

## ***Notes on I Corinthians 11:2-16***

by Jack W. Langford

### ***"HEADSHIP / HEAD COVERING / LONG HAIR"***

(Following generally the New King James text unless otherwise indicated)

#### ***FOREWORD***

In the process of time I have collected many notes and an abundance of information on the subject of *"head-covering"* as found in I Corinthians, chapter eleven. I have done this because of a desire to be accurate and truthful, both in my acceptance of facts about the subject, and for the purpose of a discriminating ministry in the past on this subject to the Christian family.

Many of us realize that there is a wide variety of conflicting opinions about this issue. There is also a variety of practices amongst professing Christian groups as a consequence. In a contrary manner, many are totally indifferent to the issue. They could care less, and that carelessness shows up very obviously in their lack of discipline concerning the principles of modesty and godliness. On the other hand, and perhaps amazing to those who are careless, I have found this to be a very interesting and profitable study and vitally interrelated to other issues in the Scriptures.

In the process of studying and contemplating this subject, I came to realize that in certain areas I needed to make adjustments for myself in what I came to see as a correction on an aspect of the issue. However, this adjustment on certain verses has only furthered my appreciation of the fundamental basic instructions which I have believed from the beginning. My basic position has not changed; neither has the outcome of that position. One might observe that my "route" to my conclusions has changed, but not the conclusion. And I think you will find this helpful.

I will present the fruit of my study in a careful and straightforward manner. I am sure there is much more to learn. However, I know that much of the material will be of important interest and spiritually stimulating to conscientious Christians. Regardless of whether you agree with me or not, I would hope you do not discard this material as unworthy of further consideration. Many people are so easily satisfied with "their church's" teaching that they have no use for any criticism of it. The call to careful examination by the apostle Paul, in his very first epistle (I Thess. 5:21), is an exhortation that should characterize the lives of Christians who want to honor Christ in all things. Of similar importance is Paul's exhortation in II Corinthians 13:5, "Examine yourselves as to whether you are in the faith. Test yourselves."

Jack W. Langford, August 23, 2006

#### ***INTRODUCTION***

This section in Paul's epistle deals with a disorder in the Corinthian assembly that affected the ageless principle of "headship," which principle had been ordained of God from the very beginning at the fall of man and woman in the garden of Eden. God had said, "...your desire shall be for your husband, and he shall rule over you" (Gen. 3:16). This principle of headship was violated by some of the Corinthian saints being negligent in the practice of "head-coverings" when such was in order and demanded by circumstances. As is indicated in the text, the disorder could occur either when a man would have his head covered when he should not, or when a woman did not have her

head covered when she should have. Thus, in addressing the issue the apostle Paul will discuss the subjects of "*headship*," "*head-covering*" and "*long hair*" as they apply to the issue. This will bring the saints into a proper understanding and application of truths relative to what their practice should be.

Of course, as these instructions are read in this twentieth century, they may seem to be archaic and difficult to understand in light of modern customs and practices—even among professing Christians. Therefore, as one reads and studies these verses, it behooves him to make sure that he correctly understands several things before he can expect to properly apply the instructions to our situation today. First of all, we must make sure we understand the problem. Obviously, if we don't really understand the problem, then we will be creating a "problem," and will never be able to understand the solution. We must also properly understand exactly what Paul is saying. We don't want to put words and ideas in Paul's instructions that are not there. There are many suppositions that individuals have placed upon these instructions that were never intended by the author. In addition, it will be very profitable to understand the principles from the Hebrew Scriptures which will support Paul's instructions. In a very definite sense, this is fundamental in order to understand the basis upon which Paul will build his instructions. And lastly, we must properly understand what is applicable to us today, as we walk in the "church which is Christ's body," and as a testimony for Christ in our present world. Most certainly, as we read through Paul's instructions we will be thinking of all these questions and be answering them as we go along. So, with prayer for the Holy Spirit's leading, let us read the passage, believing that this is a vital part of God's instruction for our profit.

I can also assure you at the outset, that these instructions are not the narrow private views of the apostle Paul. Nor is Paul anti-feminine as some often charge. Such is not the characteristic of Paul. He is Christ's spokesman for the church of Jesus Christ throughout this dispensation—"The things which I write unto you are the commandments of the Lord" (I Cor 14:37). One either believes that or he doesn't. In addition, Paul's arguments are not taken from some contemporary practices, but from principles that can be found from the beginning of man's earthly sojourn, and continue right on through even to the end of this age.

### ***TRADITIONS -- DIVINE OR HUMAN??***

Chapter 11, verse two, will properly begin this section.

2. "*Now I praise you, brethren, that you **remember me** in all things and keep the **traditions** just as I delivered them to you.*"

The early church was given *traditions* or customs by divine revelation through the apostles, in particular through Paul, the apostle to the Gentiles. We say Paul in particular, because of his unique position in relationship to the divine revelations given to him about the subject of this dispensation of Grace (Rom. 11:13; 15:15,16; Gal. 1:11,12; Eph. 3:1-12; etc.). Thus Paul's words, "*that you **remember me** in all things*," point to that God-ordained position in which the Head of the church placed Paul "as a wise master builder" (I Cor. 3:10). As Moses was the mediator of the Law to Israel, so it was that the apostle Paul mediated to the churches the factors that made Christianity a new and distinct movement apart from Judaism in the world. The same is stated in I Cor. 4:17, where Paul says that Timothy "will remind you of *my ways in Christ*."

These Divine *traditions* (such as Acts 16:4; II Thess. 2:15; 3:6 & I Cor. 14:37) are to stand in total contrast to mere "traditions of men" (Col. 2:8; Mark 7:3,5,8,9 & 13). Mere human traditions, in

most cases, did violence to the Word of God. These *traditions* by the apostles are revealed in the full body of Paul's letters as well as in the other epistles and Acts. They do not come by oral "hand-me-downs" as taught by the Roman Catholic Church—which traditions are nothing but a garbled confusion of Biblical statements, mixed with many totally pagan customs and mere human ideas.

These inspired *traditions* cover, either directly or indirectly, every aspect of our new lives as we live for Christ in the midst of a very ungodly world. The life and conduct of God's people today should match the teachings and doctrine deposited for and to that divine organization that Christ is building on earth today. Now, as this verse (2) which we just read indicates, the Corinthians had actually kept and observed these traditions, and Paul commends them for it. However, here is one which Paul will take up that they needed reinforcement on—

### ***THE HEADSHIP PRINCIPLE***

3. *"But I want you to know that the **head** of every man is Christ, the **head** of the woman is the man, and the **head** of Christ is God."*

Headship actually has reference to *authority*. There are levels of authority in both the heavenly sphere and the earthly. The three levels of headship or authority are: 1.) God (the Father) is the *head* of Christ; 2.) Christ is the *head* of the man; and 3.) the man is the *head* of the woman. The first and third orders of headship are interesting to note and compare. The fact that the Father is the Head of Christ does not mean that Christ is inferior to the Father. It simply means there is order of authority. Christ takes instructions from the Father. He is submissive to the Father. Christ does the Father's will. Yet men are to honor the Son even as they honor the Father (John 5:23). In a similar way, the fact that a man is the head of the woman does not mean that the woman is inferior to the man. On the contrary, it simply means that there is order. The woman is to take her instructions and guidance from the man. She is to be submissive to her husband. She will do the will of her husband. Yet, as we will read in this passage, both the man and the woman are "one in the Lord." To honor one is to honor the other. The husband is to be "giving honor to the wife, as to the weaker vessel, and as being heirs together of the grace of life" (I Pet. 3:7).

This order of headship or authority is fundamental and basic to the immediate problem Paul is dealing with at Corinth. The problem of the Corinthian disorder was to fail, in a specific area, to reflect in a demonstrative way this headship or authority that God had instituted. Obviously, if there is such an order of headship instituted by God, then it follows that there must be ways and means of demonstrating or not demonstrating that order.

### ***WHEN THE MAN IS OUT OF ORDER***

4. *"Every man praying or prophesying having **his head covered**, dishonors his head."*

There are actually several questions that arise from this statement. First would be, what does it mean to be praying or prophesying? I hope to answer that more carefully, especially as it relates to the woman, as we go along in this study. A second question would be, what does it mean to have *one's head covered*? Following this we could ask, how would this dishonor his head or headship? Now actually I am going to answer all three of these questions. However, I will be taking up the second question directly and pointedly first. That seems to be the one that gives most people a

problem, and needs to be answered right up front.

*What does the expression, "his head covered," actually mean?*

At the very outset Paul uses a word that may, or may not, give us trouble in understanding what he is saying and that is this word "*covered*." What does one having "*his head covered*" actually mean? Paul uses the expression as if he were taking it for granted that the Corinthians know exactly what he is talking about. Paul never pauses to explain it. He simply continues to use it as he continues with his message. He speaks of being "covered" and "uncovered." This means, on the face of it, that Paul is expecting the Corinthians to be following his thoughts with continuity and understanding, and not with questions about what he has said for the last ten or twelve verses. Furthermore, it would be absolutely ridiculous to think a person hearing this passage read, as the Corinthian church was hearing it read to them, was to wait ten or twelve verses later in the message in order to understand what Paul is talking about in the earlier verses. In fact, it would be very awkward and distracting as to what they are trying to comprehend afterwards, to be focusing at the same time on understanding what they had been hearing some ten or twelve verses earlier. Therefore, it will be most appropriate, at the outset, that we know what he is talking about.

One of the most troublesome problems, which plagues many Christians in reading and discussing this chapter, is just what constitutes, or does not constitute, a "*head covering*." The reason for this is that it must be noted in the early verses of this section where the covering of the head is mentioned (verses 4,5,6,7 & 13) that Paul's words do not define or question what constitutes a "*covering*." So, I say again, it seems to be taken for granted by Paul in this text that this "head-covering" is a known factor. At least that must be the honest impression one receives as he reads these early verses. And quite frankly, we shall see that it *was a known factor!*

Many have presumed (including myself at one time) that we simply don't know what this "*covering*" is, that Paul is talking about in the next nine or ten verses, until we come to verse fifteen where Paul mentions the long hair. Statements have been made like the following—"Now, at this verse we don't yet know what this covering is." I have one Bible study before me, which makes this precise statement over and over again until he finally reaches verse 15. One must realize that if this presumption be true, then it has created several problems that are not at all indicated by an unbiased reading of the text. For instance, if we don't know what *covering* Paul is talking about as we read these verses, or as the Corinthians were hearing them read, then a person really has no way of properly or completely understanding the thoughts Paul is expressing, or how one could apply this teaching in the intervening passages as they were being read. We must therefore honestly ask ourselves, "Is this complication, suspicion or awkwardness actually intended by Paul?" I doubt it very much. In fact, I am sure it is not! This awkwardness is actually the result of our own supposition that Paul does not tell us what the covering is until verse 15.

In addition, if we presume that we cannot know what *covering* Paul is talking about until verse fifteen, then we are presuming that Paul's terminology, about a man or woman *covering their head*, is either unknown or else used here for the first time in the sacred Scriptures. This presumption is most certainly false, because we will find that this is not an uncommon expression used in the Hebrew Scriptures. The Scriptures talk very plainly about "*covering*" and "*uncovering the head*." We shall see that the statements Paul makes are not something new and unique to the Scriptures, nor was it something new and unusual even in the Gentile world.

Therefore, as an important preliminary, let us read and familiarize ourselves with some Scriptural examples of having one's "*head covered*" in preparation to reading Paul's words. If we do this, then we could realize that the Corinthians were understanding from the very beginning exactly what Paul was saying and needed no later explanation.

Note the following examples from the Hebrew Scriptures:

II Samuel 15:30 "So David went up by the Ascent of the Mount of Olives, and wept as he went up; and he had **his head covered** and went barefoot. And all the people who were with him **covered their heads** and went up, weeping as they went up."

What is the meaning of this sad pilgrimage by king David and the multitude of people who were with him? A look at the context will tell us that David's son, Absalom, had usurped the kingdom out of the hand of his father, and David and his people were fleeing in sorrow. Both men and women "*covering their heads*," obviously meant that they all put a **garment** over their heads on this occasion as a symbol of shame and sorrow. Furthermore, this was obviously a typical demonstration in the custom of the Jewish people. Even if the women had long hair they still would be "*covering their heads*" with a garment. Having long hair was something entirely different than "*covering one's head*." Many of the women who were traveling in this group could initially have long hair, but also have **uncovered** heads. Somewhere during the beginning of their trek they placed garments upon their heads *to cover them*. Now this is the same, exact language Paul is using!

Jeremiah 14:3&4 "...They were ashamed and confounded and **covered their heads**." Because the ground was parched, for their was no rain in the land, and the plowmen were ashamed; they **covered their heads**."

This passage is self-explanatory in its context (see verses 1-4). Because of Judah's disobedience, God had sent drought and famine to their land. Their land was barren and there was no water. The act of "*covering their heads*" was a demonstration of their shame and confusion at the lack of water and productivity. Again we see that this type of demonstration was not uncommon in Israel among the Jewish people. Most certainly, this expression never was understood to mean that the people or the men stopped and *grew long hair*. It plainly and simply meant that they "*covered their heads*" with a **garment**, in this case, as an act of humiliation.

Esther 6:12; & 7:8 "... But Haman hurried to his house, mourning and with **his head covered**." & "...they **covered Haman's face**."

Even the Gentiles sometimes "*covered their heads*" with a **garment** in shame, sorrow or humiliation. Wicked Haman had been embarrassed and horrified by the exaltation of Mordecai the Jew. In addition, on the second day of the feast set by Queen Esther, wicked Haman was exposed in his plot to kill all the Jews. He fell down on Queen Esther's couch pleading for mercy and the king is violently indignant so that the king's servants or guards immediately "*covered Haman's face*." In both these cases it obviously meant a **garment** was placed over the head. There is no expositor of any of these passages from the Hebrew Scriptures that would contend otherwise.

Psalms 140:7 "O God the Lord, the strength of my salvation,  
You have **covered my head** in the day of battle."

Here, the expression, "You (God) have *covered my head in the day of battle*," is a simple

metaphoric use of the expression. The Jews sang this song, which speaks of God's divine protection over His people when they went into battle. It is as if He intervened and *shielded their heads with supernatural armor* from the death stroke of the enemy. Thus once again, the expression "*to cover the head*" simply meant to place a garment (or some other item as specified) over the head.

Even as the expression is used of a woman in particular, it meant a physical **garment** was placed over their heads or faces. This was not necessarily done for humiliation but rather for propriety or even concealment.

Genesis 24:65 "...(Rebekah) So she took a *veil and covered herself*."

Genesis 38:14&15 "So she (Tamar) took off her widow's garments, *covered herself with a veil* and wrapped herself... When Judah saw her, he thought she was a harlot, because she had *covered her face*."

A quick look into a Bible concordance will demonstrate that there are many references to coverings in a general sense. For instance King David, "*covered* his face" (II Sam. 19:4). Of Israel it was said, "Shame *covered* our faces" (Jer. 51:51). And again, "their nakedness shall be *uncovered*" (Isa 47:3), etc.

Some have proposed the following example although it is not entirely accurate. It is true that God had ordered the priests of Israel to wear hats during their duties in the Tabernacle and later the Temple. Leviticus 8: 9 & 13 says, "And he (Moses) put the **turban** on his (Aaron's) head...then Moses brought Aaron's sons and put tunics on them, girded them with sashes, and put **hats** on them..." Then Moses gave the following specific instructions in case some catastrophe came upon them or to their families:

Lev. 10:6 "And Moses said to Aaron, and to Eleazar and Ithamar, his sons, 'Do not *uncover your heads* nor tear your clothes, lest you die, and wrath come upon all the people..."

Lev. 21:10 "He who is the High Priest among his brethren, on whose head the anointing oil was poured and who is consecrated to wear the garments, shall not *uncover his head* nor tear his clothes."

Some translators (NKJV above) have rendered this "uncover his head" simply because of the fact they had special hats upon their heads. However, in all carefulness, and for accuracy's sake, a literal rendering is demonstrated by the more proper translation "*shall not dishevel his hair, nor tear his vestments*," (See NRSV) or (the footnotes to the NASV).

However, one can see from reading these various examples (and you may find others) that the expression Paul uses in I Corinthians 11, of having one's "*head covered*" or "*uncovered*," was easily understandable to the ears of the Corinthian assembly. Be they Jews or Gentiles, men or women, they easily understood what Paul was saying due to this common custom and terminology. Furthermore, we should not forget that this custom was still very much in practice among the observant Jews in the early church, and sometimes even the Gentiles as well. And actually, we shall see that there is nothing in this passage by Paul to contradict this normal understanding of what "*covering the head*" meant. Some have naturally asked—

#### **WHAT ABOUT VERSE FIFTEEN?**

Not only did the Corinthians know what Paul was saying from the very beginning but, in fact, later statements will only **ratify** this understanding. Having said this, I am going to jump ahead and comment on verse 15 just for the moment. This is the last time this expression of a "covering" is used, at least as it is translated in certain English translations, including the NKJV.

14. "Does not even nature itself teach you that if a man has long hair, it is a dishonor to him?"

15. "But if a woman have long hair, it is a glory to her, for her hair is given her for a **covering**"

I say again Paul's illustration, from the realm of the "natural," will actually substantiate this point that I am making that the covering is a garment. Remember, this is the New King James Version. It is very profitable, as the translators of the early King James Version themselves stated in their introduction, that the readers look at other translations and compare with the lexicons for accuracy's sake.

In the case of verse 15, it is a shame that the translators of the KJV and the NKJV did not give a fuller translation instead of merely using the word "covering" again as in earlier verses. In the earlier verses of **4, 5, 6, 7** and **13**, the Greek word for covering used is *katakalupto*. A compound word, *kata* [down], and *kalupto* [to cover], and simply means to have something placed down on the head—in effect, to cover the head. This is normally and properly translated "**covering**." This does imply a physical garment, but it does not specifically say so. However, the noun form of this word is *kaluma*, and it does mean a covering such as a garment or veil, and is so translated in II Cor. 3:13. Consequently, several translators do render these verses as "veil" or some such garment. Thus, the literal translation by "covering" is technically accurate in verses, **4, 5, 6, 7, & 13**.

However, **neither** of these Greek words are used here in verse **15**. A totally different word is used. A literal translation of this verse would be, "..for her hair is given to her for a **VESTURE**." The Greek word used here is the noun *peribolaion*, meaning "*something wrapped around as a vesture, cloak, mantle or garment*" and not merely a covering. This particular word is only used one other time in the Greek Scriptures and that is in Hebrews 1:12 where it speaks concerning the starry heavens, "And as a **vesture** Thou shalt fold them up" (KJV), or "Like a **cloak** You will fold them up" (NKJV), or "as a **mantle** Thou wilt roll them up" (NASV). And so it is indicated in the various lexicons. Alford said that the translation of the word is "properly a **wrapper**, or other **enveloping garment**." This word is from the Greek verb *periballo* which almost always means "**to be clothed, arrayed, or put on a garment**." Thus it is used some 23 out of 24 times in the Greek Scriptures (see # 4016, Strong, Wigwam's Greek Concordance). In addition, Bullinger's Lexicon points out that the word *peribolaion* is here preceded by *anti*, meaning, "instead of," or as another Lexicon says, "answering to."

In other words, Paul is speaking in this particular verse (15) of the woman's long hair in a metaphorical manner, much like what is given in Psalm 140:7. The long hair that God provides in nature for the woman is "instead of," or "answering to" a *garment* that *covers the head*. This is the woman's natural garment for every activity of life. She has it with her permanently, all the time, for every occasion. This natural "*garment*" for her total life would correspond to the physical "*covering*" or **garment** understood in the earlier verses, which were for specific occasions.

Usually it has been argued that the word "covering" here in verse 15 should be transposed back upon verse 4, 5, 6, 7 & 13, to demonstrate that the "covering" there is finally identified as

"long hair." However, Paul is not at all meaning to say that the covering in the earlier passages is "long hair." That is not his purpose. He is meaning to enhance his point about the need of a covering for the head on specific occasions, by an example from nature of a garment God has provided for the woman's general demeanor. When we transpose the actual word Paul uses in verse 15, "*vesture*" or "*garment*," back to verse 4, etc., then we have verse 4, etc., saying, "Every man praying or prophesying having a **garment** on his head, dishonors his head." And, "Every woman praying or prophesying who does not have a **garment** upon her head is dishonoring her head." Now, this is precisely what the normal understanding of these passages would be.

In reality, therefore, Paul is saying, in verse 4, etc., at the very beginning of his discussion, that it is not proper for a man to be "praying or prophesying having his head covered **by a garment**." Likewise, a woman who prays or prophesies without a garment on her head is also wrong. For the man to so cover his head, "dishonors his head (and/or headship)." As we have demonstrated from the Hebrew Scriptures, people who "covered their heads" normally demonstrated such things as "sorrow," "shame," "submission" and/or "dishonor." Therefore, for a man to be speaking on God's behalf as in prophesying, or to be publicly and vocally praying to God, he should never dishonor or shame his headship position that God has ordained by covering his head.

### **Remember The Two Occasions where the head covering should, or should not, be used.**

As we take the text literally, Paul is specifying only two occasions where such a covering would be out of order for the man, and that is when a man is publicly "speaking forth from God" (the miraculous gift of prophecy), or publicly "speaking to God" (formal or public prayer). For man to deliberately cover his head on such occasions would be demeaning to his God-given position of headship and authority on earth. I will speak more about public prayer at a later time.

Obviously, if a man had long hair (unless he was a Nazarite) he would **always** be out of order, and not just at the time of praying or prophesying. Furthermore, the fact that Paul only specifies these **two specific occasions** where the infraction would take place means that the covering is something a person could put on or take off at the time of these specific, given occasions.

It is possible that the Jewish tradition of the men covering their heads on certain ritual occasions, or even in their synagogues and services, had become an introduced custom at this time. The Jewish Encyclopedia says that at an early date the "head coverings" for men were optional. They had begun to cover their heads as they worshiped in the synagogues. Eventually they had a garment called the "tallith" which they sometimes put over their heads during ministerial duties or at religious services. Today it is the order in orthodox Judaism and not optional. The Hasidic Jewish men wear their hats all the time. Surprising enough, even certain Amish sects have come to practice the custom. In addition the Orthodox Jewish men wear or pin a little cap on their heads most of the time. We would know from what Paul is herein saying that such a tradition for men is not ordained of God. It was just another one of the pharisaic traditions that actually did violence to the truth of God's Word. As Paul says, he "dishonors his head (and/or headship)."

Furthermore, if this covering were long hair, as many have supposed, then it would mean that a man who took the Nazarite vow could never publicly pray or prophesy to God because of having his long hair covering his head. That would mean that Samuel the prophet was out of order, and John the Baptist was out of order, and even the apostle Paul, himself, who took the Nazarite vow

apparently more than once (see Acts 18:18 & 21:20-26), would also be out of order. This would be positively unthinkable.

### ***IN BRIEF REVIEW THUS FAR***

Consequently, in light of the previous facts that we have discussed so far, we can answer the initial question as to what is meant by the expression "to cover the head."

- 1.) In light of its repeated Hebrew usage in the Scriptures, it normally and customarily meant that a garment was placed on top of the head. The normal meaning of the words "head covering" had simple and clear reference to a physical *garment*.
- 2.) Even the illustration Paul uses from nature, that God gives the long hair on a woman metaphorically as a *garment*, actually emphasizes that principle conclusion.
- 3.) The awkward predicament, that those who would be hearing this passage read would not be able to know what this *covering* is until they heard verse 15, meant they could not properly comprehend what Paul is talking about as they would hear the passage read.
- 4.) If this *covering* were long hair, then those men who had long hair (other than Nazarites) would **always** be out of order and not just when they prayed or prophesied.
- 5.) Since the infraction is specified to occur on these two identifiable occasions it would automatically infer that this *covering* is something that could be put on or taken off as needed.
- 6.) Actually, if the covering were long hair, then all who took the Nazarite vow, including Paul himself, would automatically be out of order if they publicly prayed or prophesied. And that is automatically unacceptable and intolerable.

Therefore, we conclude at this juncture, the covering must be understood in its normal ordinary manner as being a physical *garment*. Other factors will support this as we continue to read through the passage.

*And may I also say, **emphatically**, that to know and recognize at the outset that this covering is a physical garment placed over the head does not in the least change or compromise the overall basic teaching that will emerge from this passage.*

### ***WHEN THE WOMAN IS DISORDERLY***

Now Paul turns to the Christian woman who would violate the principle.

*5. "But every woman who **prays** or **prophesies** with her head uncovered dishonors her head, for that is one and the same as if her head were shaved."*

First of all, we must take this passage literally on the two examples of disorderliness, that being of a Christian woman publicly **praying** or **prophesying** with her head *uncovered* (presumably by a not having a garment over her head).

Please take special note of what Paul does NOT say in this passage! Paul did not say that a woman going to the market to shop with her head *uncovered* was out of place! Paul did NOT say that a Christian woman sitting in a fellowship meeting with her head uncovered was out of place!

Paul did NOT say that a woman at home washing dishes with her head uncovered was sinning! Why didn't Paul say any of these things? Because none of them would be true!

If the lack of covering on the head of a Christian woman was the lack of long hair, then, of course, she would ALWAYS be in a dishonorable condition, everywhere and all the time, and not just when she was publicly *prophesying* or *praying*. The very fact that Paul specifies these as the two occasions where this infraction would occur means that on other occasions it would **not be disorderly** for the woman to have her head "uncovered." In the normal duties of life a woman would be perfectly fine with her head "uncovered" by a garment. In fact, the very Scriptures that exhort the Christian woman to not elaborately decorate herself in fancy hairdos (I Tim. 2:9 & I Pet. 3:3) demonstrate positively that the Christian women did not have mandatory head coverings as is taught by the Amish traditions or even certain Catholic traditions.

### ***What about Veils for women in public worship service?***

According to I Corinthians 14:34 a woman was not to be exercising the miraculous gifts, such as *prophesying*, in an assembly meeting. Nor was a Christian woman to be publicly preaching or teaching in an assembly function—I Tim. 2:11,12. So therefore, Paul is not talking about women wearing a veil or something when they "go to church" as some denominations would teach. There is really no indication here that Paul is talking about some type of normal public worship service such as a regular Christian meeting. That is merely supposed by many expositors of this passage. Normally, as the above Scriptures demonstrate, Christian women would not be leading out in public prayer in a local congregation, even as they would not be prophesying in public in a local congregation. We shall see that they may do so in a more private setting but not in a local congregational meeting. Consequently, we do not believe this infraction would occur in such a meeting.

### ***When would such coverings be used?***

As I stated previously, taking the passage literally and in simplicity, there were two specific occasions when this disorder had been in public notice. That was when certain of the Corinthian women did exercise the gift of prophecy and/or did pray in a public manner where men may/or may not be present.

Some women under the old dispensation were prophetesses. This is last seen in Anna who prophesied to individuals in the Temple about the Lord Jesus Christ (Luke 2:36-38). I don't have any doubt whatsoever that she covered her head when she so prophesied. Though she may have been talking to individuals, it was still in a public setting in the Temple. Some women in the church did have the "gift of prophecy." It can also be exemplified by Philip's four daughters in Acts 21:9, who could prophesy to individuals, such as in the home that Paul was visiting. As one should realize, this is long after Paul wrote I Corinthians. In the privacy of that home it is inferred that they prophesied, in accordance with others, what would befall Paul in the coming days of his last visit to Jerusalem. On such an occasion they would cover their heads. Since they were speaking on God's behalf before men they would demonstrate the authority of the man by their heads being covered. This apparently happened on several occasions in the homes of the members of the Corinthian assembly. They failed to cover themselves on those occasions. I don't have any reason to believe this "prophecy" is talking about some indirect use of the word prophesy, such as "speaking forth" to a neighbor about

the Lord, or being a "witness" to someone, or even "exhorting" a fellow Christian. Those are incidental things that take place in everyday living and are not in view.

As to public prayer, it has been noted by most students of the subject of prayer that there existed two forms of prayer. There was personal and incidental prayer that could take place between you and God anytime, or in your own closet, as Christ exhorted. But in addition, there existed under Israel's Law system what has been called "ritual prayer" or "formal prayer." This was done in designated places, at designated times, and sometimes in designated forms. As the church of Jesus Christ progressed out of Judaism into pure Christianity, this type of prayer would pass away. What is called "ritual prayer" had several forms. Originally it was done at the Tabernacle, see I Sam. 1:7-12. For those Jews of the dispersion it was done "three times a day" and "facing Jerusalem," see Dan. 6:10. It was to be done at the Temple for sure; see Luke 19:46 and Acts 3:1 & 22:17. It was to be done at certain times of the day; see Dan. 6:10; Acts 3:1 & Acts 10:9. Away from Jerusalem, it was done at certain designated places; see Acts 16:13.

Perhaps in certain designated places for public prayer, such as was the custom of Jewish women (and even some Gentile women as well), see Acts 16:13, and where men may be present (as Paul, Timothy and Luke were present), they would also don their shawls or scarves to cover their heads as they articulated their prayers. I say again, normally a Christian woman would not lead out in public prayer in a congregational meeting, even as she would not publicly prophesy in a similar assembly. Normally such a meeting is not specifically called for the purpose of public prayer in the first place. Such was incidental to that meeting. Incidental prayer, such as a person would do in the normal routines of life, be it at home or work, or even on their beds at night, or at the beginning of a congregational meeting is, likewise, really not in view in this passage. In contrast to this, there were certain meetings specifically called for the purpose of prayer (Acts 12:12-17). Here, in some cases, a woman may be articulating her prayer openly as different ones took their turns. If such were the case, those women would be expected to have their "heads covered." On occasions where Christian women may exercise their gift of prophecy (other than a normal public fellowship meeting) they also would don their coverings.

It will also be important to remember at this time, that the practice of the miraculous gifts was *transitional* in nature. They were only practiced during the time frame of the transition period of the early church. When the miraculous gift of prophecy ceased, this would no longer matter. In addition, it is important to remember that certain forms of prayer, such as *ritual prayer*, were likewise transitional in nature. These practices, centered around what is called "ritual prayer" would, likewise, not continue in the church age. At some of these places they were obviously open to public scrutiny. To this very day, Jewish women often appear at the base of the wall where the original Temple once stood over in Jerusalem. They engage in "ritual prayer," and still cover their heads with shawls. They do so in the specified place for the women. Any traveler can observe this.

6. *"For if a woman is not covered, let her also be shorn.  
But if it is shameful for a woman to be shorn or shaved,  
let her be covered."*

### ***"COVERED or SHAVED"***

For a Christian woman to deliberately fail to cover her head on such occasions as when she would be speaking prophetically on God's behalf, or openly praying to God, as Paul specified, would

demonstrate a violation of the order of "headship" and "authority" that God ordained. If a woman would not put a covering over her head on these occasions she is out of order, and might just as well have her natural covering of hair also cut off. Such a humiliation of being shaved was befitting women who needed to be shamed.

Again, according to this passage there is no question as to what constitutes being "covered." They are either *covered* or *not covered*! It is important to realize that anybody looking on knows the difference. If being "covered" or "not covered" was a matter of trimming the hair in varying degrees then no one would ever know for sure unless it was severely cut. And this is not even hinted at in the passage. Nor is it left up to man's scrutiny to investigate carefully. Some women have naturally short hair. In certain Christian circles there has been a whole lot of speculation over what constitutes being "uncovered" if the covering is the hair. Some speculate that it would obviously have to be a drastic cutting in order to constitute being seen as "uncovered." Others would say even a little trimming would violate the tradition. The fact that the covering is not the hair, but a physical garment, relieves the necessity for any such speculation.

In verse five, Paul is saying that the woman who prays or prophesies with her head uncovered "dishonors her head"—meaning the headship of the man, that it is further "the same as if she were shaven." In verse six, Paul adds, that if it is shameful for a woman to be shorn (short) or shaven, then let her be covered. There are only two extremes here—**covered** or **shaven**. And there are only two conditions, "*covered*" and "*not covered*." There is no inbetween. If the woman's head was not covered on such an occasion then Paul is saying, take the next step, and just *shave the head* to **correspond** to being *uncovered*. If a woman was "uncovered" on these occasions then she might as well be shorn or shaved in humiliation. The fact that she should have her hair cut off if she is *not covered* demands that the covering on her head must be something in addition to her hair.

### ***THE ORDER OF AUTHORITY***

7. *"For the man indeed ought not to cover his head, since he is the image and glory of God; but the woman is the glory of the man."*

8. *"For the man is not from the woman, but the woman from the man."*

9. *"Nor was man created for the woman but the woman for the man."*

All of this further explains the order of headship that God instituted from the beginning. Since on earth man is the image and glory of God he is not to have his head covered on such occasions as speaking on God's behalf or publicly praying to God. The woman on the other hand reflects the glory of the man. Therefore, when she would speak on God's behalf with the miraculous gift, or articulating her prayers to God in a public setting, she must not circumvent the authority of man. She must demonstrate that authority of the man over herself by the headcovering.

### ***ANGELS AND AUTHORITY***

10. *"For this reason the woman ought to have (a symbol) of authority on her head, **because of the angels.**"*

There are two questions that this passage *raises*. First, what does it mean to have "authority" on the woman's head? Secondly, what does this have to do with angels? The first question can be answered rather quickly by noting that the "authority" simply points to the man's "authority" in the "headship" principle that God originally ordained. The head covering represents man's authority over her. There will be a further example of this as we read from the Hebrew Scriptures shortly.

The other question takes more explanation. It has often been asked, what does this subject have to do with angels? Why would angels take note of the "authority" demonstrated by the headcovering on the woman? or by her natural garment of long hair? The answer is actually very simple and has been written about throughout the Scriptures. The angelic confrontation against God originated with Satan's rebellion. This Satanic rebellion is actually the backdrop on the stage of which man's redemption is being acted out in the present ages. In addition, the judgment of Lucifer and the angels will take place coinciding with man's final judgment by God and Christ in the great tribulation period. Satan will directly enter into the man of sin as an incarnation, and all the fallen angelic host will be cast out of heaven to the earth for a climatic rebellion in their warfare against God. Thus, there is a connecting relationship between man's redemption process and Satan's attempt to thwart that gracious redemption program.

For man it began with the *fallen angel*, Lucifer, who circumvented the man in the garden temptation, and went directly to the woman. She was the "weaker vessel" and the means through which Satan, in his cunning, brought about the fall of mankind. However, after the fall God provided a safety or protection for the woman. She was to remain under the protection and headship of the man, and he was to exercise authority over her. To the woman God said, "Your desire shall be to your husband, and he shall rule over you" (Gen. 3:16). This order and authority of the man is repeated by the apostle Paul in connection with the fall of mankind in I Timothy 2:11-14:

*"Let the woman learn in silence with all submission. And I do not permit a woman to teach or to have **authority** over the man, but to be in silence. For Adam was formed first, then Eve. And Adam was not deceived, but the woman being deceived, fell into transgression."*

Not only does this passage repeat the order of headship but it reminds us once again of the purpose of the woman putting on a headcovering when she would prophesy or publicly pray. This would signify the *authority* of the man over her. *The same would be true of her natural garment.* Furthermore, the angelic world, being actively interested in the whole general drama of redemption that is being enacted here on earth, is looking on. The headship order is a vital part of that redemption program and for the protection of the woman in the conflict between Satan and mankind.

Actually, as was indicated earlier, the warfare between good and evil began long before man was even created in the earlier rebellion of Satan against God. It spread first into the angelic realm and on the pre-adamic earth (Ezek. 28:1-19). Then, it spread to the human family as the newly created mankind lent their affection to Satan's deception. The angelic agents of Satan are actively engaged in further deceptive tactics. There is still no easier tactic than to go through the women. It is not accidental that several of the latter day cults were founded by women, such as the Seventh Day Adventists, the Christian Scientists, the Pentecostal, Spiritism (with the Fox sisters) and others as well. I just noted recently that the United Methodist Bishops Counsel is presided over by a woman, and the first Episcopalian *woman* bishop has been ordained. All these man-made religious orders have neglected the "headship" order of God and are vulnerable to total Satanic influence.

In Ephesians 3:8-11, the apostle Paul speaks of the grace that was given to him to preach "the unsearchable riches of Christ," and then he goes on to speak of the church's opportunity to demonstrate to the angels the truth of God's grace:

*"to the intent that now the manifold wisdom of God might be made known by the church to the principalities and powers in the heavenly places,"*

So it is clearly evident that the *angels* are looking on at the drama being enacted here on earth, which will have its culmination in the last days. How important it is in these days for our Christian women to realize both the responsibility and the privilege to display God's supreme order and authority in our new life in Christ. In addition, the church of Jesus Christ is a large family. It is made up of many individual families where God desires to propagate proper family values that glorify Christ. For Satan to strike at the individual headship of a family is destructive to that family and eventually to the church of Jesus Christ as well. In fact, there is no better way to destroy the testimony of the church than to destroy the testimony of the family. Should we not be alerted to the fact that Satan is looking at our obedience to the truths about headship? Of course he is!

Another passage that speaks of the angelic interest in God's redemptive plan is that of I Peter 1:12: *"...who have preached the gospel to you by the Holy Spirit sent from heaven—which things angels desire to look into."*

Thus, this particular tradition of headship and signification of authority in the head covering of the woman, both in the realm of speaking on God's behalf and in the total realm of living, is being observed not merely by mankind as a testimony, but even by the angelic realm which, often lurking out of man's sight, is nevertheless the strong influence behind the scenes. That satanic influence is ever seeking to find a weakness in man's defenses. They find that weakness quite often through the failure of man in neglecting his headship order, and in the woman when she tries to assume a place that is out of order for her.

When we read the book of Job we are taken behind the scenes on earth to the real cause of Job's misfortunes, and that was in the angelic realms in heaven. In a similar way when we read of the calamity of the great flood in Noah's day we are also taken behind the scenes to see that the wickedness of man was encouraged by the angelic "sons of God" who "saw the daughters of men, that they were beautiful." The fallen angels "left their first estate" and married into the human family, no doubt to pollute it (see Gen. 6:1-4; II Pet. 2:4 & Jude 6).

Thus it is that the order of headship should be a genuine principle engraved in our hearts and demonstrated in appropriate ways by our life and actions. This is one form of life and garment that is fashionable even beyond the range of earthly observation. There is no faster way in which Satan can destroy the testimony of the church of Jesus Christ than to destroy the testimony of the Christian family, and bring it into contempt by disorderliness in the home.

When Christians take these Satanic and angelic incursions seriously, they will enact God's provisions accordingly. When people in the church go to sleep in apostasy, they could care less about these issues concerning the natural garment and headship in general.

### ***EQUALITY ACCORDING TO GOD***

*11. "Nevertheless, neither is the man independent of the woman, nor the woman independent of the man, in the Lord."*

*12. For as the woman was from the man, even so the man also is through the woman; but all things are from God."*

The order of headship and authority does not mean that the woman is in anyway inferior to the man. It is simply God's institution of order in the human family. There is equality with God. Each has his proper and equally important place in God's arrangement of things. When either the man or the woman gets out of his or her God-ordained place, they will add confusion and disorder. Neither will find true happiness until each takes his proper place. Then God will give to them true happiness and security as they walk in their proper places.

*13. "Judge among yourselves. Is it proper for a woman to pray to God with her head uncovered?"*

In light of the important principles that Paul has given in the matter of headship is it not proper for the woman, at one of the few times that she may be speaking openly and publicly on God's behalf, or at a time when she may be publicly addressing God, to demonstrate the headship and authority of man?

### ***THE LESSONS FROM NATURE!***

In further effort to ratify the truth stated above, the apostle invokes a lesson from the natural realm in creation itself. This means that the lesson from *nature* is intuitive and instinctive in the realms of mankind where they have not degenerated from their original God-implanted consciences. Originally God implanted a consciousness of nakedness when Adam and Eve sinned. However, fallen and rebellious man has ever since constantly tried to defy that implanted consciousness. In these days in which we are presently living, the results of that flagrant violation are resulting in a sexual revolution that is virtually able to destroy vast millions of human beings in the agony of physical disease. When man rebels against the balanced instincts of nature he will always pay the price. There will be degeneration in individuals and in society.

*14. "Does not even nature itself teach you that if a man **has long hair**, it is **a dishonor** to him?"*

*15. "But if the woman **has long hair**, it is **a glory** to her; for her hair is **given her for a covering garment**."*

I repeat, Paul speaks of that which is instinctive in man. On this subject it has been said this means the "Native sense of propriety," which "rests on the objective difference in the constitution of things" (Robertson, Word Pictures, IV, pg. 162). The clear distinction between the male and the female in the character of the hair was plainly instilled from the beginning. We shall see this in the Hebrew Scriptures shortly. In addition it was observed in the Grecian world, and in the Roman world as well. When men violate this distinction they are, in fact, violating the order of "headship" that God has instituted.

In addition, this basic principle has been upheld right here in our own United States history, at least, that is, up until recently. It had been the order from the beginning that the women had long hair and the men cut their hair. Sad to say, today, recognized perversion and tolerance by ungodly liberal society has come to allow men to often parade themselves with long feminine hair. Such is a sickening example of moral degradation in our society, and is contrary to nature.

Earlier, in our own so-called "roaring twenties" the American women began to "bob" their hair, so that now it is perfectly fashionable for women to cut their hair anyway they want and as short as they want. I remember my own mother-in-law telling of how her mother wept when, as a teenage girl at a boarding school back in the twenties, my mother-in-law cut off her long hair. Not only is this the common style today but they often make light of the "burden" of long hair. Nevertheless, they also often admit that long hair has its undisputed beauty and attraction.

In order to ground ourselves in the original principles that God has ordained throughout the ages on the subject of the long hair in the women, whereas the men were to cut their hair, we must needs go back into the Hebrew Scriptures just as we did when we wanted to determine what was meant by the term "head-covering." This is a principle that knows no dispensational boundaries.

### **That which is taught by the Hebrew Scriptures**

#### **No. 1. Numbers 5:11-31**

This passage of Scripture concerns the ritual to be performed by a wife when her husband has a spirit of jealousy come over him, and he is suspicious that she has committed adultery, but he has no proof of it, and she denies it. She is to be brought "before the Lord" into the tabernacle by the priest. After a particular "grain offering" is made the priest shall gather some dust from the floor of the tabernacle and mix it into an earthen vessel of "holy water." After the woman takes a vow she shall drink the water "of bitterness," and if she is not guilty she will be immune to the effects of the water. However, if she is guilty her body will deteriorate accordingly. The particular words we are herein concerned about are verses 18 and 19, and for accuracy's sake I am quoting from the New American Standard Version (see also the RV, the RSV, and the NRSV):

"The priest shall then have the woman stand before the Lord and let *the hair of the woman go loose*...And the priest shall have her take an oath...'If no man has lain with you and if you have not gone astray into uncleanness, *being under the authority of your husband*, be immune to this water of bitterness that brings a curse...'"

The one aspect of this ritual that has a clear bearing upon the theme of I Cor. 11 is the loosening down of the woman's hair, which is the display of her *natural garment*, and which speaks of her subjection to the headship of the man, as she acknowledges being under his *authority*. This is precisely what the apostle Paul is saying in his inspired letter to the Corinthians. The long hair on the woman is an outward sign of her subjection to the authority of her husband.

#### **No. 2. Numbers 6:1-21**

In this passage of Scripture we have the law concerning those who take the Nazarite vow. This was a vow of special *separation* (from whence the word *Nazarite* comes) to perform some duty to the Lord. The duty would involve an extended period of time, and in some cases individuals took such a vow for a lifetime (such as Samuel, Samson and John the Baptist). Of special interest to us here is verse 5 which says (NASV):

"All the days of his vow of separation no razor shall pass over his head. He shall be holy until the days are fulfilled for which he separated himself

to the Lord; *he shall let the locks of his hair grow long.*"

When Josephus, the Jewish historian, and also Philo, the Jewish expositor, who both wrote in the first century, described this vow for the benefit of the Grecian and Roman world, they used a certain Greek word *komao* to describe what those men did who took the vow. This word simply means "to let the hair grow." It is to be understood that it would grow the natural full length so as to have long hair. Now, this is the very same word the apostle Paul is inspired to use in I Cor. 11:14 & 15 (see *The Greek-English Lexicon* by Arndt & Gingrich, and Josephus, *Antiq. Of The Jews*, IV, IV, Chap. 4). It can be translated this way:

"...if a man (under normal circumstances) *lets his hair grow* (unabated) it is a dishonor to him. But if a woman *lets her hair grow* (unabated) it is a glory to her..." (Literal translation).

The clear implication of this particular word and its usage is that the woman would allow her hair to grow *its natural full length* as did those who took the Nazarite vow. That is really beautiful because in a very real sense the Christian woman is also dedicating herself (much like the Nazarites) to a form of *separation* to the Lord for a specific purpose that God has ordained in the Christian family. So, to do this because God has ordained it becomes a privilege and a testimony.

In addition, in Numbers 6, verses 6-8, the law instructs the Nazarite to not go near a dead person even if it were his own family member, because such would make him ritually unclean, and because "*the consecration of God was upon his head.*" This expression is interesting because it demonstrates that his testimony for separation to God was demonstrated *in his long hair*. It was in fact, called "*the hair of his dedication*" (Verse 9). Now please keep this in mind as we apply this principle to the Christian woman.

Interestingly enough, both a man or a woman could take the Nazarite vow (see Num. 6:1). When one took the Nazarite vow no razor would touch his head from the time he took the vow until the time the vow was completed. At the completion of the vow his head was to be shaven and the hair offered as a sacrifice (see Num. 6:1-21). Customarily the Jewish men would cut their hair off at the beginning of the vow (see Acts 18:18 & 21:24) and then they would never touch their heads with a razor until the time that the vow was completed, no matter how long that time lasted.

However, in the case of a woman who took the vow, there was no instruction to cut off her hair, either at the beginning of the vow (see the case of Manoah's wife who became a Nazarite in Judges 13:4-14), or in the initial law of Numbers 6:1-21. In fact, Samson's mother was instructed to act as a Nazarite in Judges 13 and was only told to abstain from the fruit of the vine and from contamination with a dead body. In neither case, as in the original law of Numbers 6, or that of Manoah's wife in Judges 13, was the woman to cut off her hair. This is actually consistent, since it was natural and orderly for the woman to always *let her hair grow*. It was, therefore, not required that they shave their heads as the man was supposed to. Though the man was to shave his head at both the beginning of his vow, and at the end of it, yet the woman was not given this particular order. Her naturally long hair was always there. In the sense of her long hair being permanent, the long hair on the woman can be said to represent her *permanent consecration* to God, especially as it relates to the subject of headship which Paul is discussing here in I Cor. 11.

We can appropriately say that "*the consecration of God*" is upon the head of every Christian woman who has "dedicated" herself to the obedience of God's order for her. It becomes an appropriate demonstration that she is dedicated to obeying God's instructions for her domain.

Many great kings and monarchs were portrayed with full long hair. This was a demonstration by them of power and pride. Such was the case with king David's son, Absalom. Apparently he really took pride in his full head of hair. Absalom would only get a haircut once a year (II Sam. 14:26). That particular form of pride became the very thing that ensnared him and took his life. No doubt, in its full development, the hair could be used to represent power and pride. In the Nazarite vow, therefore, we might understand that the full head of hair represented the total dedication of all that person's power and pride in service to his God.

### ***"How Long is Long?"***

One time when I was speaking on this subject, a brother whose wife wasn't complying with God's directives on this issue, asked the question, "Would you please tell me, just how long is 'long'?" He obviously thought that no one would attempt to define how long "long" is, and therefore felt comfortable in his own independent allowances on the subject. However, I responded this way, **"I know exactly 'how long is long!'"** He seemed surprised and taken back at my answer. Then I defined the word as it is used in the Bible (see above) and added, **"It is just as long as 'let it grow' is!!"** Whenever anyone would stop "letting it grow," that person would not be in compliance with this Scripture. This is the actual meaning of the word. In addition, the word as used is also in the Greek present tense. That means simply, "as of now, keep on letting it grow." It would be a continuous process. Furthermore it has been pointed out that the word, "given (her)" in the Greek is *dedotai*, which is in the perfect tense. This carries with it the idea of permanency. Thus, the force of verse 15 is this; *"If a woman keeps on letting her hair grow long, it is a glory to her, for her hair has been given permanently as a garment."*

It is also a fact of physiology that all heads of hair do not naturally grow as long as others. Some women have relatively short hair. That really does not matter in this case, because the orders are to simply "let it grow." If a woman lets her hair grow its natural full length, she has complied with these instructions and can have a clear conscience before God.

### **No. 3. Song of Solomon 4:1; 6:5; & 7:5**

As is expressed in this song, in the language of its native setting, the long hair on the woman was an object of special beauty and attention.

"Behold, you are fair, my love! Behold, you are fair!  
You have dove's eyes behind your veil.  
Your hair is like a flock of goats, going down from Mount Gilead."  
"...Your hair is like a flock of goats going down from Gilead."  
  
"Your head crowns you like Mount Carmel,  
And the hair of your head is like purple;  
The king is held captive by your tresses."

In commenting on this passage of Scripture one author put it in a very fine way:

"So when we hear him say that her hair is a flock of goats descending from Mount Gilead, we need to remember the emotional associations with such a scene. It is perhaps the end of a long day, so the goats are descending from the mountain. Across the valley is seen an entire flock moving together down the mountain. The individual members of the flock blend together to form a dark

stream flowing smoothly to the valley. The peacefulness of the evening and the flowing movement of the flock tell us that the long flowing hair of the bride is very attractive, almost hypnotic to the king. And elsewhere in the song, this interpretation is confirmed because the king tells us that he is held captive by her hair. This is a picture of the king playfully entangled and bound by her hair which was so attractive to him." (A song for lovers, by S. Craig Glickman, page 14).

Interestingly enough, the Song of Solomon has long been traditionally applied to the Church of Jesus Christ. In fact, in some older translations title captions have been placed over the various sections emphasizing Christ's relationship to the Church and vice-versa. This, of course, is erroneous. dispensationally, this book bears a remarkable and direct relationship to the nation of Israel as the "Wife of Jehovah." There could only be a secondary relationship to the Church, and that with extreme carefulness. It is true that the Church is "espoused to one husband" (II Cor. 11:2). There is indeed, "the mystery of Christ and the Church" (Eph. 5:32). And "Christ is the head over all things to the Church" (Eph.5:22-24). In this light, the Church would want to bear a sense of responsibility in displaying subjection to the headship of Jesus Christ. This could even be reflected in our Christian women having that dedication displayed in their long hair. Since the long hair is called a woman's "glory," only a Satanic perversion would cause the Christian woman to think that there is preference to be stylish in emulating the world's tradition by cutting off her long hair.

#### ***4. Captives having their heads shaved***

There were two times when the heads of women were to be shaven. The first was when Israel went to war and captives were brought back into the land of Israel. If a Hebrew saw a beautiful woman and chose to make her his wife, then she was to have her head shaved and nails trimmed and change her garments (Deut. 21:11-13). After waiting for a short period of time, allowed for her consideration for her parents, he could then take her to be his wife. All this was to represent a *new beginning* for this bride as she was now accepted within the congregation of Israel.

The other occasions were where Israel herself had become a disobedient nation to God and was taken into captivity. The enemy would shave the heads of men and women for the purpose of humiliation. From God's perspective, this was to mark the shame and dishonor and humiliation of the people of Israel because of their disobedience. Many are the verses to this extent. See as examples, Isa. 3:24; 15:2; 22:12; Jer. 7:29-31; 41:5; Ezek. 7:18; Amos 8:10 & Micah 1:16.

#### ***5. Examples from the Priesthood***

Lev. 19:27, 28; 21:4- 6; & Ezek. 44:20.

"You shall not shave around the sides of your head,  
nor shall you disfigure the edges of your beard.  
You shall not make any cuttings in your flesh for the dead,  
nor tattoo any marks on you: I am the LORD."

"Otherwise he shall not defile himself, being a chief man among his people,  
to profane himself. They shall not make any bald place on their heads,  
nor shall they shave the edges of their beards nor make any cuttings  
on their flesh. They shall be holy to their God, for they offer the  
offerings of the LORD made by fire, and the bread of their God;  
therefore they shall be holy."

"They shall neither shave their heads nor let their hair grow long,  
but they shall keep their hair well trimmed."

These examples from the priesthood make it evident that God did not want the priests, as examples to the people of Israel, to disfigure their appearance nor to violate the distinction between man and woman in the order of their hair. It is interesting, that in the case of Ezekiel 44:20, this is telling us of the future design for operations centered around the future Temple in Jerusalem, during the thousand year reign of the Messiah. In other words, the past and the future are covered by these same rules that God instituted as an example for all mankind, especially in the future. How much more so should Christians today be conscious of God's design for their testimony.

It is very interesting, that in total contrast to this, during the great tribulation that is soon coming upon the world, there will be a Satanic invasion of earth by innumerable hosts of demonic beings to torment mankind. Those beings are described in the book of Revelation in the following manner (Rev. 9:7 & 8):

"...and their faces were like the faces of men.  
(but) They had hair like women's hair..."

So when we see a similar appearance among young or middle-aged people in our modern "liberated" culture, we should have no trouble in understanding the author of this or that perverted style. Furthermore, if these demonic creatures are described as having "hair like the women's" then it is obvious that everybody knows, instinctively, the difference between what a man's hair should look like and what a woman's hair should look like.

### ***THE PERMANENT NATURE OF THE NATURAL GARMENT***

In that the apostle Paul invokes the supporting evidence from nature, of the long hair for the woman and the short hair for the man, in order to demonstrate the principle of headship, we can understand that it is also appropriate to go back to each of the preceding verses which we have considered earlier in this chapter, and remember that what the head covering therein indicated also has its compliment in the natural garment of the woman's long hair itself. In other words, what the physical garment demonstrated about headship when the woman would publicly pray or prophesy, so the natural garment would demonstrate all the time on behalf of the Christian woman. In addition, the natural garment would not be effected by transitional differences changing, as in the gift of prophecy ceasing, or by the cessation of ritual prayer for this dispensation of time. The natural garment is permanent and not subject to transitional changes.

#### ***To Summarize***

What then, *in summary*, are the purposes of both the temporary covering garment and/or the permanent natural covering garment?

- 1.) ***It demonstrates the headship of man*** (verses 3 & 7).
- 2.) ***It honors her head*** (verse 5).
- 3.) ***It demonstrates the authority of the man*** (verse 10).

- 4.) *It is for her protection which speaks to the angels looking on* (verse 10).
- 5.) *It shows her subjection to God's order of things* (verses 7-10).
- 6.) *It serves as a covering garment* (verse 15).
- 7.) *It is a glory to her* (verse 15).
- 8.) *It demonstrates her full dedication and separation to Christ* (verse 15).

### ***OBJECTIONS TO LONG HAIR FOR THE WOMAN***

Needless to say, as often as God gives instructions, there are those who want to circumvent those instructions—

- 1.) Some have objected to letting their hair grow long because so many hypocrites do it! That may be true about anything. All that proves is that some people do the right thing for the wrong reason. We should never stop doing what is right, according to the Word of God, no matter what a hypocrite might do.
- 2.) Some would argue that this is the institution of another physical ordinance, and a characteristic of Christianity is not physical ordinances. This is not at all true. There are many exhortations from instructions to the churches that involve the physical. Modest dress for both women and men is certainly a tradition among God-fearing believers, but it is not a physical ritual ordinance. The avoidance of drunkenness and gluttony, the avoidance of stealing, the dangers of television, etc., etc., are all exhortations involving what we do with our flesh, but are not rituals. The same thing is true on the subject of recognizing the difference between the man and woman in the matter of hair. It has nothing whatsoever to do with creating a ritual ordinance, but it has to do with our practical walk in modesty and godliness.
- 3.) Some have argued that they have seen certain women who give the impression that they are especially holy because they have long hair. And they say this is given them for a covering. Yet in many cases their hair doesn't cover any more than a man's hair might cover. In fact it is often worn on tops of their heads instead of hanging down. It neither covers their heads, faces or back.

In answer to this, we must remember that the Scripture states the woman's long hair is a "garment" without specific reference as to how that natural garment is worn. In Numbers 5, as we have seen, the woman was to "loosen down her hair." That meant she usually wore it up on top of her head in some convenient way. Even as it was bound up, it still constituted a covering garment and was in compliance with God's natural law. Everyone knew it was long—especially the angels.

- 4.) Some have argued that certain long-hair supporters look at a man with hair hanging down to his shoulders, even though a few inches have been cut off, and proclaim that he has shamefully long hair! Yet when some woman has hair cut off to the same length, they say she has short hair. That seems inconsistent to us.

Obviously, "long hair" on most men is relative to what a man's hair should normally be. A father may say to his son who has hair covering his ears, "Your hair is too long! Go get a haircut!" He does not mean that his son's hair is like a woman's, but relatively long compared to what it should be. Since the modern-day woman often cuts her hair much shorter, it behooves the Christian man to be careful to be distinguishable by not letting his hair grow too long. It should be the opposite of that of the woman.

5.) "What? Let my hair grow long?" "I'm not going back to the 18th century!" "That is a relic for the past—before women's liberation!" "Paul was known to be against women!" "The very idea of having a bun on top of my head—no way!" "It is not comfortable or manageable!" "It was just an individual's opinion!" etc., etc., etc.

All this reflects the modern contempt this generation has for God's order, and they shall pay the price—when they face that Creator.

### *A very Sobering Observation*

I remember a statement made by an older minister many years ago that really impressed everyone. And certainly it was designed by the Spirit of God to draw our attention to the spiritual truth taught for our walk and conduct in this matter in this present ungodly world. He had been reading the accounts of believing women washing the feet of their Savior with the long hair of their very own heads—Luke 7:38, 44 & John 12:3. These are very sober and moving accounts of repentant and dedicated women, with great emotion, doing a service for their Savior, seemingly oblivious to the many other guests looking on. This older minister lowered his bible and looked steadfastly into the eyes of his audience and said something like this,

"How would any of you Christian women here feel, if you could have had the privilege of washing the Savior's feet in this manner, but instead you have cut off your glory and laid it at the feet of modern style and custom??"

May God help us all to wash our own minds and hearts from the ungodly defilements and pollutions of corrupt worldly conceptions and values. Only then can we properly appreciate God's standards of true beauty and propriety. Choosing God's values for our life and conduct will have both present happiness as well as future rewards.

### **CONCLUSION**

**And Paul concludes with verse 16,**

*"But if anyone seems to be contentious,  
we have no such custom, nor do the churches of God."*

As it reads in the original or the New King James Version, a person might persuade himself to think that it really does not matter what we do. "After all," one might argue, "Paul says, 'We have no such custom.' Therefore, it does not matter what we do with our hair!"

Of course, this is the very opposite of what the apostle Paul is saying. Paul would never spend all this carefulness in explaining a custom to be followed, and then turn right around and say in conclusion, that it really doesn't make any difference what you do! What a waste of time and space if that is what Paul is saying! Most certainly he is not saying this. If I might repeat the verse, with the understanding in parenthesis, it would read this way:

*"But if anyone seems to be contentious (against what has been given),  
we have no such (other) custom (as they would suppose),  
nor do the churches of God."*

THE END

The End