

Womans Headcoverings Part 01 by Craig Simpson

In this series of articles we want to consider the subject of head coverings; it is a subject that has caused so much confusion throughout the years, and in a lot of people's minds, it is really an unsettled matter. This however, needn't be the case. If we look at this subject with a searching mind, we will see that the subject is very clear and has a reasonable explanation, which is provided in the pages of the Word of God.

Our objective in these articles is to approach the subject with a clear mind helping all of us to come to a firm conclusion once and for all, we will:

- firstly set the background to the Apostle Paul's inspired comment
- look at what Paul has to say in 1 Corinthians 11
- look at what early church history has to say on these matters
- consider objections which have been raised throughout the years
- and finally consider what we in the twenty first century should be doing in our worship to our Heavenly Father.

Background to the Apostle's Inspired Comment

Lets begin our analysis in Genesis chapter 1. On the sixth day of creation man was made and the record says in Genesis 1:26-28,

"And God said, Let us make man in our image, after our likeness: and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over the cattle, and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth. So God created man in his own image, in the image of God created he him; male and female created he them. And God blessed them, and God said unto them, Be fruitful, and multiply, and replenish the earth, and subdue it: and have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over every living thing that moveth upon the earth."

From these verses we see that man and women were given dominion over the animals of the field, and in fact over the whole creation of God. We know that in Genesis chapter 2 it is recorded that God made Adam out of the dust of the ground. And after his creation He said unto Adam, (Gen. 2:16, 17)

"Of every tree of the garden thou mayest freely eat: But of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt not eat of it: for in the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die"

An important point to note in connection with our current subject was that this commandment was given directly to man.

After this God brought all the animals, which He had made before Adam, and Adam, named them all. It was God who gave humans this authority or dominion over the rest of creation. Adam and Eve had a job to do - it really can be summed up in that they were to ensure God's will was done on earth. God's authority was given to man and woman and the rest of creation was in turn to be subject to them.

It is interesting to note the order of these events in chapter 1:26, 27 man and woman were to have dominion over the rest of creation. Yet in chapter 2:19 Adam alone was to name the animals. Only after he had done this was a deep sleep to fall upon him and God took from his side and formed woman. Because man was formed first, and Eve came from Adam, man was given authority over woman. Adam actually named Eve (Gen. 2:23),

"and Adam said, This is now bone of my bones, and flesh of my flesh: she shall called Woman, because she was taken out of Man" note this was before the fall and thus independent of the curse, and again (Gen. 3:20). "and Adam called his wife's name Eve; because she was the mother of all living"

But again the same principle applied. Adam's authority over women was not his own, it was God's authority delegated to him. And it didn't mean he could exercise his own will over woman, he was acting on God's behalf. This also did not mean that Adam had an unfair advantage over Eve in spiritual matters, both of them had equal opportunity of salvation. But what it did do, was put Adam first in the line as far as responsibility was concerned.

When Adam and Eve sinned by eating of the forbidden fruit, it was Adam who was addressed first; he had been given authority over the woman and in the act of them sinning he hadn't spoken up, he'd gone along with what Eve was doing, he wasn't living up to his God given position. He wasn't deceived it was Eve, his obligation was to speak up and to show her what God wanted from them, which was that God's will was to be done on earth.

It is interesting to note also here what the consequences for Eve were, (Gen. 3:16)

"Unto the woman he said, I will greatly multiply thy sorrow and thy conception; in sorrow thou shalt bring forth children; and thy desire shall be to thy husband, and he shall rule over thee."

Because Eve had tried to usurp the authority given to Adam, and he had let her, the result was the first sin. And here again it is reiterated and made very clear in this curse that Eve was to be subject to Adam. And these consequences have been passed on to all of her offspring. (1 Tim. 2:12 - 14).

"But I suffer not a woman to teach, nor to usurp authority over the man but to be in silence. For Adam was first formed, then Eve. And Adam was not deceived, but the woman being deceived was in the transgression"

How then is man to have authority over the woman? Well quite simply, that whilst it should be and is encouraged in Scripture that man and woman discuss what God would have us to do and how He would have us to act, the ultimate responsibility for giving direction rests with man.

With these few principles once again reiterated, we come then to 1 Corinthians chapter 11. And we are now in a position to understand what the Apostle is talking about, which we will proceed with in our consideration in our next study.