

## Womans Headcoverings Part 02 by Craig Simpson

In our previous article we laid the foundation for our study on headcoverings, by looking at the background to the Apostle Paul's inspired comment in 1st Corinthians Chapter 11. We saw that several principles were firmly laid down from the beginning of creation:

- That man and woman were to have dominion over God's creation acting on God's behalf;
- That the commandment not to eat of "*the tree of the knowledge of good and evil*" was given directly to Adam;
- That Adam was given authority from God over Eve, and that this authority (man over woman) was to be passed on to all of their offspring including us in our day, we made the comment that the ultimate responsibility (in Spiritual matters) for giving direction rests with man.

In this article we will build on our foundation and look a little more closely at the Apostle's inspired comment, concerning headcoverings for brothers. After setting our foundation we are now in a position to understand what the Apostle Paul is saying to the Corinthian brethren.

We know there were problems in the Corinthian ecclesia, and the ecclesia had written to Paul concerning several of these problems and it appears (although it is not specifically stated) that there were two main problems within the ecclesia to do with headcoverings:

1. The first was to do with brothers and whether they should wear a headcovering when worshipping God.
2. The second was to do with sisters and since they now had been given the Spirit gifts as well as the brothers, it appears there was some confusion to do with the Divine hierarchy and whether they should now wear headcoverings, as surely they were equal in God's eyes.

### Jewish traditions

From 1 Corinthians 10:1 it appears that there were a large number of Jewish brethren in the ecclesia at Corinth. And to the Jews something that was new, and probably something that many had trouble grasping, was to accept Jesus' position in the Divine hierarchy. Previously the hierarchy under the Mosaic system had been:

1. God
2. Angels
3. Man
4. Woman

Now Jesus was also in this hierarchy and second only to God Himself! And whilst converted Jews could accept this fact, the ramifications of this were sometimes hard to grasp. This was particularly so with regards to the headcovering. We know that under the Law of Moses, priests were to wear a headcovering whenever they worshipped God. This is why even today we see Jewish men with their 'skull caps' on, they are still following the Mosaic tradition (see Ex. 28:36-38, 40; Lev. 16:4).

The reason why a covering for the head was required under the Law was that the head was seen to be equivalent to the thinking of the flesh; and hair as it came from within a man was a fit symbol of human life, which grew continually, and was to be kept under control. So when a priest covered their head it represented the natural mind being subjected wholly to God. The garments of the priest were "*for glory and for beauty*" (Ex. 28:2), and so a priest having his head covered, rather than letting the flesh be on show, would manifest God by wearing this holy head covering.

Under the Law, to worship with your head uncovered was a symbol of leprosy (Lev. 13:45), and also a sign of mourning (Ezek. 24:17, 23). So to Jewish brethren to worship with their head uncovered would have been a rather radical departure from the traditions of the Law.

And so it appears that some of the Corinthian brethren had written to Paul about these very things, seeking to understand Apostolic teaching for the harmony of the whole ecclesia.

## **Brother's Headcoverings - 1 Corinthians Chapter 11:3, 4**

The first half of chapter eleven can be readily divided into the following sections:

- **Verse 2** Introduction
- **Verses 3-12** The Apostle's comment based on Old Testament teachings - God talking
- **Verses 13-15** The Apostle's comment based on the teaching of nature - nature talking
- **Verse 16** Apostolic command

Paul begins his address in the first two verses praising the ecclesia for keeping the ordinances he had delivered to them. And in verse three he reminds them of the Divine hierarchy, *"But I would have you know, that the head of every man is Christ; and the head of the woman is the man; and the head of Christ is God,"* this hierarchy was quite different from that traditionally recognised by the Jewish brethren.

Paul continues in verse four to explain the new way of worship in Christ, *"every man praying or prophesying, having his head covered dishonoureth his head."* Paul argues that a man who's head is Christ does not need, and in fact should not cover his head when worshipping God. If he does so he dishonours his head, which is Christ. As under the Law of Moses when a priest was worshipping God he was to cover his head, wearing garments which were *"for glory and for beauty"*, and thus radiating the Divine *"glory"*; so under the new covenant the brother at worship with his head uncovered reflects the Divine *"glory"*. With his head covered the brother in Christ in effect says that he is still in the same position as the priests under the Law, but he is not, Christ has provided the atonement for our sins. Christ fulfilled the Law, and therefore to go back to the same mode of worship by covering his head, is in effect to say that Christ's sacrifice is not sufficient.

So Paul's inspired teaching is quite clear for the brother whilst worshipping, do not cover your head. To do so is to dishonour the brother's spiritual head - the Lord Jesus Christ.

In verse 5 Paul now changes his focus to consider the coverings, which a sister should have when worshipping God, which we will consider in our next article.