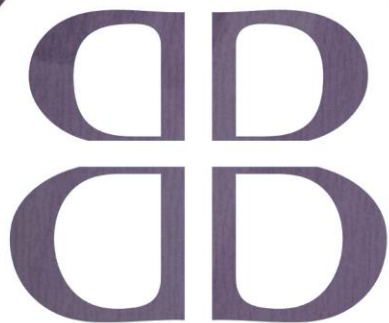


Glory and Coverings

A STUDY OF
1 CORINTHIANS 11:1-16

by PHILLIP KAYSER, Ph.D.



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Glory and Coverings
A Study of 1 Corinthians 11:1-16

Phillip Kayser, Ph.D.

“...that you may learn in us not to think beyond what is written...”
1 Corinthians 4:6

“Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceeds
out of the mouth of God”
Matthew 4:4

As the story in the introduction relates, I was once on the other side of the fence on this issue. Hence, I am grateful for the liberty extended to me then and I similarly extend liberty to those who disagree with what I now see as the Biblical and Historic understanding of this passage. I believe this interpretation and my family's current practice honors God. I also believe that no one should follow this interpretation simply to please man. I encourage all readers to be Bereans and measure my words against the touchstone of Scripture (Acts 17:11). Corrections and comments are most welcome.
~Phil Kayser.

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Introduction

It brought tears to my eyes when I finally realized that I had unwittingly been teaching contrary to Paul's mandates in 1 Corinthians 11:1-16. It struck me like a ton of bricks that I had been honoring what Paul calls a "dishonor" (vv. 4,5,14) and had been quite comfortable with a practice which Paul calls "shameful" (v. 6). We must tremble when we approach God's awesome Word remembering Scripture's warning: "My brethren, let not many of you become teachers, knowing that we shall receive a stricter judgment" (James 3:1). I had not realized the degree to which my feminist culture had affected me, or the degree to which the fear of man had influenced my interpretation until a faithful brother persevered in showing me some blind spots that I had. "Faithful are the wounds of a friend, but the kisses of an enemy are deceitful" (Prov. 27:6).

I had previously held to the position that this chapter is binding, but that the only covering that Paul was talking about is the long hair of the woman. I taught that no fabric covering is mandated. What has amazed me since I came back to the historic interpretation¹ is how clear it all seems now. I had always thought that the passage was very difficult, but a large part of the difficulty lay in defending a position which I now regard as not Biblical. It takes a great deal of ingenuity to get around the central meaning of this passage on head coverings. It is difficult to get a meaning out of the text that will be appealing to twentieth century man. But Paul knew that his message was foolishness to his culture as well (1 Cor. 1:21). But as he said in 1 Corinthians 1:25, "the foolishness of God is wiser than men, and the weakness of God is stronger than men."

I do not plan to give an extensive treatment of 1 Corinthians 11. (There are several papers written by others that you can study if you have that desire.) Instead, I want to give a brief synopsis of what the passage means and then spend the bulk of this booklet answering objections that people have raised. It is always hard to be objective and open to Biblical

¹ This has been the universal practice of the church from the first century till the beginning of the 1900's. While there may be individual statements by scholars that questioned whether the practice was needed or not, I believe Rev. Richard Bacon's assessment is correct: "It is this author's contention, which has yet to be disproved, that every commentary claiming that the covering was hair has been written since the rise of egalitarian feminism." In "Paul's Discourse on the Use of Head Coverings During Public Worship," Richard Bacon, First Presbyterian Church Rowlett.

teaching when there are emotional ramifications, so I urge you to begin your study with prayer, asking God to open your understanding, to restrain your fleshly impulses and to rejoice in God's truth, wherever it may lead you.

In a nutshell, what is the teaching on coverings?

For men:

- Have short hair—"...if a man has long hair it is a dishonor to him" (v. 14).
- Don't wear a hat, a veil or any kind of covering on your head during worship—"Every man praying or prophesying, having his head covered, dishonors his head" (v. 4).
- This applies to all males, young or old, married or single—the word for "man" is literally male.

For women:

- Have long hair—"...if a woman has long hair, it is a glory to her..." (v. 15).
- Wear a covering that comes down the head and covers both the head and the hair—"let her be covered" v. 6; the word for "covering" that is applied to women in verses 5,6,13 is a word for a fabric covering that is draped over the head.
- This applies to all females, young or old, married or single—the word for woman without the article indicates females in general.

Are these teachings only for public worship? Yes.

While other Scriptures address the subject of what to wear during the week, this passage focuses exclusively on a proper dress code for men and women in the public assemblies of formal worship. Paul says that these clothing issues were relevant to "the churches of God" (v. 16). Rather than being an issue only having individual ramifications, this was something to "judge among yourselves" (v. 13) and which the "brethren" (v. 2) jointly were to enter into. Thus it is not by accident that Paul places his discussion of head coverings right in the middle of his extended treatment on the Lord's Supper (10:1-33 and 11:17-34). 1 Corinthians 11:1-16 has no logical connection whatsoever to what Paul

has been discussing² or is about to discuss unless it relates to public worship (of which the Lord's Table was a weekly part). Likewise, the covering of all glory but the glory of God (see discussion under "Objections Answered") does not make sense outside of worship. Other Scriptures indicate that the glory of man (the woman) and the glory of the woman (her hair) not only can, but must be visible in other contexts. Other papers have gone into great detail to show that the context and the subject material all argue for this section mandating dress codes for public worship, not for every day dress. (For more details, read the "Objections Answered" section of this booklet.)

² Notice that chapter 10 begins with baptism (vv. 1-2) and then moves on to affirm that the Old Testament saints "ate the same spiritual food, and all drank the same spiritual drink" (v. 3-4) as we do in the Lord's Supper. He does this to show why they are examples of the kinds of judgments that will happen to us if we partake of the Lord's Supper unworthily (vv. 6ff). Every Old Testament sacramental meal is used to teach us how we can fall into the same judgments in the Lord's Supper. To prove judgments can come upon those who misuse the Lord's Table Paul appeals to the judgments connected with the sacramental meals in the wilderness (10:1-6), the unworthy partaking of the meals attached to the burnt offerings and peace offerings (10:7), the sacrificial meals of Numbers 15:26 (10:8), the judgments to those who ate in Numbers 16 (10:10) and the temple meals that were being eaten at the time Paul was writing (10:18). He deals with meat sacrificed to idols in 10:14-31 to say that it is inconsistent to ritually participate in meat offered to idols and also partake of the Lord's Supper. "The cup of blessing which we bless, is it not the communion of the blood of Christ? The bread which we break, is it not the communion of the body of Christ?... You cannot drink the cup of the Lord and the cup of demons; you cannot partake of the Lord's table and of the table of demons" (10:16,21). This is the basis for his discussion of meat offered to idols through the rest of the chapter. It is clear then, that chapter 10's theme is picked up again in 11:17-34. If that is so, 11:1-16 must somehow relate. The symbols of head, bread and wine must all be connected with worship.

Exegesis of the Passage

1 Corinthians 11:1 Imitate me, just as I also imitate Christ.

What Paul is about to discuss is not only apostolic tradition, but also carries with it the authority of Christ. Imitation of his and Christ's practice relative to head coverings is not an option.

1 Corinthians 11:2 Now I praise you, brethren, that you remember me in all things and keep the traditions just as I delivered them to you.

Which things was Paul praising them for? Commentators point out that it can't be the issue of the Lord's Supper (chapters 10; 11:17-34) because he says precisely the opposite when broaching that subject: "Now in giving these instructions I do not praise you..." (v. 17). Instead, he is praising them for keeping the apostolic tradition on head coverings and long hair. Though a few members had perhaps questioned the church policy on head coverings, the church as a whole was keeping everything that Paul had taught.

That phrase "the traditions as I delivered them to you" uses the Greek word *paradosis*, which means "a handing down, transmission" (Liddel & Scott), "a handing down or over, a tradition." (NAS Greek) The word occurs twice in that phrase and could be rendered "the things handed down, I handed down to you." Scripture knows of only two types of traditions handed down. It forbids any subjection for a moment to the "traditions of men" (Matt. 15:1-9; Mark 7:1-13; Col. 2:8), but it treats as infallible and binding the traditions handed down from the apostles (2 Thes. 2:15; 3:6). What the "culture bound" advocates are ironically saying is that Paul was mandating that the Corinthian Christians subject their consciences to the traditions of men. This despite the fact that Paul had earlier said, "that you may learn in us not to think beyond what is written" (4:6). Paul would never have imposed man-made traditions in the language of ethics ("ought not" [v. 7], "ought" [v. 10], "imitate Christ" [v. 1], etc.). This would violate Christ's maxim: "in vain they worship Me, teaching as doctrines the commandments of men" (Matt. 15:9). Either it is a commandment of men (culture) or a commandment of God. I cannot conceive that the same Paul who castigated men when they succumbed to 'innocent' traditions such as "touch not, taste not, handle not" (Col. 2:20-23) would bind their consciences to the changing whims of culture in 1 Corinthians 11. Where does this leave the

regulative principle of worship? Paul's maxim is "let no one judge you" and do not submit to "the commandments and doctrines of men" (Col. 2:22). In 1 Corinthians 2:3 Paul insisted that the "things we also speak, [are] not in words taught by human wisdom, but in those taught by the Spirit." Paul had been given a sacred trust on the teaching of these first 16 verses and he was passing it on to the disciples. These traditions did not originate in Corinth, nor did they originate in Paul. They were a deposit of truth given by revelation of Christ to Paul to Corinth (thus the command in verse 1 to "imitate me, just as I also imitate Christ.")

But notice too Paul's approval that they "keep the traditions as I delivered them to you." The word for "keep" is a very strong word which means "to prevent from going away; to hold fast; to guard" (BAGD). Thus this verse is translated variously as "guard the traditions" (BAG), "held fast the traditions" (ASV), and "keep unchanged the rules" (Con). Why would they need to guard these teachings if they were culturally relative? If we can adapt to our cultural dress codes (as many claim) why couldn't the Corinthians do so? Furthermore, why would Paul insist that they be guarded "as I delivered them to you"? This is a strong argument against the issue of head coverings and hair being culturally relative. There were outward cultural pressures which were causing them to drift from the apostolic practice (just as such cultural pressures make people ashamed of these verses today).³ And Paul wants them to guard the tradition on dress code from any change.

1 Corinthians 11:3 But I want you to know that the head of every man is Christ, the head of woman is man, and the head of Christ is God.

Notice that the authority issue comes 1st, not 2nd. Paul makes head covering a necessary implication of the fact that man is the head of the woman. As long as this authority structure continues to be relevant, the head coverings that flow from it are relevant.

This also means that it would be hypocrisy to wear head coverings while rebelling against the authority structure that they symbolize. In the 1800's there were many feminists who continued to wear head coverings while inconsistently overthrowing the distinctions between the sexes. An

³ It is clear from Appendix A that Paul was bucking the culture, not accommodating himself to the culture. Then, as now, there were pressures to be "with the times." This appendix examines the pictures of Greece to see if anti-headcovering advocates' arguments can stand up to the evidence.

attack against the authority structure is an attack against the symbol. Conversely, an attack against the symbol (as we will see) is an attack against the authority structure (see verse 10).

1 Corinthians 11:4 Every man praying or prophesying, having his head covered, dishonors his head.

Notice that Paul says, “every man.” This was not an outmoded principle that applies only to first century men in Corinth. It is universal language.⁴ The word “man” is literally “male,” and so this prohibition applies to young and old. Notice too that it is not just women who are singled out for correction. Dress codes apply equally to men and to women.

But notice how important this was to Paul. The male who covered his head in this way dishonored his “head.” Paul has already defined the man’s “head” as Christ in verse 3. If something dishonors Christ, we ought to sit up and take notice. The Greek word for “dishonors” means to humiliate or disgrace or shame. If our head, Jesus Christ, is disgraced or dishonored by any behavior that we might engage in, then we must flee from it. We must not dismiss this matter lightly as a matter of inconsequence. If it is that important to Christ, it cannot be a mere cultural convention.

The Greek phrase translated “having his head covered” occurs only here, and is the most general of the three terms for “covered” used in this chapter. The Greek is *κατα κεφαλῆς ἔχων* and means literally “having [anything] down the head.” Later he amplifies what he means by forbidding a man to have a garment covering (v. 7) or to have long hair (v. 14). But any kind of covering that hangs down the head is forbidden to the man. [This gives a clue as to the kind of coverings God calls women to have. The natural covering of hair hangs down the head and the fabric covering of cloth hangs down the head.]

Some have offered the following objection: “Perhaps there were only two or three men who weren’t wearing shawls since 1 Corinthians 14:29 says only two or three prophets may speak. Since the pastor is usually the only one who speaks, is it the pastor alone who must have his head uncovered?” However, the context of the whole passage calls for the dress code not just during prayer and prophecy, but during the entire

⁴ Interestingly, there are many references to shame for men connected with a covering over the head. In fact, at points it is called a “garment of shame.” See “Common Objections Answered” beginning on page 25.

service. Paul frequently uses a figure of speech called synecdoche where a part is used to describe the whole. Since prayer and prophecy are the principle parts of the worship services, that phrase represents the whole worship service. Paul confirms this by the fact that he makes prohibitions to men in verses 7 and 14 as absolute prohibitions, not just prohibitions during prayer and prophecy. This conclusion is further borne out when it is remembered that the hair could not be selectively put on or off during various parts of a worship service and there is a parallel need for both coverings. All of this argues that the man was to keep a covering off his head during the whole of the worship service (versus during only two activities). (See “Objections Answered” for more information.)

1 Corinthians 11:5 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.

Many have puzzled over this verse which appears to allow women to pray and prophesy in church since it seems to be in apparent contradiction with 1 Corinthians 14:27-36 where women prophets are explicitly forbidden from bringing their prophecies during the worship service or publicly speaking (as a voice of one). Many attempts to resolve this have been suggested.⁵ The simplest explanation is the

⁵ Some have suggested that Paul forbids all three activities (praying, prophesying, and head uncovered) here as dishonoring to the woman’s head (the male). Others have suggested that women did pray and prophecy out loud, but that they wore head coverings when doing so. While possible, I believe that this interpretation creates far more problems than it solves. Furthermore, as we will see when discussing the three glories of this passage, it fails to account for the immediate context. Others suggest that Paul is not commenting on whether praying and prophesying is appropriate here. He is simply addressing the problem of uncovered heads here, and deals with the problem of prophesying and praying in chapter 14. Others suggest that Paul is simply arguing *ad hominem* – assuming the position of the feminists in order to show how inconsistent their position would be. (If they can pray and prophesy, then there would be no need for the covering since they would be taking on the position of a man, and if they need the covering, then they can’t pray and prophesy.) Others suggest that Paul is simply using the figure of speech used earlier to describe the worship service as a whole. Greg Price comments:

“As in the case of men "praying or prophesying" (1 Cor. 11:4), so in the case of women "praying or prophesying" (1 Cor. 11:5), the "praying or prophesying" is to be understood as representative of all acts of worship (a figure of speech in which a part is stated for the whole is known as a synecdoche) in which women are to spiritually engage (even though their participation in praying and preaching is silent, it is

traditional one which I explain under the heading of objection #5. In summary it is this: Paul describes the problem that has happened in two places: in chapter 11 and chapter 14. In this chapter (which deals with head coverings) he only addresses the part of the problem relevant to head coverings. In chapter 14 (which deals with tongues and prophecy) he only addresses the part of the problem relevant to speech.

There are three main arguments in defense of this view. First, it should be remembered that 11:5 is forbidding an activity, not endorsing an activity. One must always be much more cautious in drawing positive implications from a negative statement, especially since 14:34-35 is so absolute in its prohibition of speech “in church” to a woman.⁶ Second, Paul typically argues in this fashion. Precisely the same method was used in 1 Corinthians 8:10 and 10:20-21 when dealing with the problem of eating and drinking in the pagan temples. In 8:10 Paul says, “For if anyone sees you who have knowledge eating in an idol’s temple, will not the conscience of him who is weak be emboldened to eat those things offered to idols?” Does this mean that people with knowledge are permitted to eat in an idol’s temple so long as weaker Christians don’t know about it? No. Both the eating and the causing of the weaker brother to stumble are prohibited. But in chapter 8 Paul is content to deal with the conscience of the weaker brother and in 10:20-21 he absolutely prohibits eating and drinking in pagan temples. Third, it is a logical fallacy to derive the positive permission to pray and to prophesy from this negative prohibition. As John Robbins says,

“The lesson in logic Calvin gives is extremely important: ‘By here condemning the one [speaking with uncovered head] he does not commend the other [speaking].’ If one were to say, it is wrong to go through a red light while speeding, he cannot be understood to say that it is right to speed. It is wrong both to speed and to ignore red lights. So it is with women speaking in church uncovered. Women speaking uncovered in church is wrong, and so is women speaking in church.”⁷

But even if a person believes that women are permitted to speak in church, they still cannot get around the clear implications regarding head

nevertheless an active participation of their whole being in the worship of God). Yet, they are commanded along with men to vocally lift their praises to God “in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs” (Eph. 5:19; Col. 3:16).”

⁶ Interestingly, evangelical scholar Gordon Fee argues that there is no way of avoiding the traditionalist argument if 14:34-35 is a part of Scripture. His solution? He says that those two verses could not have been written by Paul and therefore they are not part of Scripture and are not binding. He offers no textual support for this conclusion. (See the extensive quotes given under objection #5, page 38.)

⁷ Robbins, p. 26.

coverings. First, God says this mandate applies to “every woman.” Again, this argues for a universal practice, not just certain women in the congregation, or women in a certain age. The definite article is not attached to the word for “woman” (γυνή), indicating that it was the female gender rather than wives which is being referred to.

Second, the woman dishonors her head (her husband or father) if she does not have this covering on her head. Again, Paul is not talking about what the man or woman will subjectively feel; this is talking about God’s objective standard of honor and dishonor.

Thirdly, Paul throughout this passage distinguishes the covering of hair from the fabric covering women are to wear. In verse 4 Paul uses a general term⁸ to rule out a man having anything hanging down his head (whether hair or fabric). The Greek word for covering used in verses 5-13 means a garment thrown over the head.⁹ The word used for covering in verse 15 is literally “a wrap around”¹⁰ and refers to the flowing hair of a woman. It is not valid to use the “covering” in verse 15 to invalidate the different covering in verses 5-13.

Fourth, there is a clear connection between the dishonor experienced relative to the fabric covering of verses 5-13 and the dishonor experienced relative to the covering of hair in verses 14-15. Paul says that for a woman to not be covered “is one and the same as if her head was shaved”? Notice that he doesn’t say that she is shaved. If she were shaved, one could argue that the hair and the covering were the same. But this is “one and the same as if.” He uses the “as if” language to distinguish the covering of fabric (which she is not wearing) from the covering of hair (which she would be ashamed to cut off). The “as if” language powerfully uncovers just how much the lack of a head covering is a dishonor. Just as a woman’s shaved head would have shamed the

⁸ Κατα κεφαλῆς ἔχων meaning literally “having [anything] down the head.”

⁹ The Greek word is ἀκατακαλύπτω and is the verbal form of καλυμμα for fabric covering. It is translated in the Bible as veil or covering. S.T. Bloomfield says, “But from the context, and from its being at ver. 15 interchanged with *peribolaion*, it should rather seem to mean a kerchief (couvre-chef). So Theophylact, kalumma... it seems to denote a kind of head-gear, like the ancient couvre-chef (or kerchief), consisting of a piece of cloth of a square form thrown over the head, and tied under the chin, and thereby nearly covering the face, except the eyes...” (vol. 2, p. 162).

¹⁰ περιβολαιου is defined in Liddel and Scott as “anything which is thrown round.” Paul carefully uses a different word so as not to confuse the readers. Here it is used to refer to the hair hanging down the head and draped as a “wrap around.”

man who was her head, God sees the failure to have a head covering as being similarly shameful.

1 Corinthians 11:6 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.

In the first sentence Paul argues that if women are going to be unisex in clothing, they might as well be unisex in hair style. In the second sentence he builds on his argument by using a first class conditional clause (the “if” of certainty or the “if” of argument). He is saying, “If (as is certainly true) it is shameful for a woman to be shorn or shaved, let her be covered.” Some translate it “Since it is shameful for a woman to be shorn or shaved, let her be covered.” The word for covering here is a common word for a fabric covering that hung down around the shoulders.

On the distinction between shorn or shaved, Price says,

“Whereas ‘shaven’ refers to hair cut close by a razor, shorn refers to hair cut short by means of other implements. Though the implements may vary in cutting the hair, the result is all the same: the woman takes on the appearance of a man.”

The key point that Paul drives home is that the Old Testament makes clear that it is an abomination for men and women to look and dress like each other. This is especially true in the worship service. Their appearance must reflect their created order.

1 Corinthians 11:7 For a man indeed ought not to cover his head, since he is the image and glory of God; but woman is the glory of man.

The issue of glory and boasting unifies all the diverse strands in the book of 1 Corinthians. It is a book that contrasts the glory of man and the glory of God. In this passage, Paul applies the concept of glory to worship. This is truly the heart of his argument: no glory should be present in the worship service except for the glory of God. Verse 15 says that a woman’s hair is her glory. This verse says that the woman is the man’s glory. So if God’s glory alone is to be symbolically represented, the man alone should be uncovered. The woman’s glory and the man’s glory are both covered with a garment.

As we will demonstrate under "Objections Answered," the issue of hair length and head coverings is clearly rooted in the Old Testament. But even this concept of the glory of God versus the glory of man can be seen in the Old Testament in connection with head coverings. For

example, this concept is key to understanding why the high priest's head was always covered when he represented man to God (before the glory cloud in the holy of holies), but he would always take off his head covering when he left the holy place and represented God to the people.¹¹ In both places of formal worship, only the glory of God was to be visible. In the holy of holies the glory of God was symbolically represented by the glory cloud, and since the high priest was representing the glory of man to God, he was covered. When he ministered before the people however, he had to take off his head covering (like every other male) because he now represented the glory of God to those under his authority. Males as the visible representatives of the glory of God had to remain uncovered.

Therefore, Paul is not inventing a new concept when he applies the glory of God and the glory of man to the issue of who should and should not be covered. This is a concept clearly rooted in the Old Testament.¹²

1 Corinthians 11:8 For man is not from woman, but woman from man.

1 Corinthians 11:9 Nor was man created for the woman, but woman for the man.

Paul gives two more reasons why men should be uncovered in worship while women should be covered. He bases the need for distinctions in head covering on the creation of Eve from Adam, and secondly, the fact that Eve was made as Adam's helper, not vice versa. Any time Paul bases a subject on the Creation order, he is enforcing an abiding principle. If head coverings reflect this creation distinction between men and women, then it argues that they are not a cultural oddity.¹³

¹¹ Ezekiel 44:19 says, "When they go out to the outer court, to the outer court of the people, they shall take off their garments in which they have ministered, leave them in the holy chambers, and put on other garments; and in their holy garments they shall not sanctify the people." 42:14 says, "When the priests enter them [the holy chambers], they shall not go out of the holy chamber into the outer court; but there they shall leave their garments in which they minister, for they are holy. They shall put on other garments; then they may approach that which is for the people." Ezekiel 44:20 indicates that the priest must always have short hair (since he couldn't put it on and off).

¹² For more details on the Old Testament background, see the answers to objections #4 and #8 (pages 35 and 44, respectively).

¹³ See my comments on verse 15 for more information on God's provision of covering both before the fall and after the fall. Prior to the fall God provides the woman with long hair. Though Genesis 3:21 does not specify what kinds of clothing God made for Adam

1 Corinthians 11:10 For this reason the woman ought to have a symbol of authority on her head, because of the angels.

The vocabulary, grammar and meaning of this verse have all proved difficult to understand for commentators of all theological persuasions. How do the phrases “for this reason” and “because of” relate to each other? Should we insert the word “symbol of” into the verse (as many versions do), or should we leave it literally, “have authority on her head” (as the WEB, Geneva, KJV, TNIV and Bishop Bibles do)? Is the “authority” a reference to the woman’s own authority or her husband/father’s authority? Should we translate the verb as “to have” or “to keep?” What role do angels have in all this? Hodge said, “There is scarcely a passage in the New Testament which has so much taxed the learning and ingenuity of commentators as this. After all that has been written, it remains just as obscure as ever.”¹⁴ Though this may be overstated, almost all commentators agree with Gordon Fee who says, “this is one of the truly difficult texts in this letter.”¹⁵ So I approach this verse with humility, and do not claim to have the last word on the subject.

However, though there are still some ambiguities, I believe Gordon Clark is correct when he says, “in spite of the difficulty the verse must mean that woman’s subordination to man, as asserted in the previous verse, implies a moral obligation to have something on her head...”¹⁶ That much appears to be clear, and for the purposes of this paper ought to be sufficient.

However, I have found encouragement for my personal worship in this verse, and would like to briefly give my understanding of the verse as it relates to Paul’s argument. I will do so by breaking the verse down into smaller pieces.

and Eve, we can assume that it would not contradict His will in Deuteronomy 22:5. During the age of clothing, man must imitate God’s covering with an appropriate covering of clothing when meeting before the Almighty. Paul sees nothing new about the practice he is advocating. Being inspired, He has the insight to know how to tie the issues of Adam and Eve’s creation together with the subject of head covering.

¹⁴ Charles Hodge, *A Commentary on 1 & 2 Corinthians* (Carlisle, Pennsylvania: Banner of Truth Trust, 1978), p. 211.

¹⁵ Gordon Fee, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians*, (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1987), p. 518. Thiselton’s commentary spends five pages trying to unravel the passage and comes up without a clear conclusion.

¹⁶ Gordon Clark, *First Corinthians* (Jefferson: Trinity Foundation, 1975), p. 173.

For this reason... Does this point backward to the argument in verses 7-9 (the most natural way to read it in the Greek), or does it point forward to the “because of the angels?” Gordon Fee is probably correct when he observes that in Paul’s arguments elsewhere, it often goes in both directions at once:

“It first of all indicates that what is about to be said is the proper inference from what has immediately preceded: the woman ought to have authority over her head because she is man’s glory. At the same time it anticipates yet another closely allied reason to be given in the conclusion that is being advanced. The NIV caught the sense – and the difficulties – by translating, ‘for this reason, and because of the angels [the woman ought to have the sign of authority on her head.]’”¹⁷

This means that the authority structure of the man and the woman are somehow related to what Paul is saying about the angels.

For this reason a woman ought to have... At a minimum, this reinforces our contention that Paul is not trying to get the Corinthians to be more culturally sensitive. Instead, he treats this as a moral mandate. His argument is that the created order (verses 7-9) and the presence of angels (v. 10c) mandate (“ought”) certain behavior. This behavior is that she must possess, have or keep something on her head.

...ought to have a symbol of authority on her head...

Commentators are divided on whether the covering is a symbol of her being under authority or her having authority. I believe that this is a false dilemma since the Bible indicates that we only have authority when we are “under authority” (Matt. 8:8-9). When women attack the symbol of authority¹⁸, they ironically lose authority in Paul’s eyes. This is brought out most clearly in the last phrase:

...ought to have a symbol of authority on her head, because of the angels. Since the context of the passage is worship, and specifically the covenant vows of submission in the Lord’s Table (chapters 10-11), it is time to mention that angels are present in our worship services. They are witnesses to our vows (Eccl. 5:6; 1 Tim. 5:21), our singing (Psalm 138:1), our prayers (Rev. 8:1-6), our repentance (Luke 15:10) and our covenant faithfulness or lack thereof (Rev. 3:5). They join us in our worship of God (Heb. 12:22; Rev. 5:11; 7:11) and are troubled when we

¹⁷ Fee, *Corinthians*.

¹⁸ The word “symbol” is not in the Greek, though most translations include it. Literally the text says “the woman ought to have authority on her head...” Jamieson, Fausset and Brown say “Paul had before his mind the root-connection between the *Hebrew* terms for “veil” (*radid*), and “subjection” (*radad*).” For Paul, it seems clear that the covering can be called “authority” because it represents authority. Thus, I have no objection to adding the words “symbol of,” though they are not needed to make the meaning clear.

do so with hypocrisy (Eccl. 5:6). God has given each of His children angels to be “ministering spirits sent forth to minister to those who will inherit salvation” (Heb. 1:12). These angels are sometimes called “watchers/guards” (Dan. 4:13,17,23; 10:13; 12:1) because they are assigned to protect us (Psalm 34:7; 91:11-12; Dan. 6:22; Luke 4:10; Matt 18:10; Acts 27:23-24). But these angels also take sides in disputes and/or offenses between believers (Matt 18:10) and are used by the Lord for inflicting discipline (Eccl. 5:6; 2 Sam. 24:10-25).

Therefore, contrary to what some people think, these angels are very relevant to Paul’s discussion of worship. It is my contention that angels are highly offended when they see women casting off their symbol of authority. It is also my contention that wicked angels (demons) take this as an invitation to tempt such families.¹⁹ The wicked angels abandoned God’s created order and He judged them. The elect angels must be dumbfounded that men and women routinely reject God’s creation order. Demonic angels certainly know how to take advantage of such rebellion. The symbol is thus not just a testimony to men, but to angels (fallen and elect). Though men may not appreciate the symbol, the angels do.

Bengel points out that by rejecting the symbol of subjection, the woman jumps beyond both men and angels to take authority that is not hers.²⁰ To overthrow the symbol is to overthrow the system. Just as a person who defaces government property has attacked the government itself, so too Paul indicates that the one who rejects the symbol of authority (head covering) rejects the authority itself.

But the reference to angels is yet another evidence that Paul is not imposing a culturally relative custom upon this church. As Greg Price worded it,

“It should be apparent to all that Paul’s argument from the angel’s observation of Christian worship is not an argument from culture. Angels are not cultural beings, nor are they limited to particular cultures in ministering to God’s people or in witnessing the worship of God’s people. If women are obligated to have the sign of man’s headship upon their heads in worship because of the angels, then this obligation is universally binding in all the churches of Jesus Christ until Christ returns.”

¹⁹ This interpretation has an ancient Jewish background as explained by Edersheim’s interpretation of 1 Corinthians 11:10. See Alfred Edersheim, *Sketches of Jewish Social Life* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1978), pp. 154-155.

²⁰ Johann Albrecht Bengel, *Gnomon, translated by Charlton Lewis and Marvin Vincent*, (Philadelphia: Perkinpine & Higgins, 1862), pp. 222-227.

For other implications of this reference to the angels, see the section “Common Objections Answered” (beginning on pg 23).

1 Corinthians 11:11 Nevertheless, neither is man independent of woman, nor woman independent of man, in the Lord.

1 Corinthians 11:12 For as woman came from man, even so man also comes through woman; but all things are from God.

Paul clarifies that men and women are mutually dependant upon each other, but this mutual dependence never effaces the distinctions of the sexes or the authority structure that God put in place.

It is interesting that every illustration Paul has given to bolster the idea that head coverings should be worn by women and not by men are illustrations of an abiding character. Men are born of women, and the woman’s role as a bearer of a child is an incredibly honorable one. In 1 Timothy 2:1-15, which also deals with what is appropriate to a woman’s clothing, prayer and submission in the worship service ends with this same argument of childbearing. As long as it is a woman’s calling in life to bear children, this head covering is an appropriate symbol to wear.

1 Corinthians 11:13 Judge among yourselves. Is it proper for a woman to pray to God with her head uncovered?

There are two possible ways of taking this phrase. The first is to say that Paul is appealing to custom in verses 13-15 (the sociological argument). This is certainly a possibility (but see exposition of verse 14). If this interpretation is correct, Paul’s progression of thought would be as follows:

Christological argument (v. 1) – do it to imitate Christ.

Apostolic argument (vv. 1-2) – do it because this is the apostolic practice.

Headship argument (vv. 3-6) – do it because it honors the principles of headship.

Glory argument (vv. 7-15) – do it because all glory except for the glory of God must be covered in worship. The man’s glory must be covered, and since woman is the glory of man (see v 7), the woman must be covered with hair. The woman’s glory must be covered, and since her hair is her glory (see v. 15), her hair must be covered.

Creation argument (vv. 7-12) – do it to honor God’s creation order.

Angelic argument (v. 10) – do it so as not to offend the angels.

Sociological argument (vv. 13-15) – do it because custom itself reinforces the Biblical norm.

Ecclesiastical argument (v. 16) – do it because this is the custom of all the churches; to be contentious over this custom is to go against the church.

Some people adopt the sociological explanation and then assume that Paul's whole argument was simply to honor cultural norms. But adding a sociological reason for coverings does not do away with the other seven arguments.

Though I have been attracted to the above argument, I cannot accept it because this is not how Paul uses the phrase "judge among yourselves" elsewhere. For example, in 1 Corinthians 10:14-15 he wants the Corinthians to flee from the ingrained custom of idolatry. When he tells them, "judge for yourselves," he is not making his commandment relative, but is asking them "as wise men" to judge if he has not made a Biblical case.

This is how we should understand 1 Corinthians 11:13. Having instructed them on the Old Testament's teachings on this subject, Paul now asks them to re-judge this whole issue and verify that they come to the same conclusion, namely that it is not proper for a woman to pray to God with her head uncovered. He does not ask them to judge properness based on culture, or on feelings, but on his prior instructions. The same usage of the term "proper" (Greek *πρέπον*) appears in the other New Testament passage that mandates particular clothing for prayer.²¹ There it clearly means proper when judged by the Bible: "which is proper for women professing godliness" (1 Tim. 2:10). Note these other examples of this usage of "proper":

- "But Jesus answered and said to him, 'Permit it to be so now, for thus it is fitting (*πρέπον*) for us to fulfill all righteousness.' Then he allowed Him" (Matt. 3:15).
- "But as for you, speak the things which are proper for sound doctrine" (Titus 2:1).

1 Corinthians 11:14 Does not even nature itself teach you that if a man has long hair, it is a dishonor to him?

Thiselton outlines four possible meanings of the word "nature."

"(1) an intuitive or inborn sense of what is fitting, right, or seemly (Bengel and Meyer); (2) the way humans are created, ie., their constitution as men and women

²¹ The issue of what garment is "proper" (Greek "*prepon*") to prayer is commented on by Paul in 1 Timothy 2:8-10 where Paul says that males are to pray with raised hands (showing leadership) whereas women are to pray with "modest *apparel*... which is proper [*prepon*] for women professing godliness." In both passages there is a fabric covering which is said to be "proper" for prayer and which shows submission. There is only one kind of clothing in either Old or New Testaments which shows submission, and that is the head covering.

(de Wette); (3) the physical reality of how the world is ordered (Osiander, Hofius); and (4) the customs of a given society (Chrysostom, Calvin, Grotius, Schrage).”²²

The first definition of the term would mean that God had written this distinction of long and short hair into men’s consciences as part of His natural law. Those who take this view say that Paul is appealing to their conscience.

The second option has in its favor that this is the way Paul uses the term elsewhere (see Rom. 1:26; 2:14; 11:24; Gal. 2:15; 4:8). Interestingly, in Romans 1:26 Paul discusses how unnatural homosexuality is, and uses the same terms for nature (*phusia*) and dishonor/shame (*atimia*) that are used in 1 Corinthians 11:14. If this is the definition of the term that Paul had in mind, then Paul is saying that God’s intention when he created men and women was to have them look different from each other in their hairstyle. In Romans 1:26 naturalness is not dictated by cultural custom because Greek custom had no difficulty with homosexuality – indeed they glorified it. Similarly, what is natural in 1 Corinthians 11:14 is not what custom dictated because many Greek men in Corinth had long hair.²³ Instead, it was what God had made men and women to be like. To change the differences in hair is just as much an overthrow of God’s order as dressing like the opposite sex (Deut. 22:5). Demons are described as overthrowing God’s order when they had faces “like the faces of men... [but] hair like the hair of women” (Rev. 9:7-8). The created order that God established seems like the most natural interpretation.

The third possible definition of this term “nature” is that this is the physical nature of things.²⁴ Though there is some support in the literature

²² Anthony C. Thiselton, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2000), p. 844.

²³ Adam Clarke comments, “In ancient times the people of Achaia, the province in which Corinth stood, and the Greeks in general, were noted for their long hair; and hence called by Homer, in a great variety of places, ‘the long-haired Greeks.’” *Adam Clarke’s Commentary on the Bible, Abridged by Ralph Earle* (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1967), p. 1110.

²⁴ See for example, Clarke, *ibid*. He argues, “The hair of the male rarely grows like that of a female, unless art is used, and even then it bears but scanty proportion to the former. Hence it is truly womanish to have long hair, and it is a shame to a man who affects it.” Others point to the propensity for men to go bald more frequently than women and other differences in body hair. For example, they appeal to Epictetus who says that differences in hair for men and women is part of nature, and that men ought not to shave. Instead, “we ought not, so far as in us lies, to confuse the sexes which have been distinguished in this fashion” (Loeb, I, 111.).

for this, it is unlikely. As Fee says, “After all, what ‘nature teaches’ comes about by an ‘unnatural’ means – a haircut.”²⁵

The fourth argument is that Paul is introducing a sociological or cultural explanation. Though this is possible, it is unlikely for two reasons. First, the culture in Corinth did not mandate short hair for men. Second, Paul is opposing a cultural problem that is coming into the church, not adopting it. (See answers to objection #1.). But even if one were to adopt this interpretation, it is clear that should culture change, the other seven reasons Paul has given have not changed.

1 Corinthians 11:15 But if a woman has long hair, it is a glory to her; for her hair is given to her for a covering.

Some have tried to argue that Paul is finally defining his terms, and that he now makes it clear that all references to “covering” earlier in the chapter simply meant “long hair.” The fatal flaw with this argument is that the Greek term Paul is supposed to be defining doesn’t occur in verse 15, and therefore wouldn’t have defined the term at all for the Greek reader. Paul uses an entirely different word for “covering” in verse 15 than elsewhere in the chapter. This would be extremely confusing if one holds to the “hair is the only covering” view, but it makes perfect sense if Paul is arguing from God’s natural covering (hair) to reinforce the need for the post-fall covering (clothing of the head). This sudden change of terms cannot be accidental. If Paul wanted to say that hair is the only covering he intended in the chapter, he could have a) used the same word for covering elsewhere and/or b) used the word hair to make it clear. But Paul appears to go out of his way to distinguish between two kinds of covering for two kinds of glory.

This distinction between two coverings is also implied in verse 14. The word “even” in “does not even nature teach you,” shows that Paul is using a new subject (hair) to give teaching about the previous subject (putting something on the head), and that even the covering of hair implies a difference between men and women on the issue of coverings. Thus the “hair-only” interpretation lacks simplicity and ignores the distinctions in vocabulary that Paul uses.

But beyond that, this objection completely misses the flow of Paul’s argument in verses 7-15 as he develops the two glories that must be covered so that only the glory of God is seen. Since the woman is the glory of man (v. 7), she must be covered (with her hair), and since the

²⁵ Fee, *Corinthians*, p. 527.

woman's hair is the glory of the woman (v. 15), the hair itself needs to be covered. As Richard Bacon says, "The hair of a woman cannot be both the glory and that which covers the glory!"²⁶ Since I have written in great detail on this subject under objection #2 in the back of the book, I will refer the reader there. The reference to even nature teaching us by way of hair (v. 14) indicates that nature's covering is not the same covering as what Paul has been talking about. Thus, there is a natural covering and a clothing covering. Nature had only one physical covering (the hair), whereas God insisted on additional covering after the Fall.

It is important to remember that God gave a natural covering to Eve the moment she was created. As John Lightfoot said,

"Hair was given to our grandmother Eve for a covering, (as the apostle clearly asserts in this place,) from the first moment of her creation, before she was subjected to a husband, and heard that 'He shall rule over thee;' yea, before she was married to Adam."²⁷

There are two important implications of this fact. First, the issue of long hair and a corresponding head covering is not just for wives, since Eve was created with a covering of long hair before she was given to Adam. Lightfoot continues, "The apostle treats not of wives alone, but of women in general, whether they were wives, virgins, or widows."²⁸

Second, God sets the pattern which man is to follow. God's work of making a natural covering before the fall must be imitated after the fall during the era of clothing. Adam and Eve lost the covering of innocence (which some take to be a glory radiating from them) with the fall, and immediately required a covering for their shame.²⁹ Sin introduced the need for coverings of clothing. But Paul's point is that if the natural order created by God before the Fall required a covering for the woman, how much more so after the fall. (That is how I take the force of the "even" in "does not even nature itself teach you...")

²⁶ http://www.fpcr.org/blue_banner_articles/headcovr.htm.

²⁷ John Lightfoot, *Commentary on the New Testament from the Talmud and Hebraica* (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson Publishers, 1989), vol. 4, p. 234.

²⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 235.

²⁹ The lack of shame that Adam and Eve had before the fall and the shame that needed to be covered is a theme that needs to be explored more fully. It is clear that Paul draws this issue of "shame" and "dishonor" not just from the other Old Testament passages that I have alluded to elsewhere in this booklet, but also to the Genesis 1-3 account.

1 Corinthians 11:16 But if anyone seems to be contentious, we have no such custom, nor do the churches of God.

When Paul says “we have no such custom,” what is he referring to? This is key, because whatever it was, all the churches sided against those being contentious. The options given are:

- 1) no custom of being contentious,
- 2) this was the pagan custom in Corinth, but not elsewhere,
- 3) no custom of having head coverings,
- 4) no custom of having head coverings or long hair,
- 5) no custom of blurring gender distinctions,
- 6) head coverings “is not something over which [Paul] has great passion... [it] is not to be raised to Canon Law”³⁰
- 7) that there is no custom of women having their heads uncovered or of men covering their heads in worship.

This last view is the historic interpretation of the passage and the one which I hold. It is the apostolic declaration that this was not cultural, but was cross cultural and practiced by all the churches in Christendom.

The first option, while possible, seems unlikely. It is difficult to imagine Paul referring to contentiousness as a custom rather than as a sin. However, since it does not overturn our thesis, but rather supports it, I will not spend any time seeking to overturn this interpretation.

The second option is directly contradicted by the stated purpose of the book which was to guide not only “the church of God which is in Corinth” but also “all who in every place call on the name of Jesus Christ our Lord” (1:2). It is also contradicted by the universal language used in 1 Corinthians 11:1-16 itself: “*every* man praying or prophesying, having his head covered, dishonors his head” (v. 4). “But *every* woman who prays or prophesies with her head uncovered dishonors her head...” Third, it seems extremely unlikely that Paul would have spent so much space and energy imposing customs on Corinth that no other church followed, especially since Corinth was a large city that was familiar with many different customs. Fourth, Paul and Christ speak in the harshest terms about imposing any moral mandates upon the church that do not have the backing of Scripture. Paul’s motto is, “that you may learn in us not to think beyond what is written” (1 Cor. 4:6). See the answers to Objections #1 and #7 for a detailed refutation of this view.

³⁰ Fee, *Corinthians*, p. 530.

The third view is answered in detail under objection #2. This view holds that verse 15 should have been translated as “her hair is given to her instead of a covering” (as opposed to “for a covering”). Verse 16 supposedly follows up by saying that the use of a fabric covering is not a custom anywhere in the churches. The strength of this view is that it takes seriously Paul’s mandate rather than relegating it to a culturally relative custom. The difficulty is that the word for “covering” in verse 15 is totally different from the one used throughout the passage. This only makes sense if hair is a different kind of covering.

The fourth view is ludicrous on the surface of it. If there is no church custom for having long hair or head coverings, why would Paul have argued so vigorously for it? Why would he have called it a “tradition” of Christ in verses 1-2? Why would he have used such rebukes as “dishonor” (vv. 4,5,14) and “shameful” (v. 6)? Why would he use the imperative language of ethics if it is not mandated? After all, Paul says that they “ought not” [v. 7] to do one thing and they “ought” [v. 10] to do another. In effect this interpretation says that verse 16 does away with everything that has been established in verses 1-15. It makes no exegetical or logical sense.

The fifth interpretation is that there is no custom for blurring male/female distinctions in any of the churches. While the passage as a whole has that as an underlying motif, it fails to adequately deal with the immediate context of coverings and long hair (vv. 1-15). It is a specific kind of distinction that Paul has been arguing for, and unless good exegetical reasons can be produced to ignore the specifics, they should still apply. The answers to objection #3 deal with this interpretation.

The sixth view is that Paul is now saying that this advice is optional. It says that though Paul prefers head coverings, he is not overly exercised about it. The problem should be evident to anyone who has read this far; Paul was very exercised about it. He gave commands and reprimands to anyone thinking of changing the church policy, and praised the church for guarding his teaching on this subject. Nor is there any indication in Scripture that there are optional ethical imperatives and Canon Law imperatives in the Bible. This passage has all the earmarks of Biblical ethics. May we not so profane as to relegate issues of dishonor and shame to the unimportant.

My interpretation is that there is no support that the contentious person can appeal to anywhere in church practice. Every church was following Paul’s custom, not the custom that was being contended for. As F.F.

Bruce translates this in his commentary, “we have no such custom as you are trying to introduce, and neither have the churches of God elsewhere.” Thus, Paul’s mandate is universally practiced in the first century. He is ending by saying (in effect), “If you still want to be argumentative, there is only one more thing to say: ‘You are out of line with the custom that has been established by all of the apostles in all of the churches.’” This was not a Greek thing, or a Roman thing. This was a cross-cultural mandate for every church. Also, Paul was not alone in giving this mandate. He had the backing of Christ (vv. 1-2) and of the apostles (“we” – v. 16).

We would expect that if this was indeed the custom of all the churches in Paul’s time, that there should be an unbroken tradition within the church in the first few centuries. And this is indeed exactly what we find, despite the fact that church fathers said this custom was mocked by pagans. See Appendix A for some examples from the time of the catacombs and onward.

Common Objections Answered

Objection #1 – “The commands for long hair and a head covering are culturally relative and time bounded issues.”

This view says that Paul was asking the Corinthian Christians to adapt to their culture. Since long hair is no longer shameful for men, nor short hair for women, we are not bound. Since being covered with a shawl in worship is no longer considered shameful for men or necessary for women, we are not bound.

The only proofs used to demonstrate this are supposedly taken from archeology.

However, the following points demonstrate that even if archeology had authority to overthrow exegesis, archeology now shows the opposite of this objection.

See Appendix B (page 45) “Five Myths About Corinthian Headwear,” by professor Bruce Terry. This article examines the archeological frescoes, paintings, etc of women from the 8th century BC to the 1st Century BC. These pictures blow apart the following myths:

- 1) that women in Corinth were expected to cover their heads when appearing in public,
- 2) that only prostitutes appeared without a headcovering,
- 3) that the covering women wore covered the whole head including the face,
- 4) that Greeks shaved the heads of women caught in adultery,
- 5) that men always prayed bare headed.

What is clear from the archeological evidence is that Paul was bucking the culture of Rome (since both men and women prayed with heads covered), the culture of Greece (since both men and women prayed with their heads uncovered), and the culture of later Judaism (since men covered their heads when praying).

Paul was indifferent to many cultural matters. In 1 Corinthians 8-9 he deals with the issue of liberty of conscience. But notice the stark contrast between the language of those chapters and the language of chapter 11. In 8:8 he says, “for neither if we eat are we the better, nor if we do not eat are we the worse.” But in regard to head coverings Paul uses the language of divine imperative: “imitate Christ” (v. 1), “dishonor” (see vv. 4,5,14), “shameful” (v. 6), “ought not” (v. 7), “ought” (v. 10) and

“judge” (v. 13). It is clear that Paul treats head coverings as non-optional imperatives, whereas he gave great liberty of individual choice on the issues in chapters 8-9. This is strong divine testimony that Paul cannot be speaking of cultural matters here.

Furthermore, there is evidence of pagan men with long hair. Adam Clarke comments: “In ancient times the people of Achaia, the province in which Corinth stood, and the Greeks in general, were noted for their long hair; and hence called by Homer, in a great variety of places, ‘the long-haired Greeks’”³¹ Paul was clearly going against culture, not conforming to cultural tastes and mores.

It is a dangerous practice to explain away doctrine based on archeology. We should share Paul’s attitude: “that you may learn in us not to think beyond what is written” (1 Cor. 4:6).

Paul gives more reasons to show that this binds every church, in every culture and in every time period, than he does for any other doctrine in 1 Corinthians.

Paul not only wrote this epistle “to the church of God which is at Corinth,” but “to those who are sanctified in Christ Jesus, called to be saints, *with all who in every place* call on the name of Jesus Christ our Lord, both theirs and ours” (1 Cor. 1:2). That alone ought to show that he intended these principles to be kept by Rome, Ephesus and every other portion of the church. In addition to this, Paul explicitly says that what was enforced at Corinth was also the custom of “the churches of God” (v. 16).

That passage uses universal: “*every* man praying or prophesying, having his head covered, dishonors his head.” (v. 4). “But every woman who prays or prophesies with her head uncovered dishonors her head...”

Paul appeals to his own apostolic authority on this issue as well as the authority of Christ: “Imitate me, just as I also imitate Christ.” (v. 1) That phrase by itself takes this whole section out of the realm of that which is relative and culturally bound into that which is universally binding.³²

Paul says, “I praise you, brethren, that you remember me in all things and keep the traditions as I delivered them to you” (v. 2). Which things was Paul praising them for? Commentators point out that it can’t be the

³¹ Adam Clarke, *The New Testament of Our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ*, vol. II (New York: Peter C. Smith, 1831), p. 264.

³² Some object that Christ as a Jewish man would have worn a head covering when in the synagogues. See a portion of the answer to Objection #8, p45.

issue of the Lord's Supper (chapters 10; 11:17-34) because he says precisely the opposite when broaching that subject: "Now in giving these instructions I do not praise you..." (v. 17). Though a few members had perhaps questioned the church policy on head coverings, the church as a whole was keeping everything that Paul had taught. With that as background, consider the next very important point:

That phrase "the traditions as I delivered them to you" uses the Greek word *paradosis*, which means "a handing down, transmission" (Liddel & Scott), "a handing down or over, a tradition." (NAS Greek) The word occurs twice in that phrase and could be rendered "the things handed down, I handed down to you." Scripture knows of only two types of traditions handed down. It forbids any subjection for a moment to the "traditions of men" (Matt. 15:1-9; Mark 7:1-13; Col. 2:8), but it treats as infallible and binding the traditions handed down from the apostles (2 Thes. 2:15; 3:6). What the "culture bound" advocates are ironically saying is that Paul was mandating that the Corinthian Christians subject their consciences to the traditions of men; this despite the fact that Paul had earlier said, "that you may learn in us not to think beyond what is written" (4:6). Paul would never have imposed man-made traditions in the language of ethics ("ought not" [v. 7], "ought" [v. 10], "imitate Christ" [v. 1], etc.). This would violate Christ's maxim: "in vain they worship Me, teaching as doctrines the commandments of men" (Matt. 15:9). Either it is a commandment of men (culture) or a commandment of God. I cannot conceive that the same Paul who castigated men when they succumbed to 'innocent' traditions such as "touch not, taste not, handle not" (Col. 2:20-23) would bind their consciences to the changing whims of culture in 1 Corinthians 11. Where does this leave the regulative principle of worship? Paul's maxim is "let no one judge you" and do not submit to "the commandments and doctrines of men" (Col. 2:22). In 1 Corinthians 2:3 Paul insisted that the "things we also speak, [are] not in words taught by human wisdom, but in those taught by the Spirit." Paul had been given a sacred trust on the teaching of these first 16 verses and he was passing it on to the disciples. These traditions did not originate in Corinth, nor did they originate in Paul. They were a deposit of truth given by revelation of Christ to Paul to Corinth (thus the command in verse 1 to "imitate me, just as I also imitate Christ.")

Notice also the parallel in language between verse 2 and verse 23. The teaching on head coverings and hair is a *paradosis* (v. 2) and the teaching on the Lord's Supper is a *paradosis* (v. 23). If one "tradition" is

cultural and relative, perhaps the other one is also. If the symbol of head coverings is meaningless today, what about that of the Lord's Supper? The authority of the one is the same authority as the other.

Pardon one more application of verse 2: Paul wants the Corinthian Christians to "keep *the traditions* as I delivered them to you." The word for "keep" is a very strong word which means "to prevent from going away; to hold fast; to guard" (BAGD). Thus this verse is translated variously as "guard the traditions" (BAG), "held fast the traditions" (ASV), and "keep unchanged the rules" (Con). Why would they need to guard these teachings if they were culturally relative? Furthermore, why would Paul insist that they be kept "as I delivered them to you"? That too implies that there should not be any change whatsoever.

Paul appeals to apostolic custom and church custom (v. 16) but not to the customs of the world. Indeed, he is bucking the cultural customs of the Greek world.

Paul makes this teaching a necessary implication of the headship of Christ and the abiding role relationships between men and women in the church. (vv. 3,4,5,7,8,9,11,12) If headship calls for this "sign," then the sign should be as abiding as the headship of a man is.

Paul calls for all "glory" to be covered in worship except for the glory of God. (See exposition under Objection #2.) Surely if it was important to cover man's glory (the woman) and the woman's glory (the woman's hair) back then, the need still exists for God's glory alone to be shown today. (See more under objection #2, page 28.)

It is an implication of the image of God in man (v. 7). If the "sign" is relative, why does Paul appeal to so many non-relative reasons to enforce the use of this sign? The creation order of woman coming from the man preceded cultures (v. 8). Paul appeals to this creation order when discussing coverings.

Paul appeals to the woman's role as a help-meet (v. 9). This too roots Paul's discussion in the creation account and takes it above any cultural relativity. Has she ceased to have this role of help-meet? Obviously not.

Paul appeals to the presence of angels in the worship service as a reason why women need to have a covering (v. 10).³³ I won't go into the

³³ There are many different reasons people have given as to why the angels would be concerned, offended, etc. Bengel's interpretation is this: "As the angels are in relation to God, so the woman is in relation to man. God's face is uncovered; angels in His presence are veiled (Isaiah 6:2). Man's face is uncovered; woman in His presence is to be veiled. For her not to be so, would, by its indecorousness, offend the angels (Matthew 18:10, 31).

meaning of that phrase here, but it is clear that whatever it means, Paul appeals to something beyond culture.

Child birth (vv. 11,12) continues to happen and the man and the woman's interdependence becomes yet another reason why Christians should not deviate from Paul's admonitions on coverings. If this "sign" is as transient and relative as many make it out to be, it seems difficult to account for Paul appealing to so many supra-cultural norms to enforce it.

Many appeal to 1 Corinthians 11:13 to try to prove that Paul was talking about convention, not ethics. However, the text proves just the opposite. The text says, "Judge among yourselves. Is it proper for a woman to pray to God with her head uncovered?" (v. 13). If this proves that the head covering issue was cultural or relative, then the Lord's Supper is also cultural and relative because Paul uses the same language to describe Communion: "I speak to wise men, judge for yourselves what I say. The cup of blessing which we bless, is it not the communion of the blood of Christ..." (1 Cor. 10:15-16). To appeal to the conscience makes this a moral issue, not a cultural issue. Secondly, the word for "proper" (πρέπον - *prepon*) is used everywhere else in the New Testament in connection with ethical absolutes: "...it is fitting for us to fulfill all righteousness." (Matt. 3:15) "But fornication and all uncleanness or covetousness, let it not even be named among you, as is *fitting* for saints" (Eph. 5:3); "which is proper for women professing godliness, with good works" (1 Tim. 2:10). See also Titus 2:1-5; Heb. 2:10; 7:26.

Paul appeals to "nature." In Romans 1:26-27 he does the same to prove that homosexuality is against nature. In other words, it violates God's creation order. It is unnatural in that God did not intend it to be that way when He created the natural order. Again, this would be gross hyperbole if it was not intended to be an abiding "sign." The particular sign that Paul says is the natural one is hair. After the fall, God added a cloth covering as required.

Women failing to wear head covering deviates from the universal custom of all the churches, not just the churches in one geographic or cultural areas (v. 16).

Objection #2 – “The passage only calls for long hair. It does not mandate a head covering.”

Many teach (and I used to believe) that the covering Paul talks about in verses 2-16 is hair and only hair. They base this on verse 15: “But if a woman has long hair, it is a glory to her; for her *hair* is given to her for a *covering*.” They say that if her hair is a covering, then she needs no other covering. They say that verse 15 is the clue to understanding all the other coverings in the passage.

The value of this argument hangs entirely on the assumption that Paul is defining his terms in verse 15.

But the fatal flaw with that reasoning is that the Greek term Paul is supposed to be defining doesn’t occur in verse 14. Paul uses an entirely different word for “covering” in verse 15 than elsewhere in the chapter. This is extremely confusing if one holds to the “hair is the only covering” view, but it makes perfect sense if Paul is arguing from God’s natural covering (hair) to reinforce the need for the post-fall covering of clothing (see earlier commentary). This sudden change of terms cannot be accidental. If Paul wanted to say that hair is the only covering he intended in the chapter, he could have a) used the same word for covering elsewhere and/or b) used the word hair to make it clear. (See point 5 for quote that draws out distinctions Paul makes.) Thus the “hair-only” interpretation lacks simplicity and ignores the distinctions in vocabulary that Paul uses.

This understanding fails to appreciate Paul’s argument in verses 5-6.

“The common excuse women (and some men) give for this [1 Cor. 11:4-6] is that a woman’s hair is her covering. Let’s look at it logically. If a woman prays without a head covering, she should be shaved. Therefore, if she should be shaved, she couldn’t have already been shaved. It’s kind of hard to shave a shaved head. ...If she doesn’t have hair (ie., a covering), she should be shaved. But how can you shave the head, if there is no hair to shave?! Paul is speaking of women who DO have hair, and hair can’t be the covering. If it were a covering, then men should be bald.”³⁴

“This seems quite plain from ver. 6: ‘If the woman be not covered, let her also be shorn.’ If the hair were the covering referred to, this verse would read, ‘If she has no hair, let her cut her hair’! which [makes no] sense.”³⁵

³⁴ Gsy at www.angelfire.com/wi/godseesyou/headcovering.html

³⁵ W.H at www.iit.edu/~khoogid/bible/bibprob5.html

The “hair only” interpretation fails to distinguish the glory of the woman, the glory of the man and the glory of God.

Indeed, it destroys the central mandate of Paul that no glory be seen in the assembly except the glory of God.

Paul speaks of three glories in this passage: a) the glory of God, b) the glory of man and c) the glory of the woman. The man is the glory of God (v. 7). The woman is the glory of the man (v. 7). The woman’s hair is the glory of the woman. Only the glory of God is to remain uncovered during worship. The glory of man (the woman) is to be covered and the glory of woman (her hair) is to be covered. As Richard Bacon explains: “the hair of a woman cannot be both the glory and that which covers the glory! ‘A’ is not ‘non-A.’ Nothing can be both ‘A; and non-A’ at the same time and in the same way. Paul taught us that the object which is the glory cannot also cover the glory! And he taught us that only God’s glory is to be seen in the worship service.” See his paper for details. Also see the excellent paper by Dr. Peter H. L. Wee, “Woman’s Head Covering & the Glory of God.”

“Surely a careful reading of the text would show such an interpretation to be a weak avoidance of the truth as it is set out. Notice that for the woman there are two glories involved. She is a glory: ‘The woman is the glory of the man’ (v. 7). But she also has a glory of her own. Her hair is a glory to her (verse 15). For the glory that she is (the glory of the man), God has given her a natural covering, her long hair. For the glory that she has (her hair), she must submit her will to cover that with another covering which she places over her own glory.”³⁶

The issue of what garment is “proper” (Greek “*prepon*”) to prayer is commented on by Paul in 1 Timothy 2:8-10.

In that letter Paul says that males are to pray with raised hands (showing leadership) whereas women are to pray with “modest *apparel*... which is proper [*prepon*] for women professing godliness.” In both passages there is a fabric covering which is said to be “proper” for prayer and which shows submission. There is only one kind of clothing in either Old or New Testaments that shows submission, and that is the head covering.

³⁶ See J. Boyd Nicholson, Sr. at www.iserv.net/~tkoets/church/jbnsr1.htm for more details.

What is meant in verse 5 regarding any woman praying or prophesying with her head "uncovered."

Many people say that the "covering" in 1 Corinthians 11 is hair; then does v.5 mean that she has taken her hair off? Some say it means long hair, but there is implication here that her head being uncovered is voluntary and immediately reversible. One obviously cannot lengthen ones hair except over a long period of time. Verse 6 further states that IF she be not covered, let her ALSO be shorn, which seems to rule out that her hair being cut was what was meant by "if she be not covered".

Furthermore, verses 4 and 7 tell us that a man is not to wear a head covering. Would this mean he was to remove his hair, or to wear it extremely short? If so, how short? 1 Corinthians 14:33 tells us that God is not the author of confusion, and it certainly seems that trying to inject hair of ANY nature here is, at the very least, confusing! (Could this be because hair of any length is a very recent interpretation by modern man to get away from the true and original intent of this passage? Man in this day and age has indeed become very style conscious.)

Verse 10 says that women ought to wear it because of the angels. Would we be able to use hair or even long hair here as the reference ("that she ought to have hair on her head" or even "that she ought to have long hair on her head")? If it were hair or long hair, how could the angels differentiate between the appearance of the woman of God and the woman of the world? Apparently they need to be able, for whatever reasons, to see an outward and visible covering.

“It should be obvious at this point that the intent of the covering in this passage is something that could be put on or taken off - a covering not provided by nature, but one we choose to wear or not to wear. The confusion regarding the use of hair as covering seems to come from verses 14 and 15. These verses tell us, however, that EVEN NATURE resounds God's will for woman to cover her head by ITSELF covering her head with long hair. Her long hair is, in itself, a glory to her, and the essence of this entire passage is that the glory of woman should be covered. To cover this glory of woman would necessitate that something be worn on top of the hair itself.”³⁷

³⁷ Karen McDaniel, in “Why Do Some Women Cover Their Heads?” at <http://www.prophezine.com/search/database/is37.7.html>

Objection #3 – “If what is symbolized is honored, it doesn’t matter what sign we use.”

Many teach either 1) that the heart is all that matters whether the sign is there or not, or 2) we can use a culturally relevant sign to demonstrate our submission.

There are three symbols called for in chapter 11: the head, the bread and the wine.

If we took the same attitude with the bread and the wine as we do with the hair and the head covering we would be in trouble. What would your reaction be if someone said, “We have communion with Christ in our hearts. What difference does it make if we use the signs of bread and wine”? Reformed people would rightly object that the language of 11:23 makes observance mandatory: “For I received from the Lord that which I also delivered to you: that the Lord Jesus on the same night in which He was betrayed took bread...” (11:23). But notice that exactly the same language is used to preface Paul’s discussion of head coverings. Paul says, “Imitate me, just as I also imitate Christ... keep the things handed down as I delivered them to you” (vv. 1,2). All three symbols were delivered to Paul by Christ and were in turn delivered to the people. (See notes on verses 1-2.) Any attack against head covering could equally come against the Lord’s Supper. If someone sought to make a culturally more relevant sign than bread or wine, we would rightly object, even though what the bread and the wine symbolizes deeply offends our modern culture. Logically, what the bread and the wine symbolizes renders society’s opinions irrelevant. The same is true of submission and the sign of submission.

Paul was not an innovator.

Read what Scripture says about the three words connected to this symbol:

“tradition” (1 Cor. 11:2; 2Thes. 2:15; 3:16)

“received” (1 Cor. 11:23; 15:3; Gal. 1:12)

“delivered” (1 Cor. 11:2,23; 15:5; Jude 3)

Objection #4 – “This interpretation contradicts the law of the Nazarite and the fact that the high priest wore a head covering when he went into the holy place.”

Many try to escape the clear teaching of this passage by appealing to other “problem” passages.

Complexity is no excuse.

God does not allow people to get off the hook of responsibility simply because they can’t answer all the reasons why. We don’t need to know why God has commanded something before we obey it. All we need to know is that He commanded it.

Resolving the difficulty.

Let’s just assume for the sake of the argument that a contradiction exists between the Old Testament passages and this New Testament one. What does that prove? It simply proves that God has the right to change the rules of worship relative to head coverings just as He changed the rules of worship relative to priests, sacrifices, etc. To my shame, this was an argument that I used to keep from coming to a conclusion long after I knew what 1 Corinthians 11 meant. We cannot ignore New Testament rules by appealing to Old Testament rules of worship which have passed away.

There is no contradiction between Paul and the Old Testament.

With regard to the Nazarite vow.

It is clear that the Nazarite vow applied equally to the woman as to the man: “When either a man or woman consecrates an offering to take the vow of a Nazarite, to separate himself to the LORD...” (Numb. 6:2). This means that both the man and the woman had equal shame when they went against the natural order to take this vow of radical submission. The man in having long hair and the woman when her head was shaved. Everything about the Nazarite vow was an exception to the ordinary rules of life. Exceptions don’t remove rules, they prove the rules. And it was clear that men ordinarily were not allowed to grow their hair long and women ordinarily were not allowed to shave their heads. It says of the men, “They shall neither shave their heads nor let their hair grow long; but they shall keep their hair well trimmed” (Ezek. 44:20). So when the Nazarite grew his hair and when he shaved his head,

he was going contrary to the norm. The exceptions to long hair for the woman were when a woman Gentile converted to Christianity (Deut. 21:12), cleansing from leprosy (Lev. 14:9), and breaking or ending a Nazarite vow (Numb. 6). None of those situations apply today except for the health issue. Some might say that Jesus was a Nazarite and we are to imitate Him in growing our hair long. However, Christ was not a Nazarite, but a Nazarene. If He had been a Nazarite, He would have broken the law by drinking wine (Numb. 6:3-4 with John 2; Matt. 11:19; 27:34,48). Some see in Paul's comments an application of the law of the Nazarite to all women. Though I disagree, the footnote gives a sample quote.³⁸

With regard to the high priest's hat.

Priests had special clothing (including hats) that were to be worn in the holy place (Exod. 28:40; 29:9; 39:28; Ezek. 44:18). However, the priest was not allowed to take his temple garments out of the holy place of the temple (Lev. 16:24 NIV). Any time he stood before the people he removed his hat. For example, Ezekiel 44:19 says, "When they go out to the outer court, to the outer court of the people, they shall take off their garments in which they have ministered, leave them in the holy chambers, and put on other garments; and in their holy garments they shall not sanctify the people." 42:14 says, "When the priests enter them [the holy chambers], they shall not go out of the holy chamber into the outer court; but there they shall leave their garments in which they minister, for they are holy. They shall put on other garments; then they may approach that which is for the people."

Why this distinction? The answer ties in perfectly with Paul's discussion of glory in 1 Corinthians 11. In worship, only God's glory may be visible. Within the Holy Place was God's Shekinah glory and the symbol of that glory called variously "the ark of the covenant," "the

³⁸ Adam Clarke comments: "The custom of the Nazarite may cast some light upon this place. As Nazarite means one who has separated himself by vow to some religious austerity, wearing his own hair, etc., so a married woman was considered a Nazarite for life, i.e., separated from all others, and joined to one husband, who is her lord. And hence the apostle, alluding to this circumstance says, *The woman ought to have power on her head*, i.e., wear her hair and veil; for her hair is a proof of her being a Nazarite, and of her subjection to her husband, as the Nazarite was under subjection to the Lord, according to the rule or law of his order" Adam Clarke, *The New Testament of Our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ* (New York: Phillips & Hunt, 1884), p. 139.

glory of Israel,"³⁹ the throne of His glory," etc. Outside of the Holy Place, the only glory of God that was visible was representative, in the priest. The priest took on two roles in the temple. When he stood before the people He represented God to the people and was the glory of God. But when he went into the Holy Place he represented the people to God.⁴⁰ When representing man he was covered. When representing God he was uncovered. Therefore, far from being in contradiction to 1 Corinthians 11, it parallels Paul's teaching completely. When the priest was in the Holy Place he had to be covered because the only glory that was to be visible was the glory of God. When the priest stood outside the holy place and before the people he had to be uncovered because the only glory that was to be visible was the glory of God, and he represented God's glory. In the synagogues (the Old Testament equivalent to the church), priestly garments had no role whatsoever.⁴¹ All men were uncovered in the synagogue worship. (For proof see objection 8.) Paul said, "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 man." (1 Cor. 11:7). Man as the representative of God's glory should not be covered, whereas woman as the glory of man should be covered.

³⁹ 1 Samuel 4:22 says, "The glory has departed from Israel, for the ark of God has been captured."

⁴⁰ Paul points out that since Christ is the only High Priest we presently have, He alone is the head of every man (11:3).

⁴¹ Douglas Bannerman says, "'It is worthy of note that a Jewish priest as such had no special place or rights in the synagogue. If suited in other respects to be an elder or teacher in the congregation, he might be chosen to that position; but his priesthood in itself (with one exception, to be noted immediately) gave him no peculiar privileges. It was expressly enjoined that 'no one was to presume to wear the dress of a priest in the service of the synagogue.' [Schurer, i. p. 277] The only exceptional mark of honor paid in the synagogue to the priesthood rested on the ancient rule that 'the priest, the sons of Aaron, were to bless the people.' If one or more members of a priestly family were present at the service, they were asked to come forward and pronounce with uplifted hands the closing benediction: 'The Lord bless thee and keep thee; the Lord make His face to shine upon thee and be gracious unto thee; the Lord lift up His countenance upon thee and give thee peace;' to which the whole congregation answered, Amen." "If no one of priestly descent happened to be in the congregation, the blessing was spoken in the form of a prayer by one of the rulers of the synagogue" Douglas Bannerman, *The Scripture Doctrine of the Church*, (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1976), pp. 137-138. He gives many other evidences that the priestly garments had no role whatsoever in the worship of the people in the synagogue, and it is the synagogue which forms the basis for the New Testament church.

Objection #5 – “The head covering was only to be worn while praying or prophesying (v. 4) and since these supernatural gifts of ecstatic prayer and prophesying have passed away, women no longer need to wear head coverings or wear long hair.”

This interpretation fails to deal with the sticky problem in chapter 14 where Paul specifically forbids women from praying in tongues or prophesying in the worship service.

(Please read the comments I have made under 11:5 which show how Paul used an identical method of argumentation in other passages. Those should be key in understanding what he is doing here.) It should be remembered that 11:5 is forbidding an activity, not endorsing an activity. One must always be much more cautious in drawing positive implications from a negative statement. Though such an interpretation is possible in the abstract, it is contradictory of 14:34-35. Interestingly, Gordon Fee, an “evangelical” commentator who favors the interpretation that women don’t have to wear head coverings and who permits women to pray and prophesy in church admits that there is a contradiction on his interpretation. Rather than submitting to Scripture, Gordon Fee chooses to say that 1 Corinthians 14:34-35 is not part of Scripture and is “certainly not binding.”⁴² How low have we come that we must defend

⁴² Gordon Fee says this:

“These two verses together have a singular concern, that women ‘remain silent’ in the congregational meetings, which is further defined as ‘not being permitted to speak’ (v. 34) because it is ‘shameful’ for them to do so (v. 35). The structure of the argument bears this out. It begins with ‘a sentence of holy law,’ the absolute nature of which is very difficult to get around...” “Despite protests to the contrary, the ‘rule’ itself is expressed absolutely. That is, it is given without any form of qualification. Given the unqualified nature of the further prohibition that ‘the women’ are not permitted to speak, it is very difficult to interpret this as meaning anything else than all forms of speaking out in public. Someone apparently was concerned to note by way of a gloss that all the previous directions given by the apostle, including the inclusive ‘each one’ of v. 26 and the ‘all’ of v. 31, were not to be understood as including women.” “...it is surprising that he should add it here, yet allow them to pray and prophecy in 11:5 and 13...” “The author of this piece seems intent on keeping women from joining in the vocal worship of the churches. The rule he wishes to apply he sees as universal and supported by the Law. It is difficult to fit this into any kind of Pauline context...” “Thus, in keeping with the

our modern theories by rejecting the Scriptures?!?! Though there are difficulties associated with understanding the verse, it is clear that 14:34-35 is an absolute prohibition for women to speak. So how do we answer this question?

While the traditional interpretation may seem odd, the alternatives are far more odd. The prohibitions of women prophesying in church are so strong, that it is more than a little odd to set them aside by a positive permission being implied from a negative prohibition in 11:5. (If the same method were used to interpret 1 Corinthians 8:10 there would be a blatant contradiction with 10:20-21!) Consider the things that Paul says women cannot do in 14:34-35. “Let your women keep silent in the churches, for they are not permitted to speak; but they are to be submissive, as the law also says. And if they want to learn something, let them ask their own husbands at home; for it is shameful for women to speak in church.” He repeats the prohibition in five different ways. Though Gordon Fee rejects the authority of the text, he is at least honest in what it means.

Here is the traditional argument as explained by Charles Hodge and John Calvin:

“It was Paul’s manner to attend to one thing at a time. He is here [11:5] speaking of the propriety of women speaking in public unveiled, and therefore he says nothing about the propriety of their speaking in public in itself. When that subject comes up, he expresses his judgment in the clearest terms, 14,34. In here disapproving of the one, says Calvin, he does not approve of the other”⁴³

“It may seem, however, to be superfluous for Paul to forbid the woman to prophesy with her head uncovered, while elsewhere he wholly prohibits women from speaking in the Church (1 Tim. ii.12) It would not, therefore, be allowable for them to prophesy even with a covering upon their head, and hence it follows that it is to no purpose that he argues here as to a covering. It may be replied, that the Apostle, by her condemning the one, does not commend the other. For when he reproves them for prophesying with their head uncovered, he at the same time does not give them permission to prophesy in some other way, but rather delays his condemnation of that vice to another passage, namely, in chapter xiv”⁴⁴

textual questions, the exegesis of the text itself leads to the conclusion that it is not authentic. If so, then it is certainly not binding for Christians.”

Gordon D. Fee, *The New International Commentary on the New Testament* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1987), pp. 7-5-708.

⁴³ Charles Hodge, *I & II Corinthians* (Carlisle, PA: Banner of Truth, 1978), pp. 208-209.

⁴⁴ John Calvin, *Commentary on the Epistles of Paul to the Corinthians, vol. 1.* (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1979), p. 356.

Third, in support of the traditional argument it should be pointed out that Paul uses exactly the same kind of procedure in the same epistle. As John Robbins says,

“The matter of women speaking in church is not the only instance in which Paul delays, for the sake of argument, his condemnation of an objectionable practice to another chapter, and even to another book. In 1 Corinthians 8:10, speaking of the matter of giving offense to a brother, he writes: ‘For if anyone sees you who have knowledge eating in an idol’s temple, will not the conscience of him who is weak be emboldened to eat those things offered to idols?’ But it is not until 10:20-21 that he condemns the practice of eating in pagan temples, and it is not until 2 Corinthians 6:14-18 that he blasts the Corinthians for their obtuseness.”⁴⁵

Fourth, it is a logical fallacy to say that 11:5 means that every woman prayed and prophesied or even that any did. John Robbins says,

“The lesson in logic Calvin gives is extremely important: ‘By here condemning the one [speaking with uncovered head] he does not commend the other [speaking].’ If one were to say, it is wrong to go through a red light while speeding, he cannot be understood to say that it is right to speed. It is wrong both to speed and to ignore red lights. So it is with women speaking in church uncovered. Women speaking uncovered in church is wrong, and so is women speaking in church.”⁴⁶

People object that women sang in the Old Testament worship; Paul does not forbid women singing. As John Robbins states, “Paul forbids women to speak, to pray, to prophesy, to teach, to exercise authority, and to ask questions in church meetings. Congregational singing in worship is not forbidden by Paul.”⁴⁷

But even if you reject this traditional argument, there is no way to get around the head covering issue. See the text notes in the first part of the booklet for other options people have taken.

The whole context of chapters 10-14 is decorum in the worship gatherings of the people.

As we pointed out under the earlier objections, the context and themes of this chapter indicate a much broader reason for wearing head coverings than simply prayer and prophecy. Those are two examples Paul gave to show the impropriety of what women were seeking to do. But later in the chapter he gives more universal prohibitions.

⁴⁵ John Robbins, *Scripture Twisting in the Seminaries* (Jefferson, MD: The Trinity Foundation, 1985), p. 28.

⁴⁶ Robbins, p. 26.

⁴⁷ Robbins, p. 16.

Verse 2 and verse 17 are bookends of what is good and what is not good.

“Now I praise you...” (v. 2) and “Now in giving these instructions I do not praise you...” (v. 17). Though not definitive, the contrast here argues for a similar context in which praise is given or withheld.

Verse 16 explicitly speaks to those who refuse to wear head coverings.

“We have no such custom, nor do the churches of God.” This is not only a general principle for the bride of Christ in its common affairs (church singular would have been used). Rather he has been discussing principles related to local congregations (churches plural).

The language of traditions delivered to you is the same in verse 2 as in verse 23.

The passage is limited to public worship.

If you do not see this as being a worship service it destroys the structural and thematic unity of this passage with the rest of Paul’s discourse on glory in 1 Corinthians. (See the articles by Dr. Peter H. L. Wee and Richard Bacon for the unity and cohesiveness of the passage.)

Objection #6 – “This should just be an issue of individual conviction, not of church polity”

Paul took the issue seriously.

The problem with this viewpoint is that Paul went to great lengths to convince the Corinthian Christians that it should be a part of their polity.

If individuals have the right to ignore this command, then they likewise may challenge many other commands of Scripture.

In fact, the same hermeneutics which argue against long hair and head coverings, also argue that the doctrine of the headship of the male and the submission of the female no longer apply, and that homosexuality was a cultural thing that Paul was arguing against. If you need evidence, then I can easily direct you to the literature which argues this way. There are so-called “evangelical feminists” who started out insisting that their feminism did not logically necessitate a defense of homosexuality. Years later, they are now champions of the “evangelical gay movement,”

and they now argue that evangelicals who reject head coverings and/or headship of males are inconsistent since the same hermeneutics can overturn other traditionalist arguments like marriage, homosexuality, etc. (If interested, I can direct you to several Web sites which publish such material and to books published by “respected” scholars.) This is no minor issue!

Objection #7 – “These instructions were only written to the Corinthian church and were not being imposed on other churches (cf. verse 16 ‘no such custom, nor do the churches of God’).”

This assumes a cultural situation that was unique to Corinth.

But this assumption is contradicted by both the archaeological evidence (see Appendix B, page 45) and the fact that Corinth was a very open-minded, multi-cultural city.

General address.

Paul not only wrote this epistle “to the church of God which is at Corinth,” but also “to those who are sanctified in Christ Jesus, called to be saints, with all who in every place call on the name of Jesus Christ our Lord, both theirs and ours” (1 Cor. 1:2). Paul claimed to be writing principles that applied “everywhere in every church” (4:17). In light of this language, it is hard to imagine Paul (without clarification) excluding Corinth from the “we” and “the churches of God” of 11:16.

Legalism rebuked.

Paul and Christ speak in the harshest terms about imposing any moral mandates upon the church that do not have the backing of Scripture. See the answers to Objection #1 for an in depth analysis of this problem.

Universal language is used.

“every man praying or prophesying, having his head covered, dishonors his head.” (v. 4). “But every woman who prays or prophesies with her head uncovered dishonors her head...”

Reference the answer to Objection #1.

See the first objection (page 23) for the proofs that this was intended as a universal principle in all churches and for all times.

Objection #8 – “If Paul was mandating that men not be covered, then he would have run into conflict with Jewish men in the synagogues since Jewish men always wore a head covering in the synagogue.”

Rare situations where Jewish men were covered.

The only cases of men covering their heads in the Old Testament was 1) during times of shame⁴⁸ and 2) the unusual situation of the Nazarite and the priest (while in the temple). For my treatment of how God’s provision for the Nazarites and the priests actually supports the thesis of this booklet, see objection #4. But the examples of men being covered when shamed in the Old Testament also parallel Paul’s teaching of shame and dishonor in 11:5-7. Consider the following examples of a head covering being a “mantle of shame” (Psalm 89:45 NIV). 2 Samuel 15:30 says, “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.” Jeremiah 14:3 says of the nobles: “...they were ashamed and confounded, and covered their heads.” Jeremiah 14:4 says, “Because the ground is chapt, for there was no rain in the earth, the plowmen were ashamed, they covered their heads.” So the Old Testament treats what the Jewish men do as being a shameful thing, just as Paul does. We must realize how out of accord Judaism is with both the New Testament as well as the Old Testament. It is a man-made religion.

⁴⁸ The reverse is also true. Women in the Old Testament were shamed when they were uncovered. Numbers 5:18 says, “Then the priest shall stand the woman before the LORD, uncover the woman’s head, and put the offering for remembering in her hands, which is the grain offering of jealousy. And the priest shall have in his hand the bitter water that brings a curse.” This woman who was accused of rebellion against her husband by way of adultery was shamed in a place of worship by removing the covering. The same shame associated with the removal of a head covering is associated with the cutting of a woman’s hair. For example, when a woman of another nation converted to the God of Israel, God made this provision: Deuteronomy 21:12 says, “then you shall bring her home to your house, and she shall shave her head and trim her nails.” The sign of her subjection in another religion was removed and she had to grow a new sign of subjection to God. Not until the hair grew out was this convert permitted to marry a Jew.

Anachronistic assumption.

The practice of Jewish men wearing head coverings in worship (and often outside of worship) did not begin until after 135 AD after the Bar Kochba rebellion. And even then, the practice was not firmly entrenched until the middle ages. This man-made tradition was added by Jewish rabbis to symbolize the shame of their exile and had other explanations such as the shame men should feel when in God's presence. It was a late addition and should have no bearing on the exegesis of this passage. John Lightfoot cites evidence that early Pharisaic tradition held that men did not have a head covering in the synagogues.⁴⁹ He also cites evidence that the Judaizers (perhaps out of reaction to Christianity, perhaps out of a perverted notion of hyper-spirituality?) changed both the covering of the men and the covering of the women. The men who were formerly uncovered became covered in the synagogues and the women were formerly uncovered in the public but covered in the synagogue were no longer covered (for a time) in the synagogues, and had to be covered outside of the synagogue.⁵⁰ There has never been uniformity on this

⁴⁹ “We may observe Onkelos renders כִּיד רָמָה *with a high hand*, by בְּרִישׁ גְּלִי *with an uncovered head*: as in Exod. 14:8; The Israelites went out of Egypt *with an uncovered head*; that is, confidently, not fearfully, or as men ashamed; and Numb. 15:30; “The soul which committeth any sin בְּרִישׁ גְּלִי *with an uncovered head*,” that is, *boldly and impudently*. So Jonathan also in Judges 5:1; The wise men returned to sit in the synagogues בְּרִישׁ גְּלִי *with an uncovered head*; that is, not fearing their enemies, nor shamed by them.” (Lightfoot, pp. 230-231).

⁵⁰ For example, on page 231 He quotes the Talmud showing how it mandated the veiling of women in public and to have one eye painted and the other not. “But however women were veiled in the streets, yet when they resorted unto holy service they took off their veils, and exposed their naked faces; and that not out of lightness, but out of religion” (p. 231) “When the women therefore did thus meet apart, it is no wonder if they took off the veils from their faces, when they were now out of sight of men, and the cause of their veiling removed, which indeed was that they might not be seen by men” (p. 232). “He went into his school alone privately, and ‘veiled himself and prayed.’ So did men privately, and women also, on the contrary, baring their faces privately. A reason is given of the former, namely, that the men were veiled for reverence towards God, and as being ashamed before God; but why the women were not veiled also, the reason is more obscure” (p. 233) On page 235 he shows how the Judaizers had completely reversed the reasons for the uncovering and the covering. The veil for the woman was her shame, whereas Paul says that it is her reverence and sign of authority and to be uncovered is a shame.

Lightfoot points out that the Jewish custom of the man also being veiled arose from a hyper-spirituality trying to show the reverence with which they held God. He cites the Talmud: “Where the Gloss is, מִתַּעֲטֵף מֵאֵימַת שְׂכִינָה, *‘He veils himself by reason of the terror of God [or reverence towards God], like a man that sits באים ואין פונה לצדדין* in fear, and

amongst the sects of Jews, and there were even regional differences in evidence. Thus (as frequently happened in Judaism) God's Word was distorted beyond recognition. As Christ said, "All too well you reject the commandment of God, that you may keep your tradition." (Mark 7:9). We need to be careful that we do not set aside God's clear statements in this chapter because of Jewish tradition. And it is important that we avoid the error of the Jews by allowing the opinions of men to overthrow the clear writings of Scripture. The fact that women do not wear head coverings in church in the majority of Protestant churches is clearly a tradition of man that began in the 1900's.

For those that think that we shouldn't worry about minor doctrines like this, I leave the following two Scriptures.

"Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceeds from the mouth of God" (Matt 4:4).

"This people honors Me with their lips, but their heart is far from Me. And in vain they worship Me, teaching as doctrines the commandments of men. For laying aside the commandment of God, you hold the tradition of men... All too well you reject the commandment of God that you may keep your tradition" (Mark 7:6-9).

looks not on this or that side of him.' And 'The scholars of the wise men' (in solemn fasts) 'veil themselves, and sit as mourners and persons excommunicate, כבני אדם הגזופין as those that are reprov'd by God;' namely, as being ashamed by reason of that reproof. So He that was reprov'd by some great Rabbin' 'kept himself at home as one that was ashamed; nor did he stand before him who made him ashamed with his head uncovered.'" (Lightfoot, pp. 230) For a lengthy discussion of head coverings, read Lightfoot's comments on 1 Corinthians 11 in *A Commentary on the New Testament from the Talmud and Hebraica* (Peabody, Mass: Hendrickson Publishers, 1989).

Appendix A: How Did the Early Church Interpret Paul?

Church Fathers

Hermas (150 AD) wrote, “A virgin meets me, adorned as if she were proceeding from the bridal chamber...her head was covered by a hood.”

Irenaeus (120-202 AD) wrote, ““A woman ought to have a veil [kalumma] upon her head, because of the angels.” He also made clear that the “authority” Paul referred to was the cloth covering, not the hair.⁵¹

Tertullian (150-225 AD) argued that all females should wear coverings and all males should worship bared. “Behold two diverse names, Man and Woman 'every one' in each case: two laws, mutually distinctive; on the one hand (a law) of veiling, on the other (a law) of baring.”⁵² Interestingly, Tertullian said that the pagans did not tend to do so. “Among the Jews, so usual is it for their women to have the head veiled, that they may thereby be recognized.”⁵³

Clement of Alexandria (153-217 AD) argued that the covering in verse 5 was a fabric veil. He also said, “...this is the wish of the Word, since it is becoming for her to pray veiled.”⁵⁴

Hyppolytus (170-236 AD) wrote the following church canon that represents church practice of that era: “Canon Seventeenth. Of virgins, that they should cover their faces and their heads.”⁵⁵

Chrysostom (340-407 AD) wrote a commentary on 1 Corinthians 11:1-16, defending our position. At one point he said, “And if it be given her for a 'covering,' say you, 'wherefore need she add another covering?' That not nature only, but also her own will may have part in her acknowledgment of subjection. For that thou oughtest to be covered nature herself by anticipation enacted a law. Add now, I pray, thine own part also, that thou mayest not seem to subvert the very laws of nature; a

⁵¹ Irenaeus, *Against Heresies*, Book 1, 8:2, cited in *The Ante-Nicene Fathers*, A. Cleveland Cox, ed., (U.S.A: The Christian Literature Publishing Co., 1885), I:327.

⁵² Tertullian, *On The Veiling Of Virgins*, *ibid.*, IV:32.

⁵³ Tertullian, c. 160-225 A.D., *De Corona*, ch. 4.

⁵⁴ Clement of Alexandria, *The Instructor*, cited in *The Ante-Nicene Fathers*, A. Cleveland Cox, ed., (U.S.A: The Christian Literature Publishing Co., 1885), II:290.

⁵⁵ *ibid.*, V:257.

proof of most insolent rashness, to buffet not only with us, but with nature also.”⁵⁶

Catacomb Art

Early Christians sought refuge from Roman persecution in the catacombs. The catacombs are replete with images of men and women worshipping. The men are pictured bare headed, and the women with a simple shawl.



In the catacombs: A woman prays with her head covered



⁵⁶ Chrysostom, *Homily XXVI:2*; cited in *The Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers*, Philip Schaff, ed., (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans Publishing Co.), XIII:154.

Appendix B: "Five Myths About Corinthian Headwear"

By Bruce Terry

1. Women in ancient Corinth were under some kind of obligation to wear a covering on their head when they appeared in public.

Supposed Evidence Supporting the Myth:

Regarding Romans:

"Why do sons cover their heads when they escort their parents to the grave, while daughters go with uncovered heads and hair unbound? . . . Or is it that the unusual is proper in mourning, and it is more usual for women to go forth in public with their heads covered and men with their heads uncovered?" (Plutarch, *Moralia*, The Roman Questions 14).

Regarding Spartans:

"When someone inquired why they took their girls into public places unveiled, but their married women veiled, he said, 'Because the girls have to find husbands, and the married women have to keep to those who have them!'" (Plutarch, *Moralia*, Sayings of Spartans, Charillus 2).

Counter-evidence to the Myth:

Corinth was basically a Greek city, following Greek customs (cf. Dio Chrysostom Orations 37.26: "he has become thoroughly hellenized, even as your own city has").

"The mysteries inscription of Andania (Ditt. Syll.3, 736), which gives an exact description of women taking part in the procession, makes no mention of the veil. Indeed, the cultic order of Lycosura seems to forbid it. Empresses and goddesses . . . are portrayed without veils . . ." (Oepke in Kittel *TDNT* 1965, 3:562).

See counter-evidence drawn from Zinserling's book.

2. Only prostitutes appeared in public without a headcovering.

Counter-evidence to the Myth:

Greek pottery shows that hetaerae ('companions') often wore a headdress shaped like a horn-of-plenty, even if they wore nothing else but sandals.

3. The covering that women wore in ancient Corinth covered the whole head, including the face.

Counter-evidence to the Myth:

Regarding the veiling of women in Tarsus, Dio Chrysostom (Orationes 33.49) indicates that Tarsian women followed a custom of covering their faces when they went out for a walk:

Among these is the convention regarding feminine attire, a convention which prescribes that women should be so arrayed and should so deport themselves when in the street that nobody could see any part of them, neither of the face nor of the rest of the body, and that they themselves might not see anything off the road (Orationes 33.48).

William M. Ramsey (The Cities of St. Paul 1960, 202) notes that this heavy veiling of women was "utterly different" from the Greek custom.

4. Shaving a woman's head was a sign of her adultery.

Supposed Evidence Supporting the Myth:

Regarding a German woman caught in adultery:

"the husband expels the wife from the house nude, with her hair cut, and drives her through the whole village with a whip" (Tacitus *Germania* 19).

Regarding Demonassa, ruler of Cyprus in the distant past:

"She gave the people of Cyprus the following three laws: a woman guilty of adultery shall have her hair cut off and be a harlot--her daughter became an adulteress, had her hair cut off according to the law, and practiced harlotry; . . ." (Dio Chrysostom *Discourses*, On Fortune 64.2-3).

Counter-evidence to the Myth:

"So in Greece, whenever any misfortune comes, the women cut off their hair and the men let it grow . . ." (Plutarch, *Moralia*, The Roman Questions 14). Cf. Deut. 21:12-13; Is. 7:20; 15:2; 22:12; Jer. 16:6; Mic. 1:16; and Josephus *Antiquities* iv.8.23 [B257].

5. Men always prayed bare-headed.

Counter-evidence to the Myth:

Regarding Romans:

"Why is it that when they worship the gods, they cover their heads, but when they meet any of their fellow-men worthy of honour, if they happen to have the toga over the head, they uncover?" (Plutarch, *Moralia*, The Roman Questions 10).

"It is no piety to show oneself often with covered head, turning towards a stone and approaching every altar, none to prostrate upon the ground and to spread open the palms before shrines of the gods . . ." (Lucretius *de Rerum Natura* 5.1198-1201).

". . . and when now thou raisest altars and payest vows on the shore, veil thy hair with covering of purple robe, that in the worship of the gods no hostile face may intrude amid the holy fires and mar the omens" (Virgil *Aeneis* 3.403-409).

"It was in accordance with the traditional usages, then, that Camillus, after making his prayer and drawing his garment down over his head, wished to turn his back; . . ." (Dionysius of Halicarnassus *The Roman Antiquities* 12.16.4).

Regarding Jews:

"Let not the Wise Men, nor the scholars of the Wise Men, pray unless they be covered" (Maimonides, quoted by Lenski, *The Interpretation of St. Paul's First and Second Epistle to the Corinthians* 1946, 435).

Cf. the *tallith* which Jewish men wear when they pray.

The following four charts show that there was no custom or mandate regarding head coverings. People were able to do what they pleased relative to the head. Certainly there was no cultural mandate for decent women to wear a head covering. [pk]

The Headdress of GREEK Women in Illustrations

--Table produced by CHRT2TBL 1.2 (c) 1997 by Bruce Terry--

| Date | Total | Bareheaded | Headband | Hooded |
|---------|-------|------------|----------|--------|
| 8th BC+ | 12 | 2 | 5 | 3 |
| 7th BC | 4 | 4 | - | - |
| 6th BC | 29 | - | 20 | 8 |
| 5th BC | 97 | 21 | 50 | 23 |
| 4th BC | 20 | 8 | 4 | 8 |
| 3rd BC | 11 | 6 | 3 | 2 |
| 2nd BC | 5 | 2 | 2 | - |
| 1st BC | 2 | - | - | 2 |
| Totals | 180 | 43 | 84 | 46 |

The Headdress of ROMAN Women in Illustrations

--Table produced by CHRT2TBL 1.2 (c) 1997 by Bruce Terry--

Data compiled from an analysis of photographs and illustrations in Verena Zinserling's *Women in Greece and Rome* (1973).

| Date | Total | Bareheaded | Headband | Hooded |
|---------|-------|------------|----------|--------|
| 8th BC+ | 7 | 5 | - | 2 |
| 7th BC | - | - | - | - |
| 6th BC | - | - | - | - |
| 5th BC | 1 | - | - | 1 |
| 4th BC | - | - | - | - |
| 3rd BC | - | - | - | - |
| 2nd BC | 1 | 1 | - | 1 |
| 1st BC | 16 | 7 | 3 | 6 |
| 1st AD | 9 | 6 | 2 | 1 |
| 2nd AD | 15 | 10 | 2 | 3 |
| 3rd AD | 3 | 2 | - | 1 |
| 4th AD | 3 | 3 | - | - |
| 5th AD | - | - | - | - |
| 6th AD | 8 | 3 | 1 | 4 |
| Totals | 63 | 37 | 8 | 18 |

Bareheaded and Headbands:

- A seventh century B.C. water jar shows four bareheaded dancers dancing with young men in a cult dance (page 19).
- A fifth century B.C. jar shows a Maenad (i.e., a frenzied female dancer) worshipping Dionysus in a frenzy, wearing an ivy chaplet in her hair (plate 21).
- A fifth century B.C. jar shows four Maenads with garlands in their hair drinking at a cult celebration of Dionysus (plate 51).
- A fifth century B.C. statue of what appears to be a girl praying with arms outstretched shows her bareheaded (plate 28).
- A fifth century B.C. vase shows a bareheaded woman sacrificing a young pig to the goddesses of the underworld (plate 43).

Hooded:

- A third century B.C. statue shows a priestess standing apparently wearing a hood; part of her head is missing and the identification of the headwear cannot be exact (plate 71).

Resources Available from the Publisher

- Cummings, Tim. *Ministerial Training: The Bible's Normative Pattern*.
- Davis, Andrew. *Written on Your Heart: An Approach to Extended Memorization of Scripture*.
- Elliot, Michael (Ed.). *Bible Acrostic: An Aid to Memorizing the Content of Every Chapter of the Bible*.
- Kayser, Phillip. *Biblical Romance: What Does the Bible Say About Courtship & Betrothal?*
- Kayser, Phillip. *The Canon of Scripture, Volume 1: Biblical Presuppositions*.
- Kayser, Phillip. *Church Membership: Is It Biblical?*
- Kayser, Phillip. *December 25 Jewish Style: The Ancient Jewish Celebration Anticipating the Birth of Christ*.
- Kayser, Phillip. *Dressed Up for Church: A Contrarian Rag on Appropriate Clothing*.
- Kayser, Phillip. *Feed My Lambs: Biblical Guidelines for Parents to Determine if Their Children are Ready for Communion*.
- Kayser, Phillip. *The Flaw of Natural Law*.
- Kayser, Phillip. *Getting Christians Back Into Politics*.
- Kayser, Phillip. *Glory and Coverings: A Study of 1 Corinthians 11:1-16*.
- Kayser, Phillip. *An Hour of Prayer: A Practical Guide to 12 Kinds of Prayer*.
- Kayser, Phillip. *How to Deal with Objections to Inerrancy*.
- Kayser, Phillip. *Is the Death Penalty Just?*
- Kayser, Phillip. *Leader Development: A Mentoring Checklist for Sons and Young Men*.
- Kayser, Phillip. *Mature Daughters: A Mentoring Checklist for Daughters and Young Women*.
- Kayser, Phillip. *The Problem of Evil: A Dialogue*.
- Kayser, Phillip. *Public Assembly: The Biblical Call to Faithful Attendance at Public Worship*.
- Kayser, Phillip. *Ransom Paid: Does the Bible Limit the Atonement?*
- Kayser, Phillip. *Ruins of Athens: The Curse of the Athenian Model of Education*.
- Kayser, Phillip. *Seeing History with New Eyes: A Guide to Teaching Providential History*.
- Kayser, Phillip. *Seven Biblical Principles that Call for Infant Baptism*.
- Kayser, Phillip. *Sunday as a First-Day Sabbath*.
- Kayser, Phillip. *Torture: A Biblical Critique*
- Kayser, Phillip. *Universal Suffrage: A History and Analysis of Voting in the Church and Society*.
- Kayser, Phillip, & Bubeck, Mark. *Prayers for Spiritual Warfare*.
- Kayser, Phillip, & Pickering, Wilbur. *Has God Indeed Said?: The Preservation of the Text of the New Testament*.
- Rose, Ben Lacy. *Baptism by Sprinkling*.

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Glory and Coverings
A Study of 1 Corinthians 11:1-16

Phillip Kayser, Ph.D.

Most women today do not cover their heads and men often sport long hair in public worship. Does it matter? There are many arguments put forward to support those practices but as this book reveals, they are contrary to Scripture and the practice of the historic church. Nothing less than the Glory of God is at stake when it comes to coverings in worship.

Founder and President of Biblical Blueprints, **Phillip Kayser** has degrees in education, theology, and philosophy. Ordained in 1987, he currently serves as Senior Pastor of Dominion Covenant Church, a conservative Presbyterian (CPC) church in Omaha, NE. He also serves as Professor of Ethics at Whitefield Theological Seminary and President of the Providential History Festival. He and his wife Kathy have 5 children and 9 grandchildren.



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