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HEADCOVERINGS

One of the most frequently asked questions involves the practice of headcoverings for both men and women. We would like to address this question on two levels. First we will look at the issue of authority and then secondly we will look at the actual practice of wearing a physical headcovering.

1 Corinthians 11:3-16

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. 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. 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. For this reason the woman ought to have a symbol of authority on her head, because of the angels. 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. Judge among yourselves. Is it proper for a woman to pray to God with her head uncovered? 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.

Within this teaching, the Apostle Paul is establishing the proper order of authority within the believing community and especially within the context of marriage and family. Throughout his writings, Paul makes the distinction between carnal man and the spiritual man.

Romans 8:5-8

For those who live according to the flesh set their minds on the things of the flesh, but those who live according to the Spirit, the things of the Spirit. For to be carnally minded is death, but to be spiritually minded is life and peace. Because the carnal mind is enmity against God; for it is not subject to the law of God, nor indeed can be. So then, those who are in the flesh cannot please God.

1 Corinthians 2:14

But the natural man does not receive the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness to him; nor can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned.

Romans 7:14

For we know that the law is spiritual: but I am carnal, sold under sin.

Romans 8:9

But you are not in the flesh but in the Spirit, if indeed the Spirit of God dwells in you. Now if anyone does not have the Spirit of Christ, he is not His.

Romans 8:13-14

For if you live according to the flesh you will die; but if by the Spirit you put to death the deeds of the body, you will live. For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, these are sons of God.

The spiritual man is a man submitted to the direction and teaching of the Spirit of Messiah. Let us remember the promise of the Messiah.

John 14:16

And I will pray the Father, and He will give you another Helper, that He may abide with you forever—the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it neither sees Him nor knows Him; but you know Him, for He dwells with you and will be in you.

John 14:26

But the Helper, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in My name, He will teach you all things, and bring to your remembrance all things that I said to you.

John 16:13

However, when He, the Spirit of truth, has come, He will guide you into all truth; for He will not speak on His own authority, but whatever He hears He will speak; and He will tell you things to come.

Here Jesus (his Hebrew name, “Yeshua”), is telling us that the Spirit of the Holy One will not teach anything contrary to what Yeshua has already imparted to his disciples. In other words, the same Spirit that proclaimed the pure Law of God, the Torah, in Yeshua will now teach pure Torah through his followers, if they submit to the same Spirit. Not surprisingly, this is what the prophets said the central point and purpose of the spirit of God would be in the New Covenant.

Ezekiel 36:26-27

I will give you a new heart and put a new spirit within you; I will take the heart of stone out of your flesh and give you a heart of flesh. I will put My Spirit within you and cause you to walk in My statutes, and you will keep My judgments and do them.

Jeremiah 31:33

But this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, says Yahweh: I will put My law in their minds, and write it on their hearts; and I will be their God, and they shall be My people.

We should also remember that Yeshua came to fulfill the Torah and not destroy it, either by adding to it or subtracting from it. Yeshua was perfectly submitted to the Father's word and did not create or teach his own ideas, statutes, ordinances, or commandments. The Torah is clear that it is forbidden to add or subtract from the Torah. If breaking the Law of God is sin (1 John 3:4), and the Law of God says that we cannot add to or take away from the Law of God, then Yeshua could not do that either. Or, otherwise, He would have sinned according to the Bible's own definition of sin. But, we know that Yeshua did not sin. He did not add to or take away from what was already written as the Law of God. Our Messiah Yeshua was likewise clear that he was here to do the Father's will, work, and word.

Deuteronomy 4:2

You shall not add to the word which I command you, nor take from it, that you may keep the commandments of the Yahweh your God which I command you.

Deuteronomy 12:32

“Whatever I command you, be careful to observe it; you shall not add to it nor take away from it.”

Matthew 5:17 (Yeshua speaking)

Think not that I am come to destroy the law (Torah), or the prophets: I am not come to destroy, but to fulfill.

John 4:34

Yeshua said unto them, My meat is to do the will of him that sent me, and to finish his work.

John 5:17

But Yeshua answered them, “My Father has been working until now, and I have been working.”

John 5:19

Then Yeshua answered and said to them, “Most assuredly, I say to you, the Son can do nothing of Himself, but what He sees the Father do; for whatever He does, the Son also does in like manner.

John 5:30

I can of Myself do nothing. As I hear, I judge; and My judgment is righteous, because I do not seek My own will but the will of the Father who sent Me.

John 5:43

I am come in my Father's name, and ye receive me not: if another shall come in his own name, him ye will receive.

John 6:38

For I came down from heaven, not to do mine own will, but the will of him that sent me.

John 7:16

Yeshua answered them, and said, My doctrine is not mine, but his that sent me.

Clearly, our Messiah was submitted to his Father as Paul stated. Yeshua condemned the practice of his adversaries who saw fit to assume the Father's authority and lord it over other believers by teaching their own commandments and reforms as being authoritative.

Mark 7:6-13

He answered and said to them, “Well did Isaiah prophesy of you hypocrites, as it is written:
‘This people honors Me with their lips,
But their heart is far from Me.
And in vain they worship Me,
Teaching as doctrines the commandments of men.’

For laying aside the commandment of God, you hold the tradition of men—the washing of pitchers and cups, and many other such things you do.” He said to them, “All too well you reject the commandment of God, that you may keep your tradition. For Moses said, ‘Honor your father and your mother and, ‘He who curses father or mother, let him be put to death.’ But you say, ‘If a man says to his father or mother, “Whatever profit you might have received from me is corban”—’ (that is, a gift to God), then you no longer let him do anything for his father or his mother, making the word of God of no effect through your tradition which you have handed down. And many such things you do.”

Matthew 23:1-4

Then Yeshua spoke to the multitudes and to His disciples, saying: “The scribes and the Pharisees sit in Moses’ seat. Therefore whatever they tell you to observe, *that* observe and do, but do not do according to their works; for they say, and do not do. For they bind heavy burdens, hard to bear, and lay them on men’s shoulders; but they themselves will not move them with one of their fingers.

Yeshua warned his disciples against the mixture of authoritative manmade customs and the Torah, as well as against the attitude of lording over others as the religious and secular leaders of their day were fond of doing.

Matthew 16:6

Then Yeshua said unto them, “Take heed and beware of the leaven (teachings) of the Pharisees and of the Sadducees.”

Matthew 20:25

But Yeshua called them to Himself and said, “You know that the rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them, and those who are great exercise authority over them. Yet it shall not be so among you; but whoever desires to become great among you, let him be your servant. And whoever desires to be first among you, let him be your slave—just as the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give His life a ransom for many.”

Here Yeshua demonstrates for us exactly what it means to be submitted to one’s head or authority. Yeshua did not come to live for himself or fulfill his own will and ambitions but submitted himself completely to the will of the Father even though it required of Yeshua a great price.

Philippians 2:5-8

Let this mind be in you which was also in Messiah Yeshua, who, being in the form of God, did not consider it robbery to be equal with God, but made Himself of no reputation, taking the form of a bondservant, and coming in the likeness of men. And being found in appearance as a man, He humbled Himself and became obedient to the point of death, even the death of the cross.

Paul teaches that the believing husband is to submit himself completely to the Spirit of Messiah. The husband is not to pray or teach by any other authority than the Spirit of Messiah. The question we must now answer is this, “Why was the husband given the authority to be the head of the household?” To answer this question, we must return to the story of creation. The Torah makes it very clear that Adam or man was to be in the image of God. We know from Messiah, however, that God is spirit and not corporal.

John 4:24

God is a Spirit: and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth.

Numbers 23:19

“God is not a man, that He should lie, Nor a son of man, that He should repent. Has He said, and will He not do? Or has He spoken, and will He not make it good?

1 Samuel 15:29

And also the Strength of Israel will not lie nor repent: for **he is not a man,** that he should repent.

Job 9:32

For **he is not a man,** as I am, that I should answer him, and we should come together in judgment.

While we often speak of the Creator in anthropomorphic terms, this is for our own convenience and understanding. In truth, the Creator is Spirit and has no body to limit him in time or space. Therefore, we must understand that when the Torah tells us that Adam or man was created in the image of God, it is not referring to the way that he looks. Instead, the Torah tells us that Adam was to be in the image of God in the manner in which he exercised dominion over creation, especially the animal realm, and in the manner in which he created life.

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 creeps 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 moves upon the earth.

Clearly, the unique calling upon man was to be the image of the invisible Creator. Adam, as created, would receive the necessary knowledge and understanding by direct revelation from the Creator. The Spirit of God would communicate with the spirit of Adam, which would inform his soul how to see things, how to think about them, how to understand them, and how to feel about them. Adam’s body would be informed how to interact with the world around him. In this manner, Adam would submit to the revelation of the Creator and thereby manifest the image of God in the world around him. Eve was created to help Adam bear this image.

Genesis 2:20-23

And Adam gave names to all cattle, and to the fowl of the air, and to every beast of the field; but for Adam there was not found an help meet for him. And the Lord God caused a deep sleep to

fall upon Adam, and he slept: and he took one of his ribs, and closed up the flesh instead thereof; And the rib, which the Lord God had taken from man, made he a woman, and brought her unto the man. And Adam said, This is now bone of my bones, and flesh of my flesh: she shall be called Woman, because she was taken out of Man.

This is what Paul was referring to when he stated above that the woman came from man and was created for the man.

1 Corinthians 11:8-9

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.

Eve's calling was to help Adam manifest the direct revelation and image of the Creator in the world. In part, though not exclusively, Eve would fulfill this calling in helping in childbirth by helping Adam create life. When Eve ate of the forbidden fruit, and of the tree of knowledge and then gave her husband to eat with her, she failed in her divine calling. Instead of being submitted to Adam, she submitted herself to her self will and her animal nature. By childbearing, Eve was able to redeem herself somewhat from this failure by thus helping her husband create life and restore the image of the Creator. This is what Paul is referring to in his letter to Timothy.

1 Timothy 2:14-15

And Adam was not deceived, but the woman being deceived was in the transgression. Notwithstanding she shall be saved in childbearing, if they continue in faith and charity and holiness with sobriety.

Since Eve claimed to be beguiled by the serpent, the Creator placed Adam over her as a covering to guide, protect, and direct her.

Genesis 3:13

And the LORD God said to the woman, "What is this you have done?" The woman said, "The serpent deceived me, and I ate."

Genesis 3:16

To the woman He said: "I will greatly multiply your sorrow and your conception; In pain you shall bring forth children; Your desire shall be for your husband, And he shall rule over you."

The authority of the husband and father over his household is later substantiated in the teachings on vows in the Torah.

Numbers 30:1-15

Then Moses spoke to the heads of the tribes concerning the children of Israel, saying, "This is the thing which Yahweh has commanded: If a man makes a vow to Yahweh, or swears an oath to bind himself by some agreement, he shall not break his word; he shall do according to all that proceeds out of his mouth.

"Or if a woman makes a vow to Yahweh, and binds herself by some agreement while in her father's house in her youth, and her father hears her vow and the agreement by which she has bound herself, and her father holds his peace, then all her vows shall stand, and every agreement with which she has bound herself shall stand. But if her father overrules her on the day that he

hears, then none of her vows nor her agreements by which she has bound herself shall stand; and Yahweh will release her, because her father overruled her.

“If indeed she takes a husband, while bound by her vows or by a rash utterance from her lips by which she bound herself, and her husband hears it, and makes no response to her on the day that he hears, then her vows shall stand, and her agreements by which she bound herself shall stand. But if her husband overrules her on the day that he hears it, he shall make void her vow which she took and what she uttered with her lips, by which she bound herself, and Yahweh will release her.

“Also any vow of a widow or a divorced woman, by which she has bound herself, shall stand against her.

“If she vowed in her husband’s house, or bound herself by an agreement with an oath, and her husband heard it, and made no response to her and did not overrule her, then all her vows shall stand, and every agreement by which she bound herself shall stand. But if her husband truly made them void on the day he heard them, then whatever proceeded from her lips concerning her vows or concerning the agreement binding her, it shall not stand; her husband has made them void, and Yahweh will release her. Every vow and every binding oath to afflict her soul, her husband may confirm it, or her husband may make it void. Now if her husband makes no response whatever to her from day to day, then he confirms all her vows or all the agreements that bind her; he confirms them, because he made no response to her on the day that he heard them. But if he does make them void after he has heard them, then he shall bear her guilt.”

Here we see a father and/or husband having been given the authority to confirm or annul the vows of his young daughter and his wife. If a young or minor daughter living in her father’s house makes a vow, the father can (on the day he hears of it) let it stand or annul it. If, however, this daughter is an adult woman living on her own, her father cannot annul her vow. Single adult women living on their own are NOT under their father’s covering. A married woman, likewise, is no longer under her father’s covering but of that her husband.

We should note that a divorced woman or a widowed woman has no one to annul their vows, and therefore, must fulfill them just as it is true for men. Clearly, divorced women and widowed women are treated the same as men. Just as the father had the authority to annul or confirm a daughter’s vow in her youth, so now the husband has this same authority in the marriage relationship.

We want to be very clear that MEN DO NOT HAVE AUTHORITY OVER WOMAN. The idea that all men have authority over women is a gross misapplication of the Scriptures. Men do not have authority over women. Husbands have authority over their wives, and fathers have authority over their children. It is vitally important that we understand the difference between being a man and being a husband and father. My wife is not to submit to every man that she meets or seeks to dominate her. The Scriptures are clear that she is to submit only to her husband.

Ephesians 5:22

Wives, submit yourselves unto your **own** husbands, as unto the Lord.

Colossians 3:18

Wives, submit yourselves unto your **own** husbands, as it is fit in the Lord.

Clearly, we see that the teaching of Paul rooted in the Torah. Adam was to be submitted to the Spirit of Messiah while Eve was to be submitted to her own husband. The idea that somehow now believers are to submit themselves to the authority of a rabbi, pope, preacher, or pastor is WRONG! Paul is quite clear that the head of every man is Messiah, not the clergy. This system of elevating one man as the authority over a whole congregation of unsuspecting believers is called Nicolaitanism. The Greek word “Niko” means “to conquer.” The Greek word “Laos” means “people.” As a compound word, “Nicolaitanism” means “to conquer the people.” The idea that all of Yeshua’s followers are now to submit themselves to a professional religious leader is a pagan practice. In fact, it is a practice that the resurrected Messiah hated.

Revelation 2:15

Thus you also have those who hold the doctrine of the Nicolaitans, which thing I hate.

Revelation 2:6

But this you have, that you hate the deeds of the Nicolaitans, which I also hate.

Immediately after the giving of the Ten Commandments, the Torah contains a teaching about the Hebrew bond servant. Within this teaching is the provision for a Hebrew servant that so loves his master that he chooses to remain a servant in the master’s house even after his legal obligation of servitude is completed.

Exodus 21:2-6

If you buy a Hebrew servant, he shall serve six years; and in the seventh he shall go out free and pay nothing. If he comes in by himself, he shall go out by himself; if he comes in married, then his wife shall go out with him. If his master has given him a wife, and she has borne him sons or daughters, the wife and her children shall be her master’s, and he shall go out by himself. But if the servant plainly says, ‘I love my master, my wife, and my children; I will not go out free,’ then his master shall bring him to the judges. He shall also bring him to the door, or to the doorpost, and his master shall pierce his ear with an awl; and he shall serve him forever.

Many believers have seen a shadow picture of Yeshua the Messiah in this teaching. Yeshua is the servant who loved his master so much that he allowed himself to be pierced. While this teaching may seem to be a very positive and loving provision, the truth of the matter is that those who would avail themselves of this practice were looked down upon. The children of Israel were slaves and servants in Egypt. YHWH went to great lengths to set them free from such bondage.

Therefore, any man who would rather submit himself in servitude to another man rather than YHWH was seen as rejecting the headship of YHWH in favor of the headship of a mere mortal. We may use this example to help us understand the words of Paul concerning a man praying with his head covered. Paul clearly states that a man has the honor of living directly under the authority of the Messiah. Man has the ability to receive direct revelation from the Holy One through prayer and study. Therefore, for a man to choose not to be in a direct relationship with Yahweh through the Spirit of Messiah, but to receive his authority, knowledge, and understanding from some other man, is seen as shameful and insulting to our Creator. Man was to walk directly under the Messiah. To choose some other head is to reject the Messiah’s leadership, direction, protection, blessings, and calling.

Since man was created to be directly under the headship or authority of the Messiah, it is a shame for a man to pray or prophesy by any other authority. Believing men should not place themselves under the authority of a rabbi, pope, preacher, pastor, or their wives. To seek some other head than the Spirit of

Messiah is to place oneself in the company of those who rebelled in the wilderness, those who rejected YHWH for an earthly king, and those who sought help and council from earthly nations rather than seeking counsel from the Holy One.

Wives have a divine calling to help their husbands manifest the revelation of YHWH in the world. If wives are to fulfill their calling to be a help to their husbands, then they must submit themselves to the one receiving the revelation. For this reason, women are under the covering of their husbands, who are under the covering of Messiah.

Here, we must answer an important question, “Can and do wives receive direct revelations from the Holy One through the Spirit of Messiah?” The answer is clearly, “yes.” But, that which is received must be shared with the husband she was called to help and support. Even though the wife may have received some profound understanding from her prayer and study, she must still submit to her husband’s authority. In other words, it is quite common for the wives to study and share knowledge with their husbands; but, ultimately it is the husband that has the authority to allow or disallow the application of this information.

We want to be very clear that there is nothing in the Torah or the writings of Paul that teaches that women are to be the servants of men, nor that they are only good for cooking, cleaning, and making babies. Woman, and especially wives, should have a rich prayer and study life. For wives, this prayer and study is to be under the authority, protection, and guidance of their husbands for the purpose of supporting and helping their husbands fulfill their calling to be the image of YHWH in the world.

We also want to be very clear here that the nature of this authority is not to be done in a lording, domineering, humiliating, demeaning, or oppressive fashion. Both Yeshua and Paul are clear about the manner of leadership among believers.

Matthew 20:25-28

But Yeshua called them to Himself and said, “You know that the rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them, and those who are great exercise authority over them. Yet it shall not be so among you; but whoever desires to become great among you, let him be your servant. And whoever desires to be first among you, let him be your slave—just as the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give His life a ransom for many.”

Ephesians 5:22-33

Wives, submit to your own husbands, as to the Lord. For the husband is head of the wife, as also Christ is head of the church; and He is the Savior of the body. Therefore, just as the church is subject to Christ, so let the wives be to their own husbands in everything. Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ also loved the church and gave Himself for her, that He might sanctify and cleanse her with the washing of water by the word, that He might present her to Himself a glorious church, not having spot or wrinkle or any such thing, but that she should be holy and without blemish. So husbands ought to love their own wives as their own bodies; he who loves his wife loves himself. For no one ever hated his own flesh, but nourishes and cherishes it, just as the Lord does the church. For we are members of His body, of His flesh and of His bones. “For this reason a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh.” This is a great mystery, but I speak concerning Christ and the church. Nevertheless let each one of you in particular so love his own wife as himself, and let the wife see that she respects her husband.

We should also take note of the significance of the marriage relationship that is given in Paul's instruction to the Ephesians. In part, the reason that the wife submits herself to the authority of the husband is because she is playing a part in a divine shadow picture. The marriage relationship of believers is to be the proclamation of YHWH'S marriage to the children of Israel. Within the marriage relationship, the covenant relationship between YHWH and Israel is embodied. Just as Israel the bride is to submit to YHWH, so to the believing wife submits to her believing husband. Just as YHWH tenaciously loves and forgives Israel, so the husband is to love and forgive his wife. Here we see that the marriage relationship between husband and wife is a visible word, a sensual means of daily communicating the mutual love that is to exist between Israel and YHWH. This brings us to the second part of this teaching the use of physical head coverings.

While man was created to be primarily a spiritually motivated being living in spiritual communion with the Spirit God, the fall of man changed this. After eating of the fruit of the forbidden Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil, the eyes of man were opened. From the time of the fall onward, man has become more accustomed to living by his senses than his spirit. For this reason, man often seeks various means of expressing spiritual realities in physical fashions. Such is the case with head coverings.

While it is standard practice for Talmudic Jewish men to wear kipahs when praying, this is simply tradition and not Torah. When Paul teaches that it is a shame for a man to pray or prophesy with his head "under" (the Greek word is "kata") he is not so much talking about kipah or tallits but about authority as we mentioned earlier. It is a shame for a man to pray or prophecy by any other authority than that of the Spirit of Messiah. Paul is also quite clear that there is NOT a practice of men covering their heads with any material thing during prayer.

1 Corinthians 11:16

But if any man seems to be contentious, we have no such custom, neither the assembly of God.

It was, however, a cultural practice that a married woman kept her head covered in public as well as during prayer. A married woman's head covering was understood as an act of modesty and respect for her husband. Young single women would allow their hair to be seen, whereas married women covered their hair (or their glory) and reserved its sight only for their husbands. As Paul states, a woman's long hair was her glory. A young woman looking for a husband would let her glory fly in the breeze in hopes of attracting a husband. Once the young woman was betrothed, however, she would cover her hair lest others think she was being flirtatious. Thus, a woman's head covering was seen as a public declaration that she was now under the covering of her husband. We may see a beautiful example of this declaration in the Torah. When Abraham's servant returned from the East with a wife for Isaac, Rebekah sees Isaac at a distance and asks her who she is. When the servant reveals that it is her betrothed, Rebekah steps down from her camel and covers herself.

Genesis 24:65

for she had said to the servant, "Who is this man walking in the field to meet us?" The servant said, "It is my master." So she took a veil and covered herself.

Rebekah had already agreed to be married to Isaac before she had ever seen him. By covering herself, she was not merely playing a coy. By covering herself under the veil, she was declaring to Isaac her willingness to submit to his covering. Paul is teaching that there should be a clear distinction in authority in the body of believers. Likewise, if there is to be a symbol of this authority it, too, should demonstrate the same distinction.

Let us be very clear that the issue Paul is addressing here is a “**custom**” of manmade origin, not a **commandment** of YHWH. According to Paul, men are directly under the Messiah, and therefore, should not cover their heads when they pray or prophesy to show that there is no one or nothing between man and the Messiah - no rabbi, no pope, no pastor, and no preacher. Wives, however, are under the husbands, and therefore, should have their heads covered (that is to be under their husband’s authority) when they are prophesying and when they are praying. As the man is a part of the body of Messiah, so the wife is likewise a part of the body of Messiah, she is one flesh with her husband.

Paul teaches that a wife that prays or prophesies without having her head covered (being under her own husband’s authority) dishonors her head and brings shame upon herself. To pray with her head uncovered would be the same as if she had shaved her head. Paul goes on to say that just as the Creator gave the woman long hair as a glorious head covering in her youth, so too, has he provided her with a husband to be an honorable head covering in her married life. If a married woman dishonors her spiritual head, it would be the same as if she had shamed herself by having her head shaved, exposing her naked head. Some have erroneously stated that a woman’s hair is sufficient covering to fulfill what Paul is teaching. We would strongly disagree. Clearly, Paul is teaching that men should not have their heads covered (under another’s authority) when prophesying and praying. If hair is considered a covering, then all men should have to shave their heads or go bald to satisfy what Paul is teaching. Clearly, hair is not the covering that Paul is talking about. Paul is talking about the issue of authority, metaphorically. If this authority is to be a ritually or symbolically demonstrated, then it would be have been done with an actual veil sufficient to cover a woman’s hair.

Paul states that men’s hair should not look like women’s hair. Thus, Paul is confirming that men should neither dress, nor act like woman, and woman should not dress and act like men. This, too, is found in the Torah.

Deuteronomy 22:5

[A woman shall not wear anything that pertains to a man, nor shall a man put on a woman’s garment, for all who do so are an abomination to Yahweh your God.](#)

In its larger context, this passage of Scripture speaks about a woman usurping her husband’s authority and creating chaos and dissension in her family. Paul, likewise, is teaching that wives should not pray or prophesy outside of their husband’s authority. Husbands should not pray or prophesy under anyone else’s authority other than of the Messiah.

Paul teaches a clear distinction and difference in the manner in which husbands and wives pray and prophesy. If this is to be ritually acted out in some manner, then Paul teaches that men would honor their head by not covering their heads when they pray or prophesy to demonstrate that there is no other authority over them other than the Messiah. Wives, on the other hand, would honor their head by covering their heads to demonstrate that they are submitted to their husbands covering as the Torah teaches. Again, we must remember that Paul is responding to a particular **custom** of the believers in Corinth and not something that is practiced elsewhere in the body of Messiah.

1 Corinthians 11:16

[But if any man seem to be contentious, we have no such **custom**, neither the assembly of God.](#)

Let us now look at this issue in a very practical manner.

Should women pray with an actual physical covering over their heads?

Let us remember that Paul is not addressing a commandment of YHWH but a custom of man. With this said, we believe that Paul is suggesting that, if there is to be any custom among the body of believers to physically demonstrate this matter of authority, then a distinction should be made in the manner in which men and wives pray. Paul, therefore, teaches that a married woman should indeed have a covering over their head and hair when praying and prophesying. Please remember, however, that this is a custom and not a commandment.

Should married women wear a covering over their heads at other times?

This is a matter of personal choice. There is nowhere in the Torah or in the teachings of Yeshua where women, married or otherwise, are commanded to wear headcoverings. To suggest that this is now a commandment would be in direct violation of Deuteronomy 4:2 or Deuteronomy 12:32 by adding to the Torah. While this may have been an accepted and assumed cultural practice, it is not a direct positive commandment of YHWH.

The greater issue is proper authority, honoring one's headship, and modesty in dress and appearance. If, however, a wife desires to honor her husband by wearing a head covering, then there is no law prohibiting it. Such matters as this should be discussed between the husband and wife. We do not believe that a husband should command his wife to wear a headcovering since it is not a commandment of the Torah or the Messiah. If, however, the Spirit of Messiah convicts the wife of such a matter, a husband should not discourage it.

Should men pray with their heads covered?

There is nowhere in the Torah where it commands that a man must have his head covered when he prays or prophesies. There is no law against wearing hats or headcoverings, but it is not necessary for a man to have his head covered in prayer. While the kohen gadol (high priest) is indeed commanded to wear a turban when presiding in the sanctuary, there is no such command for an Israelite to cover his head when praying or teaching. Paul makes it very clear that there was no such practice or custom as covering one's head for prayer among all the community of believers. The idea that men **must** have their head covered with a hat or piece of cloth, or even a tallit in order to pray, is simply the tradition and teaching of the rabbis and is not Torah.

The last verse we would like to cover is 1 Corinthians 11:10:

1 Corinthians 11:10

[That is why a wife ought to have a symbol of authority on her head, because of the angels.](#)

What does angels mean? 1 Corinthians 11:10, in our opinion for whatever that is worth, is not about "heavenly" angels or nephilim or anything of the like.

The context is about Biblical authority and the purpose of a man and a woman.

Our main purpose in life is to obey the commandments of God and to help others to do the same as well.

As Paul notes in the verse prior, woman was created for man.

Woman is to be a suitable helper in assisting the man in delivering Torah to the nations, first through the order in his own house, and then going out from there as a "messenger."

The Greek word for angel does not always mean a heavenly being, and such would not fit the context here.

Paul is discussing man's role as a messenger and the woman's role in that, and because of that, the nature of household authority that needs to be present for that to work effectively.

So in summary:

- The Torah does not command a woman to wear a head covering.
- We cannot add to or take away from the Torah. (Deuteronomy 4:2)
- Paul's teaching on this matter focuses on the fact that the husband is the wife's spiritual head covering, and that the Messiah is the head covering over man.
- Women wearing a head covering is a typical practice of the Hebraic culture, and is permissible, but not commanded according to the Torah.
- If Paul was commanding women to wear a head covering, he would be considered a false prophet according to Deuteronomy 13 because he would be adding to the Torah.

We hope that this study has blessed you.

And remember to continue to test everything.

Shalom

For more on this and other teachings, please visit us at www.testeverything.net

Shalom, and may Yahweh bless you in walking in the whole Word of God.

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1 Cor 11:10, in our opinion for whatever that is worth, is not about "heavenly" angels or nephilim or anything of the like. The context is about Biblical authority and the purpose of man and woman. Our main purpose in life is to obey the commandments of God and to help others to do the same. As Paul notes in the verse prior, woman was create for man. Woman is to be a suitable helper in assisting the man in delivering torah to the nations, first through order in his own house, and then going out from there as a "messenger." The Greek word for angel does not always mean a heavenly being, and such would not fit the context here. Paul is discussing man's role as a messenger and the woman's role in that, and because of that, the nature of household authority that needs to be present for that to work effectively. At least, that is our take on it for now....