If you make the command merely cultural and only relevant to the initial recipients then the head covering will be dismissed as well as the command to examine oneself and discern the body of the Lord before partaking of the Lord's Supper. Thus the head covering is the symbol of authority and the bread and wine is the symbol of body and blood of Christ. Both of which are to be thoughtfully observed. Then Paul goes on to state a second reason why women ought to have their head covered:

"Therefore the woman ought to have a symbol of authority on her head, because of the angels." (v. 10)

If we were to translate this verse word for word it would read, "Therefore the woman ought to have a power (exousian) on her head, because of the angels." Frederic Godet translates this verse as, "For this cause ought the woman to have a sign of power on her head because of the angels." The word "symbol" or "sign" in most English translations is supplied by the context. If I were to say to you, "We're out of wine" and you were to respond, "I'll go to the store" even though you did not specifically state, "...and buy some wine" it would be understood from the context of the statement that the full meaning of what you said was, "I'll go to the store and buy some wine." Likewise, from the context of Paul's instructions concerning head coverings and later the symbols of bread and wine in the Lord's Supper we can supply "symbol" as he is not asserting that women are to have some sort of an electrical outlet on their head or a person of authority on their head.

The reference to angels seems somewhat enigmatic for Paul does explain the statement. Perhaps he is saying that the wife ought to be a testimony to the angelic beings who are witnessing the history of redemption or who are joining the worship service though they are unseen.

"However, in the Lord, neither is woman independent of man, nor is man independent of woman. For as the woman; and all things originate from God." (vv. 11-12)

The husband and wife are one, they are a compound unity. Though the woman (Eve) came from man (Adam), he himself

It came from God and therefore both are from God.

“Judge for yourselves: is it proper for a woman to pray to God with head uncovered?” (v. 13)

Just as we are to examine (the “dokimazeto,” test) ourselves when we partake of the Lord’s Supper (cf. 11:28) so also we are to judge (the “krino,” test, discern, judge, critique) what Paul is saying in light of Scripture. This does not mean that it is up to us to determine whether or not to obey Paul, but rather we are to think about these things and then follow him and his teaching.

“Does not even nature itself teach you that if a man has long hair, it is a dishonor to him?” (v. 14)

A man with long hair disgraces himself because he looks like a woman. The antecedent to the pronoun “him” is not Christ but the husband himself. Notice that Paul does not say, “If a man has long hair, it is a dishonor to Christ.” Paul is not making the point here which he made in verse 4, “Every man who has something on his head while praying or prophesying, disgraces his head (Christ).” Why then does Paul begin to talk about men with long hair and women with shaved heads? Was this a problem at the time? No, but rather he is pushing his somewhat sarcastic statement in 6 to its logical conclusion.

I won’t comment at length as to what Paul means by, “Does not even nature itself teach you?” but he is not making an assertion from natural law. Rather we are to consider how God has ordered creation. The main point is not to have a measuring tape to determine what is considered “long” but rather men are to look like men and women are to look like women. Androgyny is a sign of rebellion against God’s created order.

“...but if a woman has long hair, it is a glory to her? For her hair is given to her for a covering.” (v. 15)

Some might be tempted to take this verse and slap it together with verse 5 and then conclude that the “cover” referred to earlier is her hair. If that were so, then it would be a disgrace for men to have hair on their head when they pray. To assert that the cover in this verse is the same as that in verse 5 is an exegetical fallacy called “collapsing context” in which one takes two similar, or the same, words in two verses and slaps them together assuming they are referring to the same thing. What makes a distinction between the cover mentioned in verse 5 and in verse 15 is the pronoun “her.” Pronouns (he, she, we, they, it) are very small and can easily be overlooked. But it is extremely important to pay close attention to their antecedent (what they are referring to). The woman (wife) is a glory to her husband in verse 5 and thus her head is to be covered with a symbol. The woman’s hair is her glory and therefore it is to be long. But if she is going to disgrace her authoritative head then rather than displaying her glory in corporate worship (as a sign of rebellion) she ought to disgrace herself by shaving her physical head. Thus the woman has two covers: Her hair which is her glory and covers her physical head (her skull), and the cover over her hair which is a symbol of her glory to her authoritative head (her husband). These two covers ought not to be confused just as the two heads (skull/husband) ought not to be confused.

Others might be tempted to interpret this passage by comparing it to another which speaks of letting our light shine and not hiding it (Matthew 5:16). They then assert that the wife’s hair is her husband’s glory (rather than her glory) and therefore she ought to “let it shine” rather than “hide it under a bushel” (Matthew 5:15). However, in Matthew 5 Jesus is referring to doing good works of the law as He teaches them and not the displaying of hair as a supposed symbol of her husband’s glory. Again, her hair is her glory not her husband’s, she herself is her husband’s glory which she demonstrates by her humble submission signified by the symbol of authority over her head and hair.

“But if one is inclined to be contentious, we have no other practice, nor have the churches of God.” (v. 16)

This issue was not merely a local custom of Corinth, but rather it was the common practice of the entire Church. If anyone wants to contend with Paul’s exhortation he states in verse 1, “Be imitators of me, just as I also am of Christ.” Paul’s exhortation is based on his own leading example as he imitates his authoritative head who is Christ. Thus if you have a problem with Paul, you have a problem with Christ Himself.

Summary and Conclusion

Paul states that Christ is the authoritative head of the Christian husband and that the Christian husband is the glory of Christ. The husband is likewise the authoritative head of the wife and she is her husband’s glory. The woman’s hair on her physical head is her glory. Man is not to have his physical head covered when he prays in corporate worship for Christ.

It is his authoritative head. On the other hand, if a woman prays without her physical head covered as a symbol of authority she disgraces her authoritative head and ought to go all the way by removing her glory by shaving her physical head. The hair is her glory, not her husband's glory. She herself is her husband's glory. But if she is not going to wear a sign of authority then she ought to go all the way and remove her own glory rather than displaying it in the corporate worship service. Wives are to show submission to their husbands and have a sign of authority on their head. Hair is not a sign of authority; it is the wife's glory. The hair mentioned as a cover of her skull in verse 15 cannot be the same cover mentioned in verse 5 for Paul says man is not to have a cover when he prays. Therefore if hair is the cover in verse 5 then man ought to shave his head before he prays. Also, if the cover of the woman in verse 5 is her hair then Paul would be saying, "But her head isn't covered with hair she ought to not have her head covered with and shave it off." Such an interpretation is nonsense. Paul's exhortation in this passage is not a mere social custom for he appeals to the created order, not the various surrounding and contrasting local customs. If it were a mere local social custom of which its significance is to be maintained, what would its modern counterpart be if not a modern head covering? Finally, women are to have a symbol of authority on their head over their hair as a demonstration of submission to the husband as a testimony to the angels.

End Notes

Such issues include the meaning of "tradition" (paradosis) in verse 2, the continuation or cessation of prophesying today, and the mention of women prophesying in a corporate worship service whereas in 13:4 he states, "The women are to keep silent in the churches; for they are not permitted to speak."

Frederic Godet states, "He now passes to various subjects relating to public worship, beginning with that which lies nearest the domain of liberty: external demeanour of women in public worship." in "Commentary on First Corinthians" (Grand Rapids, MI: Kregel Pub., 1977), pg. 531.

For an interesting discussion on wordplay see Anthony J. Petrotta, "Lexis Ludens" San Francisco: Peter Lang Pub., 1991. pg. 1-8 and Scott. B. Nogel (ed), "Puns and Pundits: Word Play in the Hebrew Bible and Ancient Near Eastern Literature" Bethesda, Maryland: CDL Press, 2000.

Simon Kistemaker, "1 Corinthians" (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1993), pg. 365

Gordon Clark, "First Corinthians" (Jefferson, Maryland: The Trinity Foundation, 1975), pg. 170

Marvin R. Vincent, "Vincent's Word Studies of the New Testament" (Peabody, MA: Hendriksen Publishing), pg. 246 This is Charles Hodges interpretation in his commentary "I & II Corinthians" (Carlisle, PA: Banner of Truth Trust), pg. 208. Or in the paperback edition "Commentary on the First Epistle to the Corinthians" (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1994), pg. 208.

Unfortunately Leon Morris, an otherwise respectable theologian and scholar, seems to have fallen into this error as he asserts, "We may well hold that the fullest acceptance of the principle underlying this chapter does not require that in western lands in the twentieth century women must always wear hats to pray." in "The First Epistle of Paul to the Corinthians: An Introduction and Commentary" (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1987). However, I fail to see how living geographically in the western hemisphere and chronologically in the 20th century (or now the 21st) frees us from obeying Biblical commandments!

A yarmulke is a skullcap worn by Jewish men and boys, especially those adhering to Orthodox or Conservative Judaism.

As a man who speaks from experience, I think it is time for men to get over their vanity and own their baldness.

This not referring to women who for medical reasons (cancer surgery, brain surgery etc.) have to shave their head in order to be operated on by a surgeon. In addition, many commentators go on to argue why it is disgraceful for women to have shorn hair in that it resembled the pagan temple prostitutes of the day. However, that is not what Paul states is the reason for women to have long hair, which is that it is part of the natural order, i.e. they are to look like women and not men.

Gordon Clark for example argues that Paul is not arguing that men are not to have hats on their head while praying and that women are to wear veils. Rather, men are to have short hair and women are to have long hair. Thus he interprets "cover" in verse 5 and 15 to have the same referent, which is hair as he states, "...there is no need to discuss hats or veils. Although the eastern custom was veils or mantles for women, and although some words in the last ten verses seem to refer to such coverings, it is now become evident that hair, not hats, is the important matter. God has given women long hair instead of veils..." in "First Corinthians" (Jefferson, Maryland: The Trinity Foundation, 1975), pg. 175

Frederic Godet, "Commentary on First Corinthians" (Grand Rapids, MI: Kregel Pub., 1977), pg. 550.

Matt. 5:16. "Let your light shine before men in such a way that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father who is in heaven."

Re: Should women wear veils today? - posted by HeartSong, on: 2010/12/20 1:38

One day, awhile back, the LORD put it upon my heart to read three verses of scripture during the church service. While the reading of the scripture itself ended up to be quite a controversy, it was through this act that the LORD showed me that He would have my head to be covered during corporate prayer and prophesying. The night before the service, everywhere I went on the internet had pictures of women wearing hats - there were hats of all kinds of colors, shapes and sizes. I really didn't get the connection until someone mentioned that women were to remain silent in the church, and when I read 1 Corinthians 11:5 to refute their comment - "But every woman that prayeth or prophesieth with her head uncovered dishonoureth her head: for that is even all one as if she were shaven." - I remembered seeing all of the hats and I knew why the LORD had put them before me. :)

Re: Should women wear veils today? - posted by ginnyrose (), on: 2010/12/20 9:41

I wear one - all the time, except when sleeping.

I struggled a while with this issue. I did not want to look different from the rest of the women. In the end I submitted and have never regretted it.

This is not something a woman will naturally want to do...But such is faith.

ginnyrose

Re: - posted by bible4life (), on: 2010/12/20 13:55

This is usually one of the topics that most people in the church today just completely ignore along with biblical church discipline and correct way for tongues to be used in worship at church. I am happy to here both of you have seen what the scripture has said. People always speak about our freedom as Christians and this usually is to make excuses that none of things are for our culture today, but I look at it as watered down and a soft representation of scripture. We do live by grace, but there is still things we must obey to come in God's presence rightly. Sin is taken very serious in the New Testament look at the Lord's supper in Corinthians chapter 11, we are to examine ourselves before taking part. We need to take everything in the context of course, and not fall into legalism, but after studying the issue I believe Paul is saying exactly what we read that there must be covering in the religious worship because it is to show a sign of submission before the angels to their husbands and obeying of God's command. At least we can say to ourselves what grace God has bestowed upon us in that He even accepts us, so our attitude should be of great humility.

Re: - posted by HeartSong, on: 2010/12/20 14:30

If you think about it, the ONLY sacrifice in wearing a head covering is pride. After I submitted to the LORD on this issue, He made an occasion to test my commitment. The LORD had it that I go to a particular church service where there was a call for the congregation to come forward and pray for an individual that was sick. He had already put it on my heart to pray for this person so I knew I was to go forward - which I did, and of course I had to put on my covering because we were praying. First of all, having the congregation come forward to pray is not normally done in this church - and wearing a head covering is unheard of - and there I was, front and center for everyone to see. Later He had me do the same thing in front of a camera; again in the midst of a congregation that did not wear a covering - again front and center, this time for all the world to see.

Ah, the ways of our LORD. He certainly knows how to work these things out of us. :)

Re: - posted by HeartSong, on: 2010/12/20 14:42

One thing about wearing head coverings out in public is that it draws attention to the wearer. Back when I was trying to find other Christians I would watch the women that I saw wearing them in the stores. But I determined that most of them were not Christians because they never smiled - in fact most of them looked down right miserable. Not long ago I felt the urge to witness to one of them, who I happened to see in three different stores, but I was clueless as to what to say. It felt as if there was a huge wall between her and myself.

Over time, the LORD has had it that I come in contact with several groups of women that continually wear head coverings. These women have such a joy in their hearts that I am sure many people are drawn to Christ just by seeing them smile.

Re: head coverings - posted by Lysa (), on: 2010/12/20 14:49

Quote:

of course I had to put on my covering because we were praying.

several groups of women that continually wear head coverings.

So this is not something you wear all the time?

I've seen women put scarves over their heads while praying in church; do you wear a scarf or something like the Brethren women wear?

Just asking...

God bless,
Lisa

Re: - posted by HeartSong, on: 2010/12/20 14:59

I wear a scarf when I am praying corporately with others. I do not wear one when it is just me and the LORD and for some reason it does not seem to happen when I am just with other women.

I do not know what the Brethren women wear.

Re: Should women where veils today? - posted by narrowpath, on: 2010/12/20 15:23

I believe it is scriptural for women to wear a head covering in public Christian gatherings and my wife practices it.

1.Cor 10For this cause ought the woman to have power on her head because of the angels.

I believe this verse relates back right to Genesis when Eve was tempted by Satan who is a fallen angel. Had Eve submitted to Adam and asked him about his opinion whether or not to eat the fruit, perhaps Adam would have resisted and we would all still live in paradise. The practice of head covering symbolizes the conscious obedience of the women to honor her husband and not to succumb to Satan's temptation. Satan's tactic was to tempt the women, for he knew that she was the easier prey.

A women honoring her husband and submitting to him is very precious in the sight of God.

Re: - posted by StarofGOD (), on: 2010/12/20 18:40

What do you all think this verse is saying?

1 Cor 11:16But if any man seem to be contentious, we have no such custom, neither the churches of God.

In other translations, it's worded differently.

NIV for example:

16 If anyone wants to be contentious about this, we have no other practice—nor do the churches of God.

- Michelle

Re: - posted by ginnyrose (), on: 2010/12/20 21:13

Michelle,

I always understood this passage to say this is an issue we do not argue about: the women veil their heads when praying and prophesying and the men bare their heads when doing the same.

EDIT: How do you understand it?

ginnyrose

Re: - posted by StarofGOD (), on: 2010/12/20 21:28

Yes, I like that translation. :)

The way the KJV puts it, kind of makes it sound like you should say "we don't have this custom at all."

Thanks.

Re: - posted by bible4life (), on: 2010/12/21 5:23

Basically it is saying that this is the order that we are suppose to have in the church of God and that there is not another way about it, but what I just spoke of. Some people think the veil wearing was for that culture and time period, but I think Paul does away with that view when he says it is for the angels. This is something that still should be kept today. Yes we are living in grace, but there are certain commands and proper ways to enter worship before a Holy God, you read that we must examine ourselves too before we partake of the Lord's supper, because this is something holy before God. Galatians tells us to not let our freedom give us an occasion to the flesh.

Re: - posted by ginnyrose (), on: 2010/12/21 7:39

Quote:

-----Yes we are living in grace, but

Just a comment about 'grace'.

How you understand it makes a lot of difference how one approaches NT commands. Are they suggestions or commands? Big difference. A lot of it depends on how you define 'grace'. Is it license to live as my natural nature dictates? Or, is it enabling power of God to live for Him?

As I study the NT, the Acts of the Apostles, we see grace functioning as being the enabling power of God given to his children to live for Him, to be able to live far beyond themselves, their own strength. Consider Peter - that wimp who denied the LORD but only a few weeks later stood up boldly and preached. The difference was the enabling power of the Holy Spirit - and somewhere in this mix is grace. It is hard to separate the two.

Just my two cents...

ginnyrose

Re: - posted by mguldner (), on: 2010/12/21 7:47

I have never been really up on this topic but kind of understand the foundation of it, its about submission correct? May I ask does God want inner submission or outer submission more? I understand the symbolism but feel there is a greater need of inner submission than outer. If a woman wears a cover to show submission but isn't submitted in heart then does the veil do much good? Just some thoughts on the subject.

Re: - posted by rainydaygirl, on: 2010/12/21 8:04

Quote:
-----May I ask does God want inner submission or outer submission more? I understand the symbolism but feel there is a greater need of inner submission than outer. If a woman wears a cover to show submission but isn't submitted in heart then does the veil do much good?

That was kind of my thoughts on this matter too. I have prayed about this on several occasions and while I do not feel convicted to wear head covering I do respect these other ladies who follow the convictions the Lord places on their hearts.

rdg

Re: - posted by ginnyrose (), on: 2010/12/21 8:30

Scripture teaches us that OUT of the Abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh. What one does reveals to others what is in the heart.

Having said all this we are also very much aware of the problem of hypocrisy - doing things to make people think one thing other than what actually is. This is a problem that dogs each one of us. Have we learned to be transparent before our brothers and sisters? How honest are we? Are we willing to submit to the scrutiny of our brothers and sisters in the LORD? Are we willing to submit to the LORD as Jesus did to the Father? May I suggest that to be submissive in heart will be followed by acts of submission.

Matthew, the issue is much more than submission, it is also about the Angels. The WORD does not share how this works out in the life of a veiled woman, but I suspect that a godly woman who veils knows something about it on the personal level and it is sacred to her.

The symbol of the veiled head for the woman and the bare head for the male teaches us something about headship. It is all tied together, one cannot separate it.

It is a very interesting topic, one that leaves me feeling awed by how much Jesus loves me as a female, that I am not a second rate creature but loved by God. Can't get more special than that, can you?

ginnyrose

Re: - posted by mguldner (), on: 2010/12/21 8:50

Amen Sandra.

I definitely know very little about the covering of the head. I suppose my ignorance is great in this area. Perhaps I will do a deeper study on the subject to better understand.

Re: Should women wear veils today?, on: 2010/12/21 9:18

There is a detailed post from earlier this year by Savannah relevant to this discussion, here:

http://www.sermonindex.net/modules/newbb/viewtopic.php?forum=35&topic_id=33536&post_id=250472&viewmode=thead&order=0

Re: - posted by learnermike (), on: 2010/12/21 19:26

My wife does. She started to about two years ago. We had come to a place where we wanted to do what the Bible said. She brought it up to me one day and asked if I thought she should cover. I said "No, no, your hair is your covering." She said, "Well Paul sure does go through some effort to talk about it it would seem redundant for him to change at the end and then say "your hair is your covering". I said "I'm just not sure."

We left it there and then we met a few people that covered. I was asking about it and this brother pulled out his Bible and tried to show me, but I just did not see it.

We had been processing missions in dangerous countries and we were "seriously" processing the possibility of dying for Jesus. We had been in a "feel good" church for a while and were sensing our need to die to ourselves (literally or internally).

I started looking into the covering subject and I was looking at the Scriptures carefully one night and then I saw it! 1 Cor 11:6 For if a woman does not cover her head, let her also have her hair cut off...

I thought, "she had hair!" "and it was not considered the covering that Paul was referring to" "he is talking about an additional covering"

And then Paul says in vs 16 But if one is inclined to be contentious, we have no other practice, nor have the churches of God.

So we "took a deep breathe", and wanting to do what the Bible said even though almost no one else where we lived in Oklahoma City was doing it, we decided to do it.

I tell you, I believe for sure that a clean outside and a filthy inside will in no way gain a person access to the Kingdom of God (Period!) But we want to love the Lord in our hearts and in our actions.

I also tell you for just an "mere external thing" it really stirred things up. It brought many vanity issues up to the surface that my wife and I did not even know were there. It got my wife on path of applying the attributes described for Christian women in the New Test, by Paul and Peter.

It has been a sign to everyone around us that we want to stand for God's Word no matter what the majority is doing. (we have a long way to go in that one).

My wife and I have never had more opportunities to talk about the Lord to people. My wife is a walking tract.

It has helped to establish the order described in Corinthians in our home.

It has also been a point of contention with our family. Most of our family profess Christianity, but when My wife made that change it rocked the boat a little. My wife's family threatened to have nothing to do with our family.

They have settled down since. But it also opened my eyes to see that not every "Christian" looks at God's Word the same; as far as how authoritative it is or how symbolic it is or how literal it is.

For us, we don't ever want to hear God say something like why didn't you just do what I said? Why did you listen to men instead of my Word. Why did you listen to a theologian instead of my Words?

Ok that being said, we were not in this place 3 years ago. and we have so far to go as far as considering ourselves obedient to God's Word.

I believe that is the important part, being obedient! Being obedient to the Word of God.

I do not condemn those who do not cover. I believe it is right and I believe it not only an external thing, but in our lives it has seemed to be a place of dying to ourselves.

God Bless You

Following Him is what is important, not following man, or preachers and not my words. He has the words of eternal life!

If you want to see a picture of my wife you can go to our blog <http://truelightelectric.blogspot.com/>

Moderators if you don't want me to do that i will edit the post and delete the link. Thank you

Re: - posted by ginnyrose (), on: 2010/12/21 21:02

Mike,

I checked out your blog, read it and saw the pics of your family. All are worth a read. Your testimony there as well as the one above is inspiring.

Quote:

-----My wife is a walking tract.

Absolutely true. Obedience provides one with many opportunities to share the Gospel.

Thanks for sharing.

ginnyrose

Re: , on: 2010/12/24 21:56

Would you agree that it is referring to married women. When you get married you become one body, and the women comes under the headship of man, and both under the headship of Jesus Christ?

I think this is one of those things which tends to get written off as "cultural", when it is more about the fall of mankind in the garden. I think it is something I want to follow, but what is the teaching for singletons?

Re: - posted by StarofGOD (), on: 2010/12/24 22:44

Quote:

-----Would you agree that it is referring to married women. When you get married you become one body, and the women comes under the headship of man, and both under the headship of Jesus Christ?

I would think not because otherwise it would probably read 'husband' not 'man'.

Re: - posted by sermonindex (), on: 2010/12/24 22:54

Quote:

-----One day, awhile back, the LORD put it upon my heart to read three verses of scripture during the church service. While the reading of the scripture itself ended up to be quite a controversy, it was through this act that the LORD showed me that He would have my head to be covered during corporate prayer and prophesying. The night before the service, everywhere I went on the internet had pictures of women wearing hats - there were hats of all kinds of colors, shapes and sizes. I really didn't get the connection until someone mentioned that women were to remain silent in the church, and when I read 1 Corinthians 11:5 to refute their comment - "But every woman that prayeth or prophesieth with her head uncovered dishonour eth her head: for that is even all one as if she were shaven." - I remembered seeing all of the hats and I knew why the LORD had put them before me. :)

Dear sister,

A tremendous testimony. I believe simply the scriptures show this as an act of obedience and its symbolism speaks of heavenly things and is important. I personally am not against sisters who will wear the "covering" all the time, which I believe

veiling can be a tremendous expression of heart modesty.

But what is biblical and definitely needful in meetings is for women to have a covering. Oh may the church in North America simply come to a place of obedience on these issues. The much more important realities are heart realities and holiness which is the Spirit of Christ. But this is one scriptural outward expression.

There are many legalistic and religious groups that require head covering but it must be an expression of loving obedience to the Spirit of Christ and not men's legalistic requirement.

Re: - posted by twayneb (), on: 2010/12/25 10:23

Quote:
-----What do you all think this verse is saying? 1 Cor 11:16 But if any man seem to be contentious, we have no such custom, neither the churches of God. In other translations, it's worded differently.

There are several things Paul says in the first part of this chapter that are interesting. He shows the head covering of a woman as representing her husband's authority over her, but no such covering for the man although he is under a greater authority (God). He goes on to equate long hair for the woman as equivalent to the scarf. But then he makes a statement that, in every translation I have other than the NIV (which I usually hold pretty loosely anyhow) he states that believers (the church) does not hold to this tradition. There are several times in Paul's writings when he steps back and says something like, "Let me throw in my opinion which is not the word of the Lord, but I have His permission to say this." (example, 1 Cor 7) It was Jewish tradition that women, and men too I believe, pray under shawls. But here Paul says men do not need covering. Yet he states that that what he is stating is a custom that the church does not hold. Assuredly this was not something most Gentiles were accustomed to. I personally don't believe this is a command from the Lord that women wear head covering. However, I do some things myself that, although not commanded to do, yet I do them out of love and devotion to the Lord. So in my opinion, if a woman wants to have her head covered and does it out of desire for the Lord, I applaud it and admire her devotion. If she does it out of legal obligation, I would not applaud it, it is error in my opinion for her relationship to God is then based on law.

Re: - posted by ginnyrose (), on: 2010/12/27 9:17

Travis,

If what you said is true, why did the early church women wear veils? Why did all Christian women wear a head covering until in recent years? The early church fathers taught it...

Travis, one always runs into trouble when we work to reason "Yea, hath God said?"

ginnyrose

Re: The Head Covering - by Watchman Nee - posted by StarofGOD (), on: 2010/12/30 0:33

I just came across this article, and it is probably very well the best article that I have personally ever read on this topic. Watchman Nee goes through probably nearly every question one may have on it. Though it has been posted on this forum before, I thought I would re-post for this thread.

God bless!

The Head Covering - by Watchman Nee

When the Lord Jesus was on earth, on the one hand He came to be Savior of the world, to deliver men from sin. This is according to the system of grace. On the other hand, God sent Him to the world that through the work of the cross He might establish His own authority and set up His kingdom so that the heavens might rule on the earth. This is the system of government. Its work will continue until the power of the devil is destroyed and the kingdom and the new heaven and the new earth are brought in.

Many hold to a fundamental error: they foolishly maintain that grace can set government aside. The truth is that what God does in grace never alters God's government.... Grace only complements government.... Grace is for the purpose of redeeming and restoring those who are insubordinate and rebellious so that they may be subject to God's governmental system.... Grace can never nullify government; rather, grace enables people to obey government. May I say with all seriousness that grace gives us strength to be subject to government.

Head Covering and God's Government

The matter of head covering belongs to God's government. For those who do not know God's government, it is impossible to exhort them to have their heads covered. They will not be able to understand how much is involved in this matter. But those who have seen God's government in God's revealed Word are able to appreciate the tremendous connection between head covering and government.

The meaning of head covering is: I submit myself to God's government: I accept God's appointed position: I dare not nullify His government by the grace I have received; I do not even dare to think about it; on the contrary, I accept God's government. As Christ accepts God as His head, so should every man accept Christ as his head. Likewise, woman should representatively accept man as her head. In covering the head, the woman signifies that she is not head, that she is as if she has no head—for it is covered.

God calls upon the sisters to show this arrangement. It is through the sisters that God's governmental system is to be displayed. It is the sisters who are responsible to have the sign of obedience on their heads. God specifically requires women to have their head covered when praying or prophesying. Why? Because they ought to know God's government when they come before Him. In going before God to pray for people or in going before people to prophesy for God, whether in praying or in prophesying, whether in that which goes to God or in that which comes from God, in whatever is related to God, head covering is demanded. The purpose is to manifest the government of God.

Today woman has a sign of authority on her head because of the angels, that is, as a testimony to the angels. Only the sisters in the church can testify to this, for the women of the world know nothing of it. Today when the sisters have the sign of authority on their heads, they bear the testimony that, "I have covered my head so that I do not have my own head, for I do not seek to be head. My head is veiled, and I have accepted man as head, and to accept man as head means that I have accepted Christ as head and God as head. But some of you angels have rebelled against God." This is what it meant "because of the angels."

I have on my head a sign of authority. I am a woman with my head covered. This is a most excellent testimony to the angels, to the fallen and to the unfallen ones. No wonder Satan persistently opposes the matter of the head covering. It really puts him to shame. We are doing what he has failed to do. What God did not receive from the angels, He now has from the church.

When many of the sisters in the church take the place given to women and learn to cover their heads, they send out an unspoken word of testimony to the angels in the air, to the effect that God has obtained in the church what He desires. Because of this, woman must have on her head a sign of authority, a testimony to the angels.

Let us remember that although in practice it is only the woman who has her head covered, yet, in reality, Christ has His head covered before God and every man has his head covered before Christ. Why is it that God only requires woman to have the practice of having her head covered? This indeed is marvelous, for it involves a very deep principle.

When a sister covers her head, she is standing before God on the basis of Christ's position before God and man's position before Christ. God wants the woman to cover her head in order to manifest His government on earth. This privilege falls only to the woman. She does not cover her head merely for her own self; she does it representatively. It is because she represents man before Christ and Christ before God. So when a woman covers her head before God, it is just the same as if Christ covered His head before God.... Man and woman should have no head since Christ is the head. If one's head is not covered, there will be two heads. Between God and Christ, one head must be covered; so too must it be between man and woman and so between Christ and every man. If one head is not covered, the result will be that there are two heads, and God's government does not allow two heads. If God is head, then Christ is not; if Christ is head, then man is not; if man is head, then woman is not.

Regarding the Contentious

So, for man to be uncovered and woman covered is a charge that only Christian apostles have given. It is a practice the churches of God alone hold, for it is different from both the Jewish and the Gentile custom. It is something few observe and understand, and it is from God.

All the apostles believed that woman should have her head covered. If anyone today professes to be an apostle and yet does not believe in the head covering of woman, he cannot be counted as one of the apostles. He must be taken as an outsider. There is no such practice among the apostles of not believing this. If any church does not believe, Paul's answer is, "We have no such custom, neither the churches of God." None of the local churches which the apostles had visited had any such custom as arguing about woman's head covering. So the answer to any who argue is that there is no such practice as arguing about it. Paul is willing to reason in a few earlier verses, but after that he reasons no more. If any seems to be contentious, Paul says no apostle will approve of that one's opinion. If anyone wants to argue, no church will agree with his view. You are outside the fellowship of the churches as well as of the apostles.

Therefore, let our sisters cover their heads in the church when praying or prophesying. Why? To manifest that in the church God has obtained that which He has failed to get in the world, in the universe, and among the angels.

Re: - posted by HeartSong, on: 2010/12/30 1:22

Thank you sister! Just a short while ago I heard Zac Poonen talking about showing meekness as an example to the angels, and having missed the first part of his sermon, I was unclear as to what he was talking about. So I asked the LORD to show me and up pops your post explaining it all - only in regards to head covering - which I needed to understand also . GOD is good!

Re: - posted by nasekom (), on: 2010/12/30 7:03

Good article. Good explanation of why women are to be covered. My wife does cover her head, but I'd like to show her that article and discuss it together for deeper understanding of this subject. Thanks.

Re: - posted by Delboy (), on: 2010/12/30 7:07

Here is a link to a good concise book written by GW North available in pdf from Ron Bailey's site. Just click on the download link. http://mp3.biblebase.com/details_44.html see what you think.

Re: - posted by StarofGOD (), on: 2010/12/30 11:49

Praise the Lord sister Laura!

Re: Head Uncovering and Head Covering - posted by philologos (), on: 2010/12/30 14:40

Someone drew my attention to the fact that there are materials on my Biblebase website which are relevant to this discussion.

I think the article at the beginning of this thread is very well reasoned. I think some additions might be made and I am not sure whether the writer is suggesting that only married women should be covered in the meeting of the saints when her husband is present.

While I was in Canada a couple of years ago I felt led to preach on the topic. Some of the additions I would make to the article here surface in that message. You can listen to it here.

http://mp3.biblebase.com/download_556.html

Articles and Sermons :: Should women where veils today?

I think it is very significant that the opening section of this passage relates not to women covering their heads but to men uncovering theirs. If we begin with the question 'why are men forbidden to cover their heads in a gathering of the church?' we might get some powerful hints as to why women must do so.

edit: ps this message was given to a men's meeting in Abbotsford, Canada.