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APPENDIX:

Head Coverings

The topic of head coverings discussed in 1 Corinthians 11 can be difficult to understand. Whereas the Corinthians understood the supracultural and cultural aspects of this issue, some facets of what they understood are obscured from us today. This is what makes this passage difficult to understand and why there are different interpretations regarding it. Therefore, studying to correctly understand the underlying issues is a necessity.

The focus of Paul's exhortations in this passage is why the women of the Corinthian church were supposed to have had their heads covered while praying or prophesying. However, the primary question for many today is whether these commands are cultural or supracultural. In other words, were these practices applicable just during the time of Paul or were they meant to be practiced throughout the Church age.



I. Understanding the passage

As one reads this passage, it is easy to conclude that throughout the Church age women should wear head coverings. The question is however, why do Christian women in many cultures not wear them and why do well-known, conservative and respected theologians state that this practice is not supracultural, but cultural? To better understand the passage, it is best to address this question first.

In this portion of the discussion, two main points will be made which assert that the practice of head coverings in the church was a cultural norm.

First, verse 16 provides the clearest evidence.

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

When Paul stated, “we have no other practice (Gk., “synētheia,” custom),¹” he was stating that they had no other custom (accepted mode or manner; e.g., John 18:39; 1 Cor. 8:7). In essence, this word is not describing a supracultural principle (although the supracultural principles of submission and headship are the reason this custom was practiced). Thus, Paul was stating that the church during his time practiced the custom of women covering their heads while praying or prophesying while men did not. These were “traditions” (teachings, vs. 2) which Paul taught them to hold firmly; both being customs and norms of the first century church.

This raises the question, “Could women who were not praying or prophesying during the church service have their heads uncovered? Could they have removed their head coverings during such times as is practiced in some churches today?” The indication is that they could have uncovered their heads as Paul did not specify that they needed to be worn throughout the entire church service. This practice was specific to the acts of praying or prophesying.²

Second, when Paul taught why women were to cover their heads, he referenced cultural norms in five verses (vss. 5, 6, 14, 15, 16). Why did he use cultural justifications as reasons to convince them to follow this custom? He could have simply said, “Thus says the word of the Lord.” Therefore, in verse 16 when Paul said, “we have no other practice,” no other custom, this begs the question, “Could there have been another custom?” Yes, there could have been, but there was not. This was their custom which most closely resembled their accepted cultural norms, that of women wearing head coverings and having long hair while men were not to cover their heads and have short hair. It is interesting to note however that men did not have short hair in all cultures during that time.³ Jews who had taken the Nazirite vow also had long hair (Num. 6:5).

To give greater insight into the structure of this passage, below is a concise outline with annotations.

Introduction

² Now I praise you because you remember me in everything and hold firmly to the traditions, just as I delivered them to you.

Foundational statement (Hierarchy)

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.

¹ Swanson, J. (1997). *Dictionary of Biblical Languages with Semantic Domains: Greek (New Testament)* (electronic ed.). Oak Harbor: Logos Research Systems, Inc. (Gk., #5311)

² The indication from Scripture is that when a woman prophesied in the church, she did not do so before the assembled congregation, but rather privately (cf. 2 Kings 22:14-20; Luke 2:36-38) as women were not to teach men (1 Tim. 2:12) and were to be silent in the church (1 Cor. 14:33-34). In other words, they were not to be in a place of authority, leading or teaching the congregation. Their prophecy seemed to be focused on individuals versus revealing or teaching new doctrine to the church.

³ “In the earliest times the Greeks wore their hair *kome* (long), and thus Homer constantly calls them *karekomoontes*. This ancient practice was preserved by the Spartans for many centuries. The Spartan boys always had their hair cut quite short (*en chroi keirontes*);[1] but as soon as they reached the age of puberty, they let it grow long. They prided themselves upon their hair...” (Wikipedia. Greco-Roman Hairstyles. 3 July 2020. https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Greco-Roman_hairstyle. (Accessed 23 September 2020)).

Problem defined (Tied to a cultural norm)

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

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.

Problem addressed (Tied to a cultural norm)

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.

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.**

(⁸ **For** man does not originate from woman, but woman from man;

⁹ **for** indeed man was not created for the woman's sake, but woman for the man's sake.)

(Parentheses added as verses 8 and 9 explain verse 7)

Problem resolved

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

Equality affirmed

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

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.**

Summational Question

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

Additional argument (Tied to a cultural norm)

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

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

Concluding exhortation (This is our "practice" or custom) (Tied to a cultural norm)

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

A. Introduction – vs. 2

In Paul's introductory remarks he stated:

"Now I praise you because you remember me in everything and hold firmly to the traditions, just as I delivered them to you." (vs. 2)

Since the beginning of this letter Paul had done nothing but correct the Corinthians, which he continued to do in chapters 11-15. Though they were not doing everything perfectly, and though he could not praise them for everything (5:1; 11:17,22), they nonetheless were holding firmly to the traditions which he had taught them. For this he praised them. Please note

that the traditions (Gk., “paradosis” or teachings)⁴ referred to here can denote both doctrine (e.g., 1 Cor. 11:23; 15:1,3) and customs (cf. Mat. 15:2) such as head coverings.

B. Foundational statement – vs. 3

In verse 3 Paul begins with the foundational statement of this passage. It provides the justification for why a woman was not to be quarrelsome about wearing a head covering, but instead follow the custom of the churches (vs. 16).

"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."

This hierarchy of authority is foundational to Paul’s argument, and Paul will refer back to it within this passage. However, before continuing further, two questions regarding this verse need to be answered. The first is whether this passage is talking about husbands and their wives or men and women in general.

The usage of the Greek words "aner" (man or husband) and "gune" (woman or wife) are determined by context. Regarding this Vanlaningham stated:

“Man and woman does not refer to “husband” and “wife” (contra the ESV). Paul is speaking of a corporate church setting (vv. 4–5), and husbands and wives do not originate from each other (vv. 8, 11).”⁵

As pointed out, the translation of man and woman are congruent (in harmony) in context.

The second question is, how the word, “head” should be understood in this verse. Does it refer to an authority figure or to origins (vss. 8,12)? If Paul’s point was origins:

- God is the head (origin) of Christ (resulting from the incarnation, vs. 12; Mat. 1:18; Luke 1:35)
- Christ is the head (origin) of every man (resulting from creation, John 1:3,10; Col. 1:16; Heb. 1:2)
- Man is the head (origin) of the woman (wording from the NIV;⁶ resulting from creation, vss. 8,12; Gen. 2:21-23)

If Paul was referring to authority figures:

- God is the head (authority) of Christ (1 Cor. 3:23, 15:28; John 14:28)

⁴ Swanson, J. (1997). *Dictionary of Biblical Languages with Semantic Domains: Greek (New Testament)* (electronic ed.). Oak Harbor: Logos Research Systems, Inc. (Gk., #4142).

⁵ Vanlaningham, M. G. (2014). 1 Corinthians. In M. A. Rydelnik & M. Vanlaningham (Eds.), *The Moody Bible Commentary* (pp. 1773–1805). Chicago, IL: Moody Publishers.

⁶ The NASB translates this portion of 1 Corinthians 11:3 as, “and the man is the head of a woman.” This implies a specific relationship in contrast to a broader framework of the relationship between the male and female genders.

- Christ is the head (authority) of every man (a reference to believing men; 1 Cor. 3:23; 6:15; Rom. 14:7; Gal. 3:29)
- Man is the head (authority) of the woman (wording from the NIV; Gen. 2:20; 3:16; Eph. 5:22-24)

Although Paul does talk about origins in verses 8 and 12, it seems better to understand head as an authority figure which is a common usage in context of Jesus as the head of the Church (Eph. 1:22; 4:15; 5:23; Col. 1:18,19; 2:9). This understanding is also congruent within context, especially when considering that Paul was writing to believers in a church setting. He was not speaking about mankind in general terms, referring to believers and unbelievers as a whole which would be the case if origins were intended. Vanlaningham wrote:

“It is better to understand head metaphorically as ‘one who has authority,’ ‘leader’⁷ ... The man is the head of a woman speaks of male leadership and female subordination, in this context, in the Church.”⁸

While speaking about men and women, please note that the word *gune* can refer to “a woman of any age, whether a virgin, or married, or a widow.”⁹ Thus, this passage applies to single women as well as to married women.

C. Problem defined – vss. 4-5

In verses 4-5 Paul defines the issue which needed to be corrected.

“Every man who has something on his head while praying or prophesying disgraces his head. 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.”

Men who covered their heads while praying or prophesying in the church were disrespecting Christ. Women who did not cover their heads while praying or prophesying were disrespecting their head, either a father, a husband and their church’s leadership. Acting in this manner resembled a woman who had a shaved head. MacArthur wrote:

“The Talmud indicates that a Jew considered a woman with a shaved head extremely ugly, and Chrysostom records that women guilty of adultery had their hair shaved off and were marked as prostitutes. Aristophanes even taught that the mother of unworthy children should have her hair shorn...Paul therefore is saying, ‘If you are not willing to

⁷ “For these and other points, cf. the articles by Wayne Grudem: “Does kephalē (‘Head’) Mean ‘Source’ or ‘Authority Over’ in Greek Literature? A Survey of 2,336 Examples,” *Trinity Journal* 6 NS [1985]: 38–59; “The Meaning of kephalē: A Response to Recent Studies,” *Trinity Journal* 11 NS [1990]: 3–72; reprinted as an appendix to *Recovering Biblical Manhood and Womanhood*, ed. John Piper and Wayne Grudem [Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 1991] 425–468); “The Meaning of [kephalē] [‘Head’]: An Evaluation of New Evidence, Real and Alleged,” *Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society* [March 2001]: 25–65).” *ibid*

⁸ *Ibid*.

⁹ Strong, J. (1995). *Enhanced Strong's Lexicon*. Woodside Bible Fellowship (Gk., #1135).

look like a prostitute or a rebellious feminist by cutting off your hair, don't pray or prophesy with your head uncovered either."¹⁰

In other words, such behavior was looked down upon; it was unacceptable and disgraceful.

Therefore, the main problem being addressed was that some women in the Corinthian church were not covering their heads while praying or prophesying. It seems unlikely that there was a problem with men covering their heads, for Paul seems to simply use them as a corresponding example in contrast to the women who were not obeying the church's custom. This is why Paul further elaborated, "for she is one and the same as the woman whose head is shaved."

D. Problem addressed – vss. 6-9

1) Disobedience is disgraceful – vs. 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."

Here Paul elaborates on verse 5. Wearing head coverings should not have been an issue in the church because apparently it was the norm in the Greco-Roman society. In other words, this was something they were accustomed to on a daily basis; thus, their behavior is perplexing. Lowery wrote:

"It cannot be unequivocally asserted but the preponderance of evidence points toward the public head covering of women as a universal custom in the first century in both Jewish culture ([apocryphal] 3 Maccabees 4:6; Mishnah, Ketuboth 7. 6; Babylonian Talmud, Ketuboth 72a-b) and Greco-Roman culture (Plutarch *Moralia* 3. 232c; 4. 267b; Apuleius *The Golden Ass* 11. 10)."¹¹

Vanlaningham wrote as well:

"Respectable women in the first-century Greco-Roman world were always covered in public, and they were to be covered in church as well."¹²

Thus, it was normal for women – both believers and unbelievers -- to wear head coverings in daily life. Consequently, Paul told them that if it was disgraceful for a woman not to cover her head while praying or

¹⁰ MacArthur, J.F.; Head Coverings for Women; <https://www.gty.org/library/bibleqnas-library/QA0219/head-coverings-for-women>, 2020. Accessed 15 September 2020.

¹¹ Lowery, D. K. (1985). 1 Corinthians. In J. F. Walvoord & R. B. Zuck (Eds.), *The Bible Knowledge Commentary: An Exposition of the Scriptures*. Wheaton, IL: Victor Books, 1 Cor. 11:5-6.

¹² Vanlaningham, M. G. (2014). 1 Corinthians. In M. A. Rydelnik & M. Vanlaningham (Eds.), *The Moody Bible Commentary* (pp. 1773–1805). Chicago, IL: Moody Publishers.

prophesying, then she might as well follow another disgraceful practice of the time by cutting off her hair or shaving her head.

Paul did not specify why these women were not covering their heads while praying or prophesying. However, the issue may have been that they did not want to be under male authority, wanting the same rights as the men of the church. Therefore, not wishing to show submission, they did not want to wear a symbol of authority on their heads (vs. 10). This is not the only case where Paul had to correct these women regarding such behavior (14:33-35). He also addressed similar issues in Ephesus in his letter to Timothy (1 Tim. 2:9-15).

Please note that this argument is one from culture where Paul addressed the cultural norms of women wearing head coverings in secular culture and the norm of long hair for women.

2) She is the glory of man – vss. 7-9

Paul continues to address the problem in verse 7-9. As he does so he refers back to verse 3.

“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. For man does not originate from woman, but woman from man; for indeed man was not created for the woman’s sake, but woman for the man’s sake.”

Since woman was created from man and for man, in his glory, it was disgraceful for her to not show submission to male headship (a father, husband and church leaders) by not covering her head. Likewise, because man was created in the image and glory of God, it was disgraceful for him to cover his head and therefore not show submission to his head, Christ. Therefore, in the church women too were to honor their heads while praying or prophesying.

When considering God's created order, man is the image (Gen. 1:27) and the glory of God (vs. 7). Woman on the other hand, although she is the image of God (Gen. 1:27) is the glory of man, not God (vs. 7). To be in the image of God means that both men and women are a reflection of Him in that they, like Him, have volition, intellect, emotions and character qualities. Regarding God’s glory, this refers to His splendor, being both a summation and manifestation of who and all that He is. The fact that man is the glory of God is simply stating that as God’s creation, man, an extremely complex and wondrous being, is a representation and manifestation of God’s glory. In the same way woman is a representation and manifestation of man’s glory, having been created from him.

Being the image and glory of God, man is a direct reflection of the God who created him. God is first and sovereign, having rule and dominion over all things. Man was created first and was given rule and dominion (Gen. 1:28-30; 2:19-20) and headship over his family (Eph. 5:22-24; 6:1-

3). Man was made to serve God (cf. Mal. 3:18; 1 Thes. 1:9); thus, he is held accountable directly to Him (cf. Gen. 2:15-17). However woman, who was taken from man, was made for his sake as his helpmate (vs. 9; Gen. 2:18; 1 Cor. 11:9), was named by him (Gen. 2:23; 3:20) and is under his authority (cf. Gen. 3:16; Eph. 5:22-24; 1 Pet. 3:5-6), being his glory.

E. Problem resolved – vs. 10

As Paul continues, the solution to the problems is stated in verse 10:

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

The solution was simple; women were to show honor to their heads. As was their custom, women were to have a symbol of authority on their heads while praying or prophesying which Paul adds, "because of the angels."

The fact that they were to do this because of the angels is interesting. It is important that God's heavenly host see godly behavior from His children. Therefore, because of the angels, women were to wear head coverings in accordance with the custom of that time as they were a symbol of authority in the church, thus a sign of submission, and ultimately of obedience. Paul did not specify why or how angels were impacted by a woman who did not wear a head covering. However, when women showed their submission to their male headship, this demonstrated submission to authority, that of God, Paul, the church and the woman's authority figure in her home. This of course is a positive example for the angels who are ministering spirits for believers (Heb. 1:14). Also, it is possible because angels are interested in the gospel and things pertaining to salvation (1 Pet. 1:12), that as they observe believers, they either learn and/or are affected by their examples, maybe even distressed by poor behavior. Thus, angels were another reason why women were to demonstrate submissiveness by wearing a head covering.

F. Equality affirmed – vss. 11-12

Having made his point about woman being the glory of man and created for his sake, Paul makes a clarification. He wants his readers to understand that this does not mean that women are inferior to men. Thus, he wrote in 11-12:

"However, in the Lord, neither is woman independent of man, nor is man independent of woman. For as the woman originates from the man, so also the man has his birth through the woman; and all things originate from God." (emphasis added)

Even though Paul clearly stated the differences between men and women and their roles in God's created order, these differences are not to be an issue of superiority versus inferiority. Men and women are interdependent. Both originate from God, and as believers, they are one in Christ and heirs of

the kingdom (Gal. 3:28-29). Although their roles are different, neither man nor woman is more important than the other.

G. Summational question -- vss. 13

Before concluding, Paul asked a summational question to conclude his argument to this point.

“Judge for yourselves: is it proper for a woman to pray to God with her head uncovered?”

In answer to this question, the response obviously is, “No! It was not appropriate!” They were to respect and honor their headship. Paul then gives one additional argument before concluding.

H. Additional argument – vss. 14-15

“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.”

Here Paul gives his final argument, a cultural argument for why women were to follow this custom. The reason given came from nature, or in other words, “the character or make up of something, as a natural result or condition.”¹³ In other words, though there is interdependency between men and women, God created them physically different. Women were created to distinguish themselves with long hair and men with short hair. This is their characteristic, their make up, their hair being the natural result of how they were created. These distinctions clearly differentiate one from the other. This is also the case when head coverings were worn by women, there was a differentiation. Thus, Paul’s point is that while it is a natural aspect of life for women to have long hair and men short hair, so in the church it is natural for a woman to pray with her head covered and a man not to. Woman was given long hair as a covering to bring her glory. As long hair in Paul’s culture honored a woman, so would a head covering in the church.

I. Concluding exhortation -- vs. 16

Paul concludes:

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

If the women in the church decided not to listen to what Paul had written and were inclined to be contentious (quarrelsome, argumentative), then there was no other practice (custom) in any of the churches. In other words, there was no other manifestation (symbol) by which the women of the churches at that time demonstrated the supracultural principle of submission and

¹³ Swanson, J. (1997). *Dictionary of Biblical Languages with Semantic Domains: Greek (New Testament)* (electronic ed.). Oak Harbor: Logos Research Systems, Inc. (# 5882, L.N. 58.8).

headship while praying or prophesying. This was the custom of all the churches of God, and this practice was not an individual decision, but that of Paul (“we”) and the churches.

Regarding the modern church Vanlaningham wrote:

“The question arises: “Should women who participate in a church setting be covered today?” The answer is “No, not unless one’s culture expects it” (as in the case of the Amish and conservative Mennonite communities). Respectable women in the first-century Greco-Roman world were always covered in public, and they were to be covered in church as well. Today, if women should be covered in church, then to be consistent they should be covered at all times. How should the passage be applied in a setting where head coverings are not expected? Perhaps the most defensible application is that a woman should dress modestly to avoid the appearance of questionable morality, and in a feminine way as a demonstration of her deference to the male leadership of the church.”¹⁴

Fee also wrote:

“Although various Christian groups have fostered the practice of some sort of head covering for women in the assembled church, the difficulties with the practice are obvious. For Paul the issue was directly tied to a cultural shame that scarcely prevails in most cultures today.”¹⁵

His point is valid, because in many cultures today a woman who adorns short hair or even a shaved head is not looked down upon, but actually may be considered stylish. In contrast to the time of Paul, it is no longer considered a disgrace. Consequently today, if Paul were to write to a church about the issue of submission to authority and its symbol of authority (vs. 10), depending upon their culture, he would not be able to use this argument. This is because in some cultures the symbol of authority would be something other than a head covering. Paul would then present a completely different argument.

One thought to consider as well is how the spread of the gospel could negatively be impacted in cultures where head coverings are not the cultural norm, yet is practiced within the church. How might this practice hinder women who are unbelievers from investigating Christianity or considering attending church? In some cultures this practice may be viewed as antiquated and Christianity as a faith that is not in touch with the day in which they live. In others it may be seen as a foreign practice which is considered strange along with those who participate in it. Especially in today’s world where women in some religions must cover themselves, this similarity may cause some people to feel unnecessarily uncomfortable with

¹⁴ Vanlaningham, M. G. (2014). 1 Corinthians. In M. A. Rydelnik & M. Vanlaningham (Eds.), *The Moody Bible Commentary* (pp. 1773–1805). Chicago, IL: Moody Publishers.

¹⁵ Fee, G. D. (2014). *The First Epistle to the Corinthians*. (N. B. Stonehouse, F. F. Bruce, G. D. Fee, & J. B. Green, Eds.) (Revised Edition). Grand Rapids, MI; Cambridge, U.K.: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company; (1 Corinthians 11:2-6).

believers, thus creating a chasm between them. The goal of the church is to build bridges to unbelievers and not walls that would discourage them from them placing their faith in Christ.

II. Understanding the main issue

The arguments given by Paul were the reasons why women in the Corinthian church were to submit to the practice of covering their heads while praying or prophesying. As presented, this practice was a cultural manifestation of a supracultural mandate, that of submission and therefore honoring one's head (authority).

The following five points are presented to help the reader further consider the issue of form -- a method or cultural expression of a supracultural principle. One of the believer's goals is to differentiate between the supracultural principle and its form. When this is not done and form is seen as a supracultural principle, critical attitudes can manifest themselves and division result. This occurs when churches see their form as equivalent to biblical truth, being the only acceptable way to do something. In contrast, when a supracultural principle is the focus, then form can change from church to church and culture to culture. The most important factor will then be that the supracultural principle is obeyed.

A. Man was not made for the law, but the law was made for the sake of man -- Mark 2:23-28

In this passage Jesus reminded the Pharisees about when King David and his companions ate the consecrated bread which only the priests could lawfully eat. Jesus then stated, "The Sabbath was made for man, and not man for the Sabbath." In other words, man was the focus and not the Sabbath. Thus, God implemented the Law for man's sake, not man for the Law's sake. The Law was meant to be man's tutor (Gal. 3:24), not man's taskmaster. Therefore, the customs concerning prayer or prophesying within the church were the practices of Paul's day and not meant to enslave anyone. Instead, they were a way for them to demonstrate their faith and submission.

B. The condition of the heart is most important -- Mark 7:14-23

Jesus taught that it was not what goes into a man (i.e., food) that defiles him, but what comes out of his heart. Therefore, the issue which God is most concerned about is the condition of the heart. The Pharisees did many correct things according to the Law, but their hearts were far from God. Believers today need to focus on the heart as well. Women can cover their heads and yet not be submissive to male authority if their hearts are not right before God.

C. God is honored when things are done for Him out of a loving heart -- Isa. 29:13-14

In the book of Isaiah, the Jews were only giving God lip service because their hearts were far from Him. Their actions were done, not out of a sincere heart and love for God, but as the result of learned tradition. Therefore, being

hypocrites, they did not honor God. Believers must make sure that they do all things out of a heart for God and not simply because of traditions.

- D. God is honored when things are done because of a correct motive -- Psa. 51:16-17; 1 Sam. 15:22-23

In the Law God required the Jews to offer sacrifices to Him, yet He says in these passages that He did not delight in them. What He delights in is obedience and a broken and contrite heart. If the heart is right, then the sacrifice will follow and God will be pleased. Therefore, when a woman wears a head covering, her intent for doing so must be pure if she expects to please God (Heb. 11:6).

- E. The principles behind the Law were of utmost importance -- Deut. 22:9-11; 1 Cor. 9:9-10; 2 Cor. 6:14-17

In 1 Corinthians 9:9-10 Paul wrote:

"For it is written in the Law of Moses, 'You shall not muzzle the ox while he is threshing.' God is not concerned about oxen, is He? Or is He speaking altogether for our sake? Yes, for our sake it was written, because the plowman ought to plow in hope, and the thresher *to thresh* in hope of sharing *the crops*."

Paul used Deuteronomy 25:4 to illustrate that the command about the ox was written for the sake of people, not for the sake of the ox. Through this metaphor Paul specified the real intent of the verse, that like the ox, people should benefit from their labor. What is God's main concern? It is always for His glory and what is best for His children.

The use of head coverings for women and not for men were symbols of an underlying principle. That principle was submission and honor to one's head. Are there other ways that submission and honor can be demonstrated? Yes. Different cultures have different ways to demonstrate this as did the churches in Paul's time. Having a proper heart is of course the first thing that is necessary.

III. Conclusion

Supracultural principles and not cultural forms are the patterns presented in the New Testament. This does not however mean that cultural forms were not important in the Old Testament. They were given to make Israel a distinct nation and therefore were very important. Because Christianity is not specific to any one nation or people group, but is a worldwide faith, supracultural principles are primary, while cultural forms are secondary. If the use of head coverings was mandatory for the worldwide Church today, it would be the only cultural form prescribed in the New Testament for the Church.¹⁶

¹⁶ Baptism, communion, fellowship, etc. are commanded in the New Testament, however the form they take is never mandated.