

A Woman's Covering and the Angels

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All Scriptures are from the New King James translation unless otherwise noted.

Some have wondered what the Apostle Paul meant when speaking about the difference between a man and woman's covering, and how the woman's covering relates to the angels. In Corinthians 11, Paul related the hierarchy of God's government and how that hierarchy is represented in several ways. He began by speaking of Christ and the Church and wrote:

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 (1 Corinthians 11:3).

God's government is represented by the relationship between a married man and woman. Just as the leader of every man is Christ, so is the husband to lead his wife and family. Paul also noted that Christ is under the authority of God the Father. The apostle continued expressing this hierarchy by stating:

Every man praying or prophesying, having *his* head covered, dishonors his head. 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. 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 (1 Corinthians 11:4-6).

These verses indicate that the covering was a reference to the difference between a man and woman's hairstyle. Men are to have short hair, and women traditionally have long hair. There was not to be an exchange between the two. This is indicated a few verses later when Paul said, "Does not even nature itself teach you that if a man has long hair, it is a dishonor to him? But if a woman has long hair, it is a glory to her" (vs. 14-15).

Therefore, Paul indicated that a man who desires to come before God in faith must not have hair like a woman. This would "dishonor his head." In like manner, if a woman desires to come before God in faith, she should not have hair like a man. If she does, it is "as if her head were shaved." This expression relates that it is shameful for a woman to have hair like a man; just as it is dishonorable for a man to have hair like a woman. The apostle continued to write:

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. For man is not from woman, but woman from man. Nor was man created for the woman, but woman for the man (1 Corinthians 11:7-9)

Paul explained that man was created in the image of God. This also means that males are to be godlike in the use of his authority in the family. They should be firm when it comes to biblical doctrine, but also loving and merciful in their approach. Because the first woman was created from one of Adam's ribs, the woman came from the man. This reflects that she was designed to be his companion, but also a helpmate within the family. Because of this, the woman

is to have a covering (long hair) that attests to her position in the family. However, her covering serves another purpose. As Paul wrote:

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

A woman's long hair was also given as a sign to the angels. It reminds them that they are subservient to God. The reason for this reminder is likely due to the fact that many angels rebelled against God some time before the first humans were created.

It is our belief that Lucifer began his insurrection after realizing God's plan to eventually create a divine family from faithful human beings (Luke 20:36). Because those who will be chosen to be a part of God's family will have charge over angels, Lucifer was likely disturbed at the thought of human beings ruling over a cherub of his stature who was created with extraordinary beauty and talent (1Cor. 6:3; Eze. 28:13-15).

A woman's covering serves to remind the angelic realm of the wicked angel's rebellion. It is a sign reflecting the fact that the angels are to be "ministering spirits sent forth to minister for those who will inherit salvation" (Heb. 1:14). It reminds them that God is in charge of all, and He will do all His pleasure (Isa. 46:10).

Still, even though the woman is subservient to the man, Paul explained that both should work together to serve the needs of each other as well as their children:

Nevertheless, neither *is* man independent of woman, nor woman independent of man, in the Lord. For as woman *came* from man, even so man also *comes* through woman; but all things are from God (1 Corinthians 11:11-12).

Each gender has their place within the family. Both of their roles are honorable, and as Paul wrote "*Let nothing be done through selfish ambition or conceit, but in lowliness of mind let each esteem others better than himself*" (Php. 2:3). Men are to serve their families out of loving concern for their well being and happiness. Women are to support the direction of the husband. These principles were given to reflect the relationship between Christ and the Church (Eph. 5:25-33).

The woman was made to become a wife for the man—not the other way around. This pictures the fact that the Church was designed to become the bride of Christ. Christ was NOT made for the Church. For this reason, we see that men are not to dress like women, and women are not to dress like men (Deu. 22:5). God created the family structure and He is not the author of confusion (1Cor. 14:33). A reversal in familial roles is disorder and strives against nature itself. As Paul continued to write:

Does not even nature itself teach you that if a man has long hair, it is a dishonor to him? But if a woman has long hair, it is a glory to her; for *her* hair is given to her for a covering. But if anyone seems to be contentious, we have no such custom, nor *do* the churches of God (1 Corinthians 11:14-16).

The "custom" of the Church of God stands true today. Men are not to have long hair. However, there may be times when women may choose a hairstyle that is not considered "long" in length. While we do not believe it is the ministry's position to dictate how long a woman's hair should be in order to conform to Paul's admonition, we feel that, if a woman desires to have

a shorter hairstyle, she should strive to honor God in this area of her life, in good conscience, conforming to the biblical admonition of an appropriate length.