

God's True "Head Covering"

(I Corinthians 11:1-12)

by David A. DePra

Christianity, at the core, is, "Christ in YOU, the hope of glory." Note that Christ dwells within the individual believer. The suggestion that a wife must be under the authority of her husband in order to be right with Christ, or have the protection of Christ, or to have a relationship with Christ, is grave error. Again – the very meaning of Christianity – the meaning of the New Covenant – is that each believer has Christ within – and has a personal relationship with Him through personal faith.

This passage reveals that the wife does not need, indeed, must not try, to live in Christ through her husband. No. Each believer has personal, one-on-one, individual access to God solely through Christ. But more than mere access, each believer is to personally live from out of Christ. No one can do this by proxy. To try will undermine a person's relationship with God through Christ.

And yet this passage has often been used to prove the opposite of what is actually being taught by Paul. Wives are told they cannot live in Christ except it be through their

husbands. They are told that unless they submit to their husbands – and that is made to mean many false things – that they cannot be right with God.

This passage contains a number of spiritual principles that apply, not only to the marriage relationship, but to ALL relationships within life in Christ. That is valuable. For if there has been one repetitive error throughout the church age, it has been what might be termed, "The error of the substitute mediator." What is that? Well, the Bible tells us that there is but ONE Mediator between God and man, Jesus Christ. Anything I use as an additional mediator, or a substitute mediator, is therefore a false mediator.

A "false mediator" is anyone or anything I use to enhance or maintain my access to God. If I think I must "plug into" any group, church, or person, in order to "plug into" God, then I am using that thing as a mediator unto God. I am saying that Christ alone isn't enough. I must have this other thing to "really" enter into the purposes of God.

Of course, the root problem in this error is unbelief. The foundation of Christianity is faith -- personal, one-on-one faith -- in the True Head of the Body, Jesus Christ. If I believe that I cannot stand alone in Christ, but must stand with a group -- even the very Body of Christ -- in order to be totally right with God, then I am introducing another mediator unto God. I'm denying that what Jesus did was sufficient. I now have to add something.

I am not in Christ because I'm in the Body of Christ. I'm in the Body of Christ because I'm first in Christ. The personal, individual walk with Christ, rather than give way to the corporate walk, is really the only means by which the Body can survive and be strong. There are no other mediators in addition to Christ. In Him alone do I stand, or I don't stand at all.

The Husband IS the Head of the Wife

I Corinthians 11:1-16 is a passage of scripture that deals with this issue of our relationship with God as it pertains to our relationship with others. In this passage, God uses the relationship of the wife to her husband

to illustrate this Truth. But the principle of Truth God is revealing applies to all relationships.

As noted, it is a section of scripture often used, not only to "prove" certain "authority" teachings in the church today, but is also used to show a husband's dominance over his wife with regard to her personal relationship with Christ. But actually, it proves exactly the opposite. The passage proves that the husband has no dominance over the wife when it comes to her personal relationship with Jesus Christ. Instead, it pictures his proper place as her husband – her earthly head in the marriage. This is a passage that is vital to understand if we are to grasp the whole Truth of spiritual authority -- both as pertains to the husband and wife, and as it is to be in the Body of Christ.

That being said, it is likewise necessary to be perfectly clear another thing the passage does not teach. It does not teach that a wife should declare herself independent from her husband -- anymore than it gives the husband freedom to declare himself independent of his wife. No. Each has a purpose and function in a marriage that is in Christ. We will see

this in more detail in the text itself. But it is necessary to state this upfront because of the possibility that there could be a few readers who, in an unhappy marriage situation, might read into this Truth the wrong intent. No. **The husband remains the head of the wife – in the marriage.** This is, however, distinct to the fact that Christ is the mediator unto God for EACH, as individuals before Him.

I Corinthians 11 reveals to us HOW the husband is the head of the wife – but how he is not as her mediator unto God. In short, I Cor. 11 shows that the wife's personal relationship with God supercedes her relationship with her husband. Indeed, it is only as EACH spouse is right with God that they can truly function in the marriage according to God's will towards each other.

In God's will, the vertical, one-on-one, personal relationship is ALWAYS first. Christ dwells in EACH believer. Only then can the horizontal, in any relationship, properly function in God's will. But try to establish the horizontal FIRST and you will meet spiritual disaster. Indeed, one of the most terrible teachings possible is to tell people that they must do this or

do that in a human relationship in order to be right with God. This is bondage, and the stuff of which cults are made.

Some historical background must be also be mentioned before proceeding. The Corinthian church had apparently questioned Paul as to whether Christians were required to wear a "head covering" while praying to God. The question had likely arisen due to differences between Jewish and Gentile traditions on the matter. The Jews required that a man cover his head while praying. The Gentiles required women to cover their heads. The Corinthians wrote Paul hoping that he could clear up the disagreement. The answer he gave them was more than they bargained for.

A Spiritual Teaching

One thing must be established about Paul's answer to the Corinthians or none of this chapter will be clear: God does not care whether His people -- men or women -- wear a hat, veil, or anything else on their head while praying. God seeks those who worship Him in spirit and Truth -- not those who are wearing a hat. We have

access to God through Jesus Christ alone -- not because we wear a physical head covering of any kind.

If we understand the Truth about the grace of God we will certainly see that wearing, or not wearing, a head covering affects nothing. Indeed, Paul said, "Neither circumcision nor uncircumcision avails anything." We need to come to terms with the Truth.

Grace is a fundamental Truth of Christianity. We cannot enhance, improve, or maintain our relationship with God by our own human effort. Good works and law keeping cannot do that, so how much less can wearing a head covering? Paul is not talking at all in this passage about the need for anyone to wear a physical head covering in prayer. Such a thought is contrary to the Truth of grace.

So what is Paul talking about in this passage? He certainly seems to be talking about head coverings, doesn't he? Sure. But Paul is doing something here that we all do from time to time. It is, in fact, something Jesus did when He taught. Paul is using what we commonly call "a play on words." He is taking the issue of physical head coverings and using it to teach the

Corinthians spiritual Truth. In short, Paul has taken this issue and made from it a spiritual parable.

Paul is saying, "This issue of whether to pray with one's head covered is irrelevant. Forget it. Don't spend your time arguing back and forth about it. It is not an important issue with God. But since you asked me about 'head coverings,' I will use that issue to reveal to you what really is important to God: The Truth about your True Spiritual Head."

We need to see this. Paul is not talking about physical hats, veils, or even hair. Neither is he talking about anyone's physical head. No. Rather, he is using physical head coverings, and physical heads, as types of the spiritual. There is nothing unique about his method of teaching. It is one God uses all through the Bible.

The Text

In that day there was a mentality which continues in some places today, which suggests that access to God must come through the church, through other believers, through a leader, or through a spouse – or through something I wear, or do, or

don't do. Instead of Christ as the only Mediator unto God, Christians were taught that they had to "filter" their relationship with God through some other mediator -- a false mediator. You had to belong to a church to belong to God. You had to be "under the authority" of a certain church or leader to be under God's authority. From that basic error has emerged all forms of religious tyranny, from that of the Roman Catholic Church for 1000 years, to ideas today which say that we cannot stand in God unless we first stand in a church, group, or organization.

In few instances was this error more prevalent than in the marriage relationship. The woman, rather than being considered equal with the man before God, was considered inferior. The fact that God **does** say that the man is the head of the woman has often been made to mean something God never intended – it has been made to mean that a woman must come to God through her husband, or that her husband is her spiritual head. He is not. He is the head of the marriage. If you are a born again Christian woman, and you marry a born again Christian man, he becomes your head if you marry him. But

before you married him, was he your head in any way? No. So does he replace Christ in any way once you are married? No. Christ remains your spiritual head in every way. But now you have the head of your marriage.

So what does God mean when He says, "The husband is the head of the wife as Christ is the Head of the church."? He doesn't mean that the husband is to the wife as Christ is to the church. No. Is the husband the wife's savior? No. God is simply saying, "Just as Christ is the spiritual Head of each spouse, on the spiritual level, so with the context of the marriage relationship is the husband the head of the wife. God is telling us that there is a parallel between physical marriage and spiritual oneness with God. But it is a PARALLEL – it is not a substitute.

We can see this just by analyzing that verse. Christ is the Head of the church as the husband is the head of the wife. Well, aren't husbands also in the church? Sure. That makes Christ the spiritual husband of the physical husband, who is of the church. The wife is that too. This is why Paul said, "There is neither male, nor female...." Spiritually, we are all

married to Christ. The church is the bride of Christ. It would therefore be silly to say that if a woman marries a man that her new physical husband somehow replaces Christ as her spiritual head in a way that replaces Christ as such. No.

Paul wants to put this whole business to rest once and for all. He wants to show all Christians that no believer needs to come to God through anyone else or anything else except through Jesus Christ as the one true Head, and the one Mediator between God and man.

The Truth Paul reveals is this passage is that Jesus Christ is the Spiritual Head of each believer -- man and women -- and that no one is required to come to God through any other mediator. Each believer has personal access to God through Jesus Christ. He is the Head of the Church, and of each individual Christian -- and supercedes all other "heads" or authorities we have in this life.

Verse 1: "Be ye followers of me, even as I also am of Christ."

Before Paul gets into the main body of his teaching, he lays the

groundwork. He wants to make sure that the Corinthians realize that Jesus Christ, rather than himself, is their true Spiritual Head.

The word "followers" here in 11:1 literally means "to mimic or imitate." Paul is saying, "Although I am an apostle of Jesus Christ, you are in no way to do anything I say, or imitate anything I do, unless it equals obedience to Jesus Christ."

The Corinthian church had a tendency to follow spiritual leaders instead of Jesus Christ. That is made plain in the first chapter of this same letter. Paul asks them, "Is Christ divided?" He admonishes them for labeling themselves "of Apollos...of Paul...of Cephas." Paul wanted to get them away from associating themselves with certain leaders. He wanted to make absolutely sure that the Corinthian church did not look to him as a "substitute head" for Christ. He wants them to realize that he is as much an imitator of Christ as they should be.

Notice how verse 1 is already talking about who is the true Spiritual Head of each believer: Jesus Christ. It

sets the tone for the rest of the passage.

Verse 2: "Now I praise you, brethren, that you remember me in all things, and keep the ordinances as I delivered them to you -- BUT -- I would have you know, that the head of every man is Christ..."

Having exhorted the Corinthians to imitate him only if it equals imitation of Christ, Paul goes onto commend them for "holding fast" to the Truth he has shared with them. In other words, there were times when the Corinthians DID imitate Paul, and it was good that they did. In those cases it did equal obedience to Jesus Christ.

Paul then says "BUT -- I would have you know..." Paul wants to qualify his praising of them. He is glad they have received the Truth he has shared. BUT – he says -- "I want you to know that the head of every man is Jesus Christ." In other words, Paul is saying, "I have given you Truth. BUT - - Jesus Christ is your true Head. I am NOT. Do not look to me as your head. Look to Christ."

All ministry of the Holy Spirit has one goal: To lift up Jesus Christ so that individual believers can be established in Him for themselves. True ministry will make believers reliant upon any group or leader. Paul does not want the Corinthians to make a guru out of him. He wants them to receive the Truth he has to share and to let it draw them to Christ as their only true Head and Mediator. Paul knows that only if individual believers are established in Christ can the Body of Christ as a whole can be a effective witness unto God.

Verse 3: "But I would have you know, that the head of every man is Christ, the head of the woman is man, and the head of Christ is God."

Verse 3 begins to unfold Paul's real intention in this passage. He takes the Corinthian dispute about the physical head covering and uses it as "a play on words" for a teaching about "spiritual heads." Paul then names **three** "heads:"

The Head of every man is Christ.

The head of woman is man.

The Head of Christ is God.

Here Paul identifies the "heads" he will be talking about for the rest of the passage. Unless we understand these are the "heads" he refers to in the subsequent verses we cannot hope to understand any of the chapter. Paul is **not** talking about the physical head of a woman or a man. He is talking about RELATIONSHIPS.

Paul tells the Corinthians that Jesus Christ is indeed the Head of every man, and that the man is the head of woman. These *ARE* their heads. But he will now go on to show that because each believer -- both men and women -- have individual access to God for themselves, that the true Headship of Jesus Christ supercedes any earthly headship God may have ordained.

Verse 4: "Every man praying or prophesying, having his head covered, dishonors his head."

Immediately Paul begins to speak of the REAL head, using the physical head as a natural illustration of it.

Who is the man's "head" Paul is speaking about in this verse? He just

told us in verse three: The head of every man is Jesus Christ. So when Paul talks about a man "praying with his head covered" he is not talking about his physical head being covered. He is using the physical head as a means of illustration.

In short, **The Head which Paul says a man must NOT cover is Jesus Christ.**

But why? What does it mean "to cover" Jesus Christ as my spiritual Head? This is vital to understand, for Paul will again and again use the illustration of "covering" the spiritual head in this passage.

The word "covered" here means "to hide." And that is precisely what a physical hat does to a physical head. It renders one's head OUT OF SIGHT. When you look at a man wearing a head covering, you don't see his head, you see the covering. And this is exactly what a man must NOT do regarding his true Head, Jesus Christ. Paul is saying that a man must never "hide" or render out of sight his true head, Christ. Jesus. Christ must always be seen and experienced as the true Head of each man. He must never be made secondary to another "head."

But we must ask, "What kind of 'covering' would hide Jesus as the true Head of each believer?" Well, any physical head covering not only hides the head, but it takes the place of the head -- as far as what is visible. It becomes a sort of "substitute" for the physical head. So, to "cover" Jesus Christ as my Head would be to supercede Him with a "substitute head" -- one which both hides Him and takes his place. I could do this with a church, group, leader, or spouse. If I look to any of these as my mediator and access to God then I am using them to cover up and supplant Jesus Christ. I am looking at them as a substitute for Him as my true Head and Mediator.

Paul says a man must not pray with his Head, Jesus Christ, covered -- that is, no man must ever supercede Jesus Christ as his true Head by covering Him up with a substitute. Jesus is the only Head and Mediator the believer has. There can be none other.

Verse 5: But every woman who prays or prophecies with her head uncovered dishonors her head. For that is even all one as if she were shaven.

Praying and prophesying – prophesying meaning the declaring of the Truth in those days --has to do with one's personal relationship with God.

The husband / wife relationship is a person to person relationship – the closest that is ordained of God. The husband **is** the head of the wife. But in this passage Paul is going to show that this never takes precedence or governs the wife's personal relationship with God. It never means she cannot minister in the body of Christ unless she comes through her husband. No. *"There is neither male nor female....for you are all one in Jesus Christ."*

Ok. On with the passage. **Who** did Paul say is the "head" of the woman? The man -- or her husband. How does Paul tell her to treat him with regard to prayer and prophecy? Well, while men must pray with their Head, Christ, **UNcovered**, women must pray with their head, the man, **COVERED**. The opposite. The reason is obvious. Christ is the Mediator unto God for all men and women alike. He must always remain **uncovered** and given full glory. But the man, even though he **is** the head of the woman,

is not her mediator unto God. Therefore, with regards to her personal relationship with God, the woman MUST "cover" the man – must render him "out of sight." Christ alone is to be seen.

The man's headship over the woman in the husband / wife relationship is superceded by Jesus Christ as her greater, spiritual Head. Now before we continue, don't misunderstand this. This is not a license for wives to ignore their husbands. Rather, if a wife is directly in fellowship with Christ, this will help her all the more look to him as the head of their marriage. Again – we are here talking about human relationships vs. our personal relationship with God. We don't go to God through any human being. But when we go to God directly this will enable us to walk in love toward our fellow human being, including our spouse. As noted earlier, it is the vertical relationship with God FIRST, and then the horizontal with others.

Now to continue. Notice how clearly Paul is picturing the Truth that the woman has direct access to Christ – as does the husband. The man must NOT cover his Head, Jesus Christ. But

the woman MUST cover her head, the man. Why? Because she has a greater Head, as a member of the Body of Christ. Paul is showing that Jesus Christ is the greater Head, and the one Mediator, of **all** men and women. And so women must "cover" -- render out of sight -- her marriage head, the husband, as it pertains to her personal access and relationship to God.

Thus, rather than weaken the Truth that the husband is the head of the wife in the marriage, if the wife covers her husband and has direct access to God, this will strengthen all the more the marriage relationship. If Christ is the spiritual head of the wife -- she will, in fact, honor him as the head of the marriage. And if Christ is the Head of the husband, he will love his wife all the more. It is because EACH is personally in Christ that they will function as God intended towards each other.

Paul also says the woman "dishonors" her head, the man, if she does not "cover" him. What does he mean? Well, the man is dishonored if not covered because it would put him in the place of Christ -- a position in which he doesn't belong. A husband is

not Jesus Christ to the woman. And if she puts him in that place, or if he puts himself in that place, it is a disgrace to him.

Paul echoes this thought by saying that if the woman does not "cover" her head, the man, it is if "she were shaven." Women with shaven heads in those days were those who had committed adultery. In this illustration Paul makes an unusual, but true, statement. He is saying, "If you don't cover the man, but put him in the position only Christ can occupy, then you are committing spiritual adultery. You are forsaking your true spiritual husband, Jesus Christ, for you physical husband, the man."

Again, the Truth Paul is bringing out is that the woman has direct and personal access to God through Christ. This is not only her right, but her responsibility. She must not put her husband in the position of Christ as her Mediator unto God. To do so not only dishonors the man, but it really equals spiritual adultery.

We will come back to verse 6. But at this point, it is vital that we jump down to verse ten:

Verse 10a: "For this cause ought the woman to have power on her head..."

Paul, to this point, has told the woman she must cover her head, the man, as it pertains to her direct access to God through Christ. But he has not yet told her what to cover her head **with** -- that is, he has not told her what constitutes her "spiritual hat." But in verse 10 he finally does tell her what must cover the man: "The woman ought to have **power** on her head." Again, who is her head? The man. Paul now tells her **with what** she is to cover her head: **Power**. What does Paul mean?

One common interpretation of this verse is to say that Paul is telling women that they must "be covered" **by the man**, that is, by his authority **over** her. But that interpretation is error. Why? Notice Paul's words: "The woman ought to have power **ON her head**." But wait. WHO is her head? The man. **That means the "power" covers HIM.** HE is the "head" which the "power" is ON. So instead of the man's authority covering the woman, what we have in this verse is the woman's POWER

covering the man! He is the head the power covers!

What is this "power?" The word for "power" here means, "right to choose." In other words, the woman covers her head, the man – renders him out of sight – with her personal choice and responsibility before the Lord. Again – with her personal relationship with Christ as her personal mediator unto God.

Can we see right in this verse that God is NOT saying that the husband is the covering for the wife? No. He is not. The husband is the HEAD of the wife – he is the head who is to BE COVERED. If only people could see that simple Truth. Jesus Christ only is our covering. He alone is our Mediator unto God.

I also wish that Christian people would once and for all forsake this religious system we find in so many places where people and ministries believe that they have to get under a COVERING. This is taught nowhere in scripture. Get right with God. You will be covered! And you will be right with everyone else! That is so simple. But it requires personal faith in the finished work of Christ. It would seem

that we find it easier to develop a system that can substitute for this, and give us something we can DO.

So what we have is this: Rather than be a teaching about the authority of the husband over the woman's relationship to God, this verse is clearly showing that the man must be "covered" by the woman's responsibility and personal relationship to God.

Show me a woman who is right with God and she will be right with her husband. Show me a husband who is right with God and he will be right with his wife. Both will operate in God's order, in LOVE. But if the VERTICIAL, one-on-one relationship, each has with God is not right, then the HORIZONTAL will eventually be effected. It MUST be.

In addition to all of this, the Greek dashes to pieces the notion that this passage teaches that the husband is a covering, or a, "protective covering," for the wife. In NT Greek, there are three common words for "covering." One of them **does** mean "to protect" - - sort of like a roof protects those under it. (Those who are into much teaching about "submission to

authority" often compare being under authority to being under a protective covering. Many of them wrongly point to this passage as "proof.") But guess what? NOT ONCE in the entire chapter is the word "covered" translated from that Greek word which means "to protect" – as a roof protects. NOT ONCE. In all but one case, the word "covered" is translated from a Greek word which means "to hide." Again – just like a "hat" hides a "head." In the one other case, (I Cor. 11:15) the Greek word means to "wrap around." Again, not once is the original word the one which means "to protect."

Would God have likely gone out of His way to **avoid** using the word meaning "protect" if He was trying to picture the husband – in this passage – as a protective covering? No. But the word is NOT used. And it is because the Truth in this passage has nothing to do with the husband, or any other authority, being a "protective covering."

We would obviously be wrong to say that the husband has not the responsibility to protect his wife and family, both physically, and spiritually. And it would be wrong to say that if

the husband is wrong with God that it would hurt his family. But if this is the case, and the husband is wrong with God, what is the wife to do? She GOES TO GOD personally. Well, if she must go to God THROUGH her husband then she is completely at the mercy of her husband's relationship with God, isn't she? That is not taught in the Bible. It is taught that the wife has direct access to God, a fact that is more than proven if we would simply read what Paul says to those who are married to UNBELIEVERS.

Verse 6: "For if the woman be not covered, let her also be shorn. But if it be a shame for a woman to be shorn or shaven, let her be covered."

Paul is elaborating on his statement in verse five to the effect that a woman who will not cover her head, the man, she is guilty of committing spiritual adultery. She has violated her spiritual marriage with her true husband, Jesus Christ, by putting her physical husband in Christ's place as true Head.

Verse 7: "For a man indeed ought not to cover his head, forasmuch

as he is the image and glory of God, but the woman is the glory of the man."

Paul gives further reasons here in verse 7 as to why the man must not cover his Head, Jesus Christ, and why the woman must cover her head, the man. The reasons merely echo his previous comments about direct access to God for both the man and woman. He says:

The man is the image and glory of God.

The woman is the glory of man.

Notice the difference. Man is the image AND glory of God. The woman is only the glory of man. But why not the image of man also? The Greek helps here. "Image" is a word which speaks of character. It means "to resemble the original; to rely on it as the source." But "glory" merely means, "to point to." Clearly, a man must come to develop the character or image of God. He must BE God's glory; point back to him. But the woman must never look to her husband as the one whose **image** she must be conformed to. Yet she can, within the context of a marriage

relationship, and in a natural sense, "be the glory" of her husband. If he is right with God, it reflects IN HER. She benefits greatly. And then it reflects back to him. She "points" to him. Ephesians 6:21-33 bears this out.

Paul's statement here clearly shows, once again, that the husband is not God to the wife. He is only her earthly head, and she can point to him as that. But he is not her mediator unto God, and she is not to look to him as the **image** she must herself grow to resemble. Regarding **that**, she must "cover him." Christ takes precedent there.

Verses 8-9, 11-12: "For the man is not of the woman, but the woman of the man. Neither was the man created for the woman, but the woman for the man...nevertheless, neither is the man without the woman, neither is the woman without the man, in the Lord. For as the woman is of the man even so is the man also by the woman. But all things of God.

Paul simply says that even though God made woman as a "helpmeet" for

the man, that man nevertheless must be born of woman. He also says "neither is the man without the woman, neither is the woman without the man, IN THE LORD." If that doesn't signify a oneness and a equality then nothing does. The point is this: God has created the man and the woman for specific purposes in the marriage relationship.

The fact that the man is the head of the woman doesn't make him superior to her. It merely gives him a greater responsibility. And as it pertains to the personal relationship to God of each -- they are equal. One does not have greater access to God. And as Paul has been saying all along, the woman is not bound to have to come to God through her husband.

This verse also shows that a husband or a wife has no right to disregard each other. They do each have personal and individual access to God. They each stand in Christ for themselves. But they are ONE in Christ, and also one as man and wife in a way they are not one with other believers. But the right to stand in Christ for myself will never translate into a right to disregard my mate. It will mean that I'll be a partner with

them in finding the will of God for the both of us.

Ok. But now we must ask: What if the husband and wife disagree on something? Who gets the last word? Easy answer: The husband. (I'm talking about decisions for the family, not the husband directing the wife's relationship with Christ.)

Why? Because the husband remains the head of the wife. Yet if both husband and wife are in Christ seeking the will of God, this will never be demonstrated in any kind of "king of the castle" attitude. Nor should there be a rift spiritually. The goal here is supposed to be to seek the will of God – not to "win." Husbands are to lay down their lives for their wives. In that kind of attitude there can be no such attitude which puts the man as superior to the woman. It merely gives him the greater accountability before God for how he treats his wife and how he opens himself to God.

Verse 10b: "For this cause ought the woman to have power on her head, because of the angels."

The first part of verse ten is addressed above. We saw that the

woman's personal power of choice is that which is to cover the man, her head. The woman has personal access to God and is responsible to God for her choices.

In the second part of verse ten Paul tells us WHY the woman has personal right and responsibility before God -- rather than having to simply "come through" her husband. Paul says it is "because of the angels."

The common interpretation of this verse errs because the rest of the chapter is also misunderstood. It is often said that the reason women must "be covered" by the "authority" of their husband is because the angels are too under the authority of God, and marriage is to be also in line with God's order and structure of authority. But we have already seen that the phrase "power on her head" does not mean the woman is to be "covered with the man's authority." It means the MAN is to be covered up by the woman's personal access and relationship with God.

Paul says the woman's right of personal access to God is to cover up the man as her head "because of the angels." What angels? The angels to

which Paul here refers are likely the fallen angels.

Once we establish that, his application of the those angels to the subject at hand is clear. The fallen angels, the Bible says, constitute one-third of the angels God originally had created. These are the angels whom the Bible also says followed Lucifer in his rebellion against God. Blending into these facts is the indication that Lucifer was one of three original archangels. Put all of these pieces together and you have Lucifer, one of three archangels, with authority over one-third of God's angels.

Notice the implication: Because the angels who were under the authority of Lucifer followed their leader instead of following God, they lost their position in heaven and were plunged into darkness. They should have refused Lucifer's authority in favor of God's authority. Or, to draw a comparison to Paul's teaching in this passage, they should have "covered" their "head," Lucifer, because they had a greater Head to whom they must answer.

Paul is alluding to the terrible loyalty these fallen angels displayed to

Lucifer. He is saying, "The woman must "cover up" her husband with her right and responsibility before God. She must obey him only as it equals obedience to Christ. She must never look to him as someone through whom she must go to find access to God. The terrible example of the fallen angels stands as testimony of what happens otherwise."

Paul is revealing a Truth in this chapter which applies to the relationship any believer has to any authority. He is saying, "You are not to look to any man, any church, any group, or to anything as a mediator unto God. Jesus Christ is your only personal Mediator."

The personal relationship with God through Jesus Christ for each believer is the foundation of Christianity. Yet it is one Truth which has been distorted so often throughout history. The Roman church, for instance, taught that unless you belonged to their church and believed what they taught, and came under the authority of the Pope -- well, you simply had no access to God.

But the same kind of teaching abounds today in many circles, some

obvious and some subtle. There are some who teach that the believer's access to God is contingent upon whether that are "submitted to authority" -- especially church authority. Cults are extreme examples of this distortion. You have to "belong" to the cult or you won't "belong" to God. This whole idea, however, wherever it is practiced, boils down to one error: It creates a false mediator unto God. It covers up Jesus Christ as the true Head of each believer.

The Greek word for "submission" brings out the Truth perfectly. It means "to arrange in an orderly fashion under." In other words, if I "submit" to anything or anyone, I am arranging my life and heart in a way that corresponds to -- not their will -- but God's will for me. It simply means that I am submitting to God in my relationship to them.

How different this is from the error which states that we are to "submit" to a person. No. We are to submit to God. And if we are really doing that then we will be rightly related to that person. This works in marriage, family, at work, at church, or in any other relationship.

The Truth of the "head-covering," as shown in this chapter, clearly agrees with all of the other Truth in the Bible about spiritual authority. The same theme shines through: Jesus Christ, and Him alone, possesses ALL authority. (He did say that, you know.) The believer has the responsibility to go to Him for direction in their lives. Doing so will always result in proper relationships with those we love.

Verse 13-16: Judge in yourselves: Is it comely that a woman pray unto God uncovered? Doth not even nature itself teach you, that, if a man have long hair, it is a shame unto him? But if a woman have long hair, it is a glory to her. For her hair is given her for a covering. But if any man seem to be contentious, we have no such custom, neither the churches of God.

All this time, Paul has dealt with the issue of whether a man or a woman should pray with their respective "spiritual head" covered. Only when he mentioned a woman should have her head shaved, rather than pray with her head uncovered,

does Paul bring up the issue of HAIR. So why does he bring it up now?

In verses 13 and 14, Paul points out a physical item to verify his spiritual Truth about spiritual "heads." He says, "Does not even nature...", that is, "What you see in nature is indicative of the mind of God in the Spirit." He points to a cultural standard of that day: It was a shame for a man to have long hair -- as it was for a woman to have her hair shaved. Rather, a man should have his hair cut, and a woman should wear her hair long. This, Paul said, is what brought her the most cultural glory. It was, Paul points out, indicative of the Spiritual Truth he is teaching them.

There is an important point here. If this passage is merely dealing with the natural aspect of whether someone should pray with their covered, Paul would hardly turn and say, "Does not EVEN nature itself teach you..." He wouldn't because he'd **already** be teaching in the natural. But if he were teaching spiritual Truth, using physical examples, he would point to a natural example. And that's what he does in these last few verses on the subject.

God's Truth on this subject should set people free. This Truth should set husbands free to BE the head of the wife. This Truth should set wives free to take their place, in God's order, AS God has ordained. But more importantly, governing it all, is the believer's personal access to God. This direct relationship is that which governs ALL of our other relationships, and that is exactly why God wants to make it clear that NO OTHER relationship must be allowed to take precedent over it.

Jesus Christ is the Head of the Church. And thus, God's true "head covering" is the right of each individual believer, both male and female, to have personal access to God through Him alone, as personal Mediator.