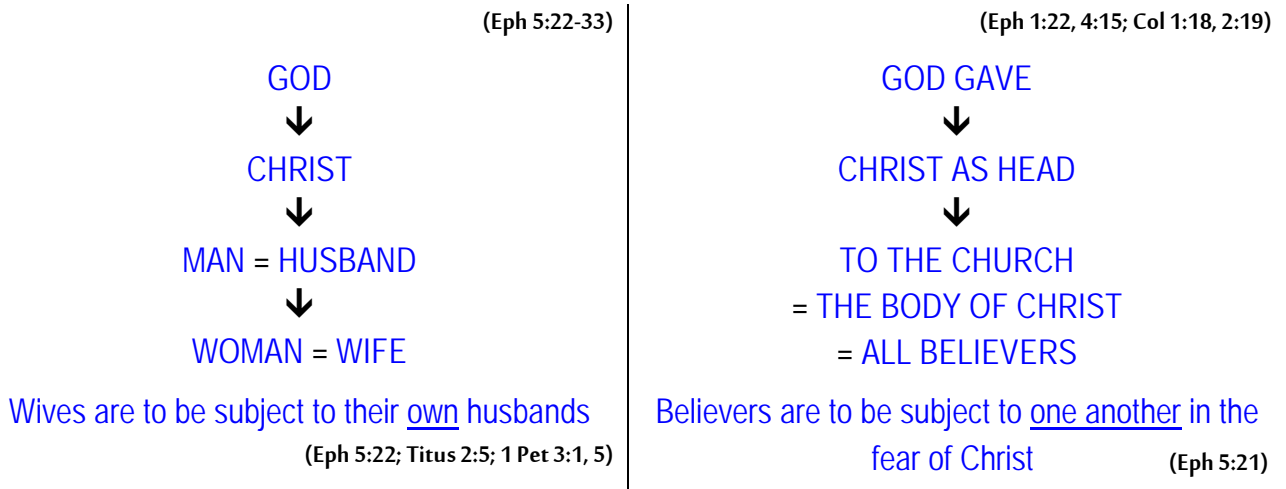


1 Corinthians 11:1-17 – HEADCOVERINGS Etc.

- 11:1 Be imitators of me, just as I also am of Christ.
11:2 Now I praise you because you remember me in everything and hold firmly to the traditions, just as I delivered them to you.
11:3 But I want you to understand that Christ is the head of every man, and the man is the head of a woman, and God is the head of Christ.



Question #1

Where in Scripture does God command a wife to wear a head covering (veil) as a symbol of her husband's authority over her?

- * this is nowhere commanded nor anywhere taught in the Scripture
 - since the issue is extra-biblical we must treat it as cultural
 - therefore it cannot be legalistically enforced across all cultures throughout all time

Question #2

Where did the teaching or traditions regarding head coverings come from?

- * according to both Greek and Roman custom, both men and women were sometimes veiled in public and sometimes unveiled or uncovered
- * the Jewish oral law (the Talmud) had very specific and strict rules regarding head coverings

Question #3

Could rabbinic law have influenced practices within the Corinthian church?

- * it is quite likely see Acts 18:1-8 →

Acts 18:1-8

1. After these things he left Athens and went to Corinth.
2. And he found a Jew named Aquila, a native of Pontus, having recently come from Italy with his wife Priscilla, because Claudius had commanded all the Jews to leave Rome. He came to them,
3. and because he was of the same trade, he stayed with them and they were working, for by trade they were tent-makers.
4. And he was reasoning in the synagogue every Sabbath and trying to persuade Jews and Greeks.
5. But when Silas and Timothy came down from Macedonia, Paul *began* devoting himself completely to the word, solemnly testifying to the Jews that Jesus was the Christ.
6. But when they resisted and blasphemed, he shook out his garments and said to them, “Your blood *be* on your own heads! I am clean. From now on I will go to the Gentiles.”
7. Then he left there and went to the house of a man named Titius Justus, a worshiper of God, whose house was next to the synagogue.
8. Crispus, the leader of the synagogue, believed in the Lord with all his household, and many of the Corinthians when they heard were believing and being baptized.



“It was the custom of the Jews, that they prayed not, unless first, their heads were veiled, and that for this reason, that by this rite, that they might show themselves reverent and ashamed before God, and unworthy with an open face to behold Him. Men, therefore, veiled themselves when they prayed, partly for a sign of reverence towards God, and partly to show themselves ashamed before God and unworthy to look upon Him.”

– John Lightfoot (1602-1675)

11:4 Every man who has *something* on his head while praying or prophesying disgraces his head.

Question #4

How would a man praying with his head covered disgrace Christ, his head?

★ in Christ we come before God with unveiled faces; in His victory our shame is gone

2 Corinthians 3:14-18

14. But their minds were hardened; for until this very day at the reading of the old covenant the same veil remains unlifted, because it is removed in Christ.
15. But to this day whenever Moses is read, a veil lies over their heart;
16. but whenever a person turns to the Lord, the veil is taken away.
17. Now the Lord is the Spirit, and where the Spirit of the Lord is, *there* is liberty.
18. But we all, with unveiled face, beholding as in a mirror the glory of the Lord, are being transformed into the same image from glory to glory, just as from the Lord, the Spirit.

Question #5

Why then would a woman (wife) cover her head while praying and prophesying?

- * the believing woman (wife) has two heads – Christ and her husband
→ if she veils herself because of shame she disgraces Christ her head

11:5 But every woman who has her head uncovered while praying or prophesying disgraces her head, for she is one and the same as the woman whose head is shaved.

11:6 For if a woman does not cover her head, let her also have her hair cut off; but if it is disgraceful for a woman to have her hair cut off or her head shaved, let her cover her head.

→ if she is unveiled in public she would shame her husband – this idea does not however come from God but rather again from the Jewish rabbinical law



"It was the custom of the women, and that prescribed them under severe canons, that they should not go abroad but with their face veiled. Let not a woman go with her head uncovered."

"Should a woman walk bareheaded in the street, her husband could divorce her without payment of her dowry."



"Some rabbis compared the exposure of a married woman's hair to the exposure of her private parts since they felt that a woman's hair could be used for erotic excitement. They forbid the recital of any blessing in the presence of a bare headed woman."

"The Talmud made this rule - "and they fetch the shame of the woman thence, that she first brought sin into the world."

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

11:8 For man does not originate from woman, but woman from man;

11:9 for indeed man was not created for the woman's sake, but woman for the man's sake.



→ that reasoning concerning the image and glory of God is not true "in the Lord"

11:11 However, in the Lord, neither is woman independent of man, nor is man independent of woman.

11:12 For as the woman originates from the man, so also the man *has his birth* through the woman; and all things originate from God.

- ✓11:7 For a man ought not to have his head covered, since he is the image and glory of God; but the woman is the glory of man.
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- ✓11:9 for indeed man was not created for the woman’s sake, but woman for the man’s sake.

Question #6

Are men the glory of God differently than women? Are women the image and glory of God at all?

- * according to Scripture both men and women alike are (have) the image and glory of God

Genesis 1:26–27

26. Then God said, “Let Us make man in Our image, according to Our likeness; and let them rule over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the sky and over the cattle and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creeps on the earth.”

27. God created man in His own image, in the image of God He created him; male and female He created them.

2 Corinthians 3:18

But we all, with unveiled face, beholding as in a mirror the glory of the Lord, are being transformed into the same image from glory to glory, just as from the Lord, the Spirit.

11:10 Therefore the woman ought to have *a symbol of* authority on her head, because of the angels.

Note: ‘*a symbol of*’ has been added by the translators

- authority – **1849** ἐξουσία ex·oo·see·ah
 - = power to choose
 - = control, freedom to action
 - = ability to do what is permissible or right

The KJV translates:

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

11:11 However, in the Lord, neither is woman independent of man, nor is man independent of woman.

11:12 For as the woman originates from the man, so also the man *has his birth* through the woman; and all things originate from God.

11:13 Judge for yourselves: is it proper for a woman to pray to God *with her head* uncovered?

¹ *The Holy Bible: King James Version.* (2009). (Electronic Edition of the 1900 Authorized Version., 1 Co 11:10–11). Bellingham, WA: Logos Research Systems, Inc.

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

Question #7

Does nature demonstrate that it is shameful for a man to have long hair and for a woman to have short hair?

- * this is not clearly seen in nature
 - if this were so, God would never have commanded that a man grow his hair and a woman shave her head as part of the Nazirite vow, a special vow to dedicate themselves to the LORD
 - verses 14 and 15 can be translated in two ways (no punctuation in Greek)

The ISV translates:

¹³Decide for yourselves: Is it proper for a woman to pray to God with her head uncovered? ¹⁴Nature itself teaches you neither that it is disgraceful for a man to have long hair ¹⁵nor that hair is a woman's glory, for hair is given as a substitute for coverings. ¹⁶But if anyone wants to argue about this, we do not have any custom like this, nor do any of God's churches.²

11:16 But if one is inclined to be contentious, we have no other practice, nor have the churches of God.
11:17 But in giving this instruction, I do not praise you, because you come together not for the better but for the worse.

CONCLUSIONS:

1. Paul is directing the Corinthians to allow each woman (wife) to choose whether to wear a head covering or not “Judge for yourself” (11:13)
2. So that people may be saved, she may choose to wear a head covering in order to
 - a) not be an offense in her culture
 - b) not shame an unbelieving husband
3. This interpretation is in line with the context of Chapters 7 – 14: “concerning the things they asked about”
 - a) Ch 7 – marriage, singleness, re-marriage etc. → as the Lord has assigned, so walk (:17, :20)
 - b) Ch 8 – eating things sacrificed to idols → “I will not cause my brother to stumble (:13)
 - c) Ch 9 – Paul's liberty → “I become all things to all men that I may save some” (:22)
 - d) Ch 10 – Idolatry etc. → “all things are lawful but not all things are profitable” (:23)
 - e) Be free to act according to your conscience; consider the conscience of the others too (10:29-33)
4. This interpretation is in line with the biblical teaching that it is never so much about the outward things as it is about the “hidden person of the heart”.
(1 Samuel 16:7; 1 Peter 3:3-4)

² International standard version New Testament: version 1.1. (2000). (Print on Demand ed., 1 Co 11:11–16). Yorba Linda, CA: The Learning Foundation.