

Chapter 5

HEAD COVERINGS, PROPHECIES AND THE TRINITY

1 CORINTHIANS 11:2-16

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Introduction

2I praise you for remembering me in everything and for holding to the teachings, just as I passed them on to you. 3Now I want you to realize that the head of every man is Christ, and the head of the woman is man, and the head of Christ is God. 4 Every man who prays or prophesies with his head covered dishonors his head. 5And every woman who prays or prophesies with her head uncovered dishonors her head-it is just as though her head were shaved. 6If a woman does not cover her head, she should have her hair cut off; and if it is a disgrace for a woman to have her hair cut or shaved off, she should cover her head. 7A man ought not to cover his head, since he is the image and glory of God; but the woman is the glory of man. 8For man did not come from woman, but woman from man; 9neither was man created for woman, but woman for man. 10For this reason, and because of the angels, the woman ought to have a sign of authority on her head. 11In the Lord, however, woman is not independent of man, nor is man independent of woman. 12For as woman came from man, so also man is born of woman. But everything comes from God. 13Judge for yourselves: Is it proper for a woman to pray to God with her head uncovered? 14Does not the very nature of things teach you that if a man has long hair, it is a disgrace to him, 15but that if a woman has long hair, it is her glory? For long hair is given to her as a covering. 16If anyone wants to be contentious about this, we have no other practice-nor do the churches of God.

First Corinthians 11:2-16 has some features that make it one of the most difficult and controversial passages in the Bible.¹ For instance: How does verse 2 relate to verses 3-16? What does Paul mean by the word head in verse 3? Can we identify the custom regarding the adornment of women in the passage? In what sense is woman the glory of man (verse 7)? What does Paul mean when he says that the woman is to have authority on her head (verse 10)? Can we comprehend the reason why a woman is to have authority on her head, namely, because of the angels (verse 10)? And finally, what does the word nature mean in verse 14?

The difficulties with this text could lead one to say that it should not be used to establish any doctrine or teaching on the role relationship of men and women. Indeed, one might claim that only clear passages should be used to form a doctrine, and this passage is too obscure. No one, or at least few people, would argue that women should be adorned with veils today, leading some to say that this passage is culturally bound and no longer viable in the twentieth century.

In contrast to this position, I will argue that the central thrust of the passage is clear. There are difficulties, but some of the key issues are not as difficult as it has been claimed, and the issues that remain obscure do not affect the central teaching of the passage. Also, while wearing head coverings no longer speaks to our culture, there is an abiding principle in this text that is applicable to the twentieth century.

The Relation of 11:2 to 11:3-16

How does verse 2 relate to the following verses? Verse 2 says, “Now I praise you because you remember me in everything, and hold firmly to the traditions, just as I delivered them to you.” The following verses (11:3-16), however, do not seem to be an example of the Corinthians holding fast to the Pauline traditions. The behavior of the Corinthian women is contrary to the custom of Paul and the other churches, according to verse 16. Presumably, Paul would not instruct the Corinthians regarding proper adornment for women if they were already following his instructions in this matter. It is probably the case, then, that 11:2 functions as a complimentary introduction before Paul begins to criticize the Corinthians on certain practices. Indeed, 11:2 is most likely the introductory statement for all of chapters eleven through fourteen. Even though the Corinthians are not following the traditions regarding women (11:3-16), the Lord’s Supper (11:17-34), and spiritual gifts (12:1-14:40), the situation of the church is not bleak in every respect.

What is the Adornment for Women in this Passage?

One of the perplexing questions in this passage is this: What custom regarding adornment is referred to here? We cannot treat this complex question in detail, but the two most probable suggestions can be set forth: (1) The custom Paul recommends is for women to wear shawls. (2) Paul objects to long, loose hair that falls down the back; he wants women to follow the usual custom of piling their hair up on top of their heads.

In favor of the view that Paul is speaking against women wearing their hair loose and falling down the back are the following arguments:² (1) There is no extant evidence that full veiling, familiar in Islam, was current in Paul’s time. Therefore, the custom described cannot be veiling. (2) The same Greek word that describes the practice of the Corinthian women in 11:5 (akatakalyptos) [“unveiled,” according to rsv] is used in Leviticus 13:45 (LXX)³ about a leper’s hair, which is to hang unloosed. The problem with the Corinthian women, then, is that they were wearing their hair loose and flowing down their backs. (3) The word apokalypto⁻, which is somewhat related to akatakalyptos, is used in Numbers 5:18, where a woman suspected of adultery had to unbind her hair and wear it loosely. The wearing of long, loose hair by an adulteress would support the idea that wearing one’s hair loose was considered shameful. (4) Respectable women in Paul’s time did not appear in public with their hair long and flowing down their backs. They wore their hair piled up on their heads in a bun. Paul wants the Corinthian women to adhere to this custom.

Despite these arguments in favor of the view that Paul is commanding the wearing of hair on top of the head by women, it is probable that Paul is speaking of wearing a head covering of some kind, such as a shawl.⁴ That a shawl rather than a full veil is in Paul’s mind is indicated by the word covering (peribolaios) in 11:15, which is not the usual word for veil but probably refers to a wrap-around. The evidence in favor of this position is as follows: (1) The verb translated as “cover” in the niv (katakalypto⁻) occurs three times in verses 6-7, and related cognate words occur in verses 5 and 13. These words most often refer to a covering of some kind. For example, the angels who saw the glory of Yahweh in the temple covered their faces (Isaiah 6:2). Judah thought Tamar, his daughter-in-law, was a harlot because she covered her face (Genesis 38:15). Since the word almost universally means “to cover” or “to hide,” the text is probably referring to a hair covering of some kind.⁵

(2) Philo (30 b.c. - a.d. 45) uses the same words Paul does in 1 Corinthians 11:5, “head uncovered” (akatakalypto⁻ te⁻ kephale⁻), and it is clear that Philo is speaking of a head covering being removed because the priest had just removed her kerchief (Special Laws, 3:60). Akatakalyptos also means “uncovered” in Philo, Allegorical Interpretation II,29, and in Polybius 15,27.2 (second century b.c.). Moreover, it is simply a negative adjective based on the verb katakalypto⁻, which commonly means “cover, veil.” (3)

Esther 6:12 (LXX) employs the same expression found in verse four, kata kephale⁻s, of Haman, who hurried home mourning, covering his head in shame. He probably used part of his garment to do this. (4) A similar expression occurs in Plutarch (46-120 a.d.), where it is specifically stated that the head is covered with part of the toga (himation).⁶

Verse 15 seems to create a difficulty if Paul is speaking of a head covering. Verse 15 says that her “long hair is given to her for a covering.” But if her hair is given to her for a covering, then a woman would not need to wear another covering over her hair. However, it is improbable that the only covering that Paul requires is a woman’s hair, for we have already seen that the words for covering that Paul uses in verses 4-6 and verse 13 point to a veil or a shawl. Indeed, if all Paul has been requiring is long hair, then his explanation of the situation in verses 4-6 is awkward and even misleading. Verse 15 can be explained in such a way that Paul is not rejecting his earlier call for a shawl. The word for (anti) in verse 15 probably indicates not substitution but equivalence.⁷ In other words, Paul is not saying that a woman has been given long hair instead of a covering. Rather, he is saying that a woman has been given long hair as a covering. His point seems to be that a woman’s long hair is an indication that she needs to wear a covering.⁸

To sum up: the custom recommended here is a head covering of some kind, probably a shawl. The importance of identifying this custom can be exaggerated, unless one believes that the custom of the day should be applied to our culture. The major point of the text is clear: women are to adorn themselves in a certain way. The precise kind of head covering Paul had in mind is no longer clear. What is more important, and we turn to this next, is: Why does Paul want the women to adorn themselves in a certain way?

The Function of 11:3 in the Argument and the Meaning of Head

Probably the most crucial question in this passage is what Paul means by the word head (kephale⁻) in verse 3: “Now I want you to realize that the head of every man is Christ, and the head of the woman is man, and the head of Christ is God.” Two answers are being suggested today: source and authority.⁹ The meaning of this word has been extensively debated in the literature, and we will not cover all the ground again. Instead, three reasons will be given to defend authority as the best understanding of the word head.

(1) Even if we were to grant that the word head can mean “source” in a few instances, Wayne Grudem has shown that the meaning “authority” is indisputable in a number of passages, while the meaning “source” is never certainly attested. Grudem is correct in saying that those who oppose the meaning “authority” demand more examples of this meaning than they would with almost any other word. Usually, three or four clear examples are of great value, and Grudem provides a number that are decisive.

(2) Even if it were demonstrated that head does mean “source” in a few passages, it never bears that meaning in the Septuagint, and that is the relevant piece of literature with which Paul would have been most familiar. The use of head in the Septuagint is minimized by the Mickelsens because Paul was writing to Greeks who did not know the Old Testament well.¹⁰ But this is an unconvincing argument. Paul appeals to the Old Testament either allusively or by quotation often when writing to Gentile converts. Most evangelicals agree that the Greek Old Testament is the most important source for Paul’s theology, and of course this would apply to his use of words as well.

(3) A crucial usage, of course, is in Paul’s own writings. It is precisely here that the evidence for “source” is weakest. Compare, for example, a passage on the same basic topic, men and women, in Ephesians 5:22ff. Paul says that “the husband is the head of the wife as Christ is the head of the church” (verse 23). In what meaningful sense can one say that a husband is the source of his wife? Wives do not exist by virtue of their husband’s existence. Wives do not derive their life from their husbands. The meaning “source” here makes Paul’s statement hard to comprehend since it is difficult to see how husbands are

the source of their wives. Some have said that Paul is speaking of Adam as the source of Eve. But what is the evidence for this? Paul clearly speaks of husbands and wives in general in verses 22 and 24, and it would be strained and unusual to see a sudden reference to Adam and Eve in 5:23. Further support for head meaning “authority” is found in 5:22 and 5:24, for there Paul calls on women to submit to their husbands, which accords nicely with the notion that head denotes authority.

Paul uses the word head with the meaning “authority” in Ephesians 1:22 as well. Beginning with 1:20ff, he says that God raised Christ from the dead, seated Him at His right hand far above all other authorities and powers, subjected all things under His feet, and gave Him as head over all things to the church. The entire context focuses on the enthronement of Christ and His exaltation. The focus on the exaltation of Christ in the context suggests that the meaning of head is “authority.”

Such an interpretation is confirmed by a parallel passage in Colossians 2:10. There Christ is said to be “the head over every power and authority.” Here head must mean “authority,” not “source,” because the same rulers and authorities are also spoken of in Colossians 2:15, and there they clearly refer to the demonic powers that were publicly humiliated and led in a triumphal procession through Jesus’ death and resurrection. Paul is not saying to the Colossians in 2:10 that Jesus is “the source” of these demonic powers; his point is that Jesus is sovereign over them, that He rules over them.

The texts that are sometimes used to argue that Paul could use the word head to mean “source” are Colossians 1:18; 2:19; Ephesians 4:15. In each case, the asserted meaning is possible but doubtful, since the meaning “source” for this word is not clearly found in the Septuagint, elsewhere in Paul, or in the rest of the New Testament. In Colossians 1:18, Christ is said to be the head over the church, and the concept of authority accords well with the context (Colossians 1:15-20). Colossians 2:19 and Ephesians 4:15 could be translated as “source,” but Paul is probably saying in these two passages that the Sovereign of the church is also the One who sustains and strengthens the church.

Now we return to 1 Corinthians 11:3. If our interpretation is correct, then Paul is saying that Christ is the authority over every man, man is the authority over woman, and God is the authority over Christ. Since Paul appeals to the relation between members of the Trinity, it is clear that he does not view the relations described here as merely cultural, or the result of the fall.

C. Kroeger objects that to make God the head over Christ is to fall into the christological heresy of making Christ subordinate to God.¹¹ But this would only be a heresy if one asserted that there was an ontological difference (a difference in nature or being) between Father and Son. The point is not that the Son is essentially inferior to the Father. Rather, the Son willingly submits Himself to the Father’s authority. The difference between the members of the Trinity is a functional one, not an essential one.

Such an interpretation is confirmed by 1 Corinthians 15:28: “When [Christ has subjected all things to Himself], then the Son himself will be made subject to him who put everything under him, so that God may be all in all.” Paul did not see such subjection of the Son to the Father as heretical because the Son was not essentially inferior to the Father. Instead, He will subject Himself voluntarily to the Father’s authority. The Son has a different function or role from the Father, not an inferior being or essence.

This point is often missed by evangelical feminists. They conclude that a difference in function necessarily involves a difference in essence; i.e., if men are in authority over women, then women must be inferior. The relationship between Christ and the Father shows us that this reasoning is flawed. One can possess a different function and still be equal in essence and worth. Women are equal to men in essence and in being; there is no ontological distinction, and yet they have a different function or role in church and home.

Such differences do not logically imply inequality or inferiority, just as Christ's subjection to the Father does not imply His inferiority.

In fact, some evangelical feminists recently have made misleading statements regarding the issue of subordinationism in the doctrine of the Trinity. R. C. and C. Kroeger define subordinationism as "A doctrine that assigns an inferiority of being, status, or role to the Son or Holy Spirit within the Trinity" (italics mine).¹² They also say, "Some apply a doctrine of subordination of woman to man on the basis of a similar relationship within the Trinity (1 Corinthians 11:3)."¹³ G. Bilezikian says, "Nowhere in the Bible is there a reference to a chain of command within the Trinity. Such 'subordinationist' theories were propounded during the fourth century and were rejected as heretical."¹⁴

Such statements reflect a serious misunderstanding of both the doctrine of the Trinity and the nature of subordinationism. The Kroegers' definition of subordinationism fails to make the historic and crucial distinction between essence and role. What the church condemned was a subordinationism that predicated a difference of essence or being among Father, Son, and Spirit. The distinct role of the Son does not imply that He is essentially inferior to the Father. The addition of the word inferiority before the word role in the Kroegers' definition is especially distorting because a distinct role does not logically imply inferiority. That the Kroegers are inconsistent regarding the definition of subordinationism is evident in that elsewhere in their article they define it correctly: "The Nicene fathers ascribed to the Son and Spirit an equality of being or essence, but a subordination of order."¹⁵ What the Nicene fathers called a subordination of order is another way of saying that they saw a subordination in role, or a subordination in the economic Trinity. The Nicene fathers rightly saw that this did not imply that the Son and the Spirit were inferior in nature to the Father. The Kroegers' earlier definition of subordinationism, then, makes sense only if they conclude that the Nicene fathers were heretical.

Bilezikian is even less careful. He says that there is not the slightest evidence in the Bible for "a chain of command within the Trinity." I would not use the phrase "chain of command," but that the Son submits to the Father is clear from 1 Corinthians 15:28. It is clear that this subjection of the Son to the Father is after His earthly ministry, so how anyone can say that there is no hint of a difference of order or role within the Trinity is difficult to see. Whenever Scripture says that God sent the Son into the world (e.g., John 3:17), we see subordination in role: the Father commands and sends; the Son obeys and comes into the world to die for our sins.

The notion that there is a subordination in function or in the economic Trinity but an equality of essence is also part of the historic heritage of evangelical theology. John Calvin says of Tertullian's understanding of the Trinity, "Nor am I displeased with Tertullian's definition, provided it be taken in the right sense, that there is a kind of distribution or economy in God which has no effect on the unity of essence."¹⁶ What Calvin means by "distribution or economy" is a difference of role, and thus he concludes that a different role does not rule out equality of being or essence.

Charles Hodge says about the Nicene Creed:

The creeds are nothing more than a well-ordered arrangement of the facts of Scripture which concern the doctrine of the Trinity. They assert the distinct personality of the Father, Son and Spirit; their mutual relation as expressed by those terms; their absolute unity as to substance or essence, and their consequent perfect equality; and the subordination of the Son to the Father, and of the Spirit to the Father and the Son, as the mode of subsistence and operation. These are Scriptural facts, to which the creeds in question add nothing; and it is in this sense they have been accepted by the Church universal.¹⁷

The distinction between being and role is also reflected in Louis Berkhof. He says, “There can be no subordination as to essential being of the one person of the Godhead to the other, and therefore no difference in personal dignity. . . . The only subordination of which we can speak, is a subordination in respect to order and relationship.”¹⁸

To sum up, both Bilezikian and the Kroegers have wrongly defined subordinationism, thereby misleading readers with regard to the historic and evangelical doctrine of the Trinity.

Another argument used for the translation “source” in 1 Corinthians 11:3 is that Paul says woman came from man in verse 11:8, and this obviously suggests the idea of source. Surely this understanding of verse 8 is correct, but verse 8 does not explicate the meaning of head in verse 3. Instead, Paul uses this argument from source to prove that woman is the glory of man.

The order of Paul’s statement in 1 Corinthians 11:3 has caused some question. If Paul is teaching hierarchy here, why does he not write (1) “the head of Christ is God,” (2) “the head of every man is Christ,” and (3) “the head of the woman is man”? Instead, Paul places “the head of Christ is God” as the last statement in the verse. Some suggest that this rules out any hierarchical understanding. But we have already seen that the clear meaning of head is “authority,” and thus a hierarchy is definitely established. Why, then, does Paul place “the head of Christ is God” last? I think Paul added the headship of God over Christ right after asserting the headship of man over woman in order to teach that the authority of man over woman does not imply the inferiority of women or the superiority of men. Some Corinthians may have concluded that the headship of man over woman diminished woman’s worth. Paul anticipates this objection and adds that God is the head over Christ. And even though God (i.e., the Father) is the head over Christ, He is not essentially greater than Christ. So too, even though women are under men’s authority, they are not essentially inferior. Paul follows this same pattern in 11:7-12. In 11:7-10, he says women were created for man’s glory and sake. But in 11:11-12, he shows that this does not involve the inferiority of women.

The Relation of 11:4-6 to 11:3

We have spent considerable time on 11:3 because it is fundamental to the whole passage. Verses 4-6 flow from the theological principle enunciated in 11:3. Since Christ is the authority over men, and since men are the authority over women, it follows that no man should wear a head covering when he prays and prophesies, while a woman should.

Paul objects to men wearing head coverings in verse 4 because such adornment would be disgraceful. Why? Because that is what women wore (11:5-6), and thus a man who wore such a head covering would be shamefully depicting himself as a woman. Conversely, if women do not wear head coverings, their failure to be adorned properly would be shameful (11:5) because they would be dressing like men. That the shame involved is due to appearing like a man is confirmed by Paul’s explanation in 11:5b-6. A woman’s failure to wear a head covering is analogous to her having her hair cut short or shaved. Every woman in the culture of that day would have been ashamed of appearing in public with her head shaved or her hair cut short, because then she would have looked like a man.

Paul explicitly says in 11:15 that a woman’s “long hair” is her “glory.” And if a man has long hair, it is a dishonor to him (11:14). If we compare verse 14 with verse 15, it is clear that for a man to wear long hair is a dishonor to him because such long hair is the particular glory of a woman, i.e., because if a man wears long hair, he looks like a woman. If we examine verses 5 and 6 in light of verses 14-15, we see that for a woman to wear her hair short or to shave her hair is contrary to what brings her glory, namely, long hair. Indeed, to keep her hair short is to wear it the way a man does (cf. 11:14). Thus, we can conclude that Paul wants women to wear head coverings while praying and

prophesying because to do otherwise would be to confuse the sexes and give the shameful impression that women are behaving like men.

On whom or what is the man or woman bringing shame if he or she is not adorned properly? In verse 4, Paul says that the man who has a head covering “dishonors his head.” In verse 5 he says that the woman without a head covering “dishonors her head.” What does he mean by the word head in these verses? The word clearly refers to authority in 11:3, as we have seen above. It refers to one’s physical head in verses 4 (first use), 5 (first use), 7, and 10. Two interpretations are possible in our context, and they are not necessarily incompatible.

On the one hand, to disgrace one’s head may mean that one disgraces oneself. Three arguments can be used to defend this interpretation. (1) The word head can simply refer to one’s self. In Acts 18:6, Paul says to the resistant Jews in Corinth, “Your blood be on your own heads!” He clearly means that the responsibility for rejecting the gospel message lies only with themselves. (2) The parallel with verses 14 and 15 suggests that head means “oneself.” In verse 14, Paul says “if a man has long hair, it is a disgrace to him” (my italics). Now this thought in verse 14 is remarkably close to the idea that a man who wears a head covering “dishonors his head” (11:4). In the same way, if a woman’s wearing long hair “is her glory” (verse 15, my italics), then the disgrace and shame described in verses 5 and 6 must refer to the disgrace she brings on herself. (3) Verses 4-6 forge a close relationship between one’s physical head and disgracing the head. It is legitimate to infer that those who do not adorn their physical heads in a proper way bring shame on their heads, i.e., their own selves.

On the other hand, dishonoring the head in verses 4 and 5 may refer to the head described above in verse 3. Thus, a man who wears a head covering brings dishonor on his head, Christ. The woman who fails to wear a head covering brings dishonor on her head, man. Three arguments support this interpretation. (1) Verses 4-6 are an inference or conclusion drawn from the fundamental proposition in verse 3. Why does Paul want women to wear head coverings? Because such head coverings reflect the role relationship intended between man and woman. Since man is the head of woman, woman ought to adorn herself with a head covering. Failure to do so is to bring shame on one’s head, namely, man. Such an understanding of head accords well with the intended connection between verse 3 and verses 4-6. (2) If Paul only wanted to say that one was disgracing oneself, he could have used a reflexive pronoun in verses 4 and 5. By using the word head in an obviously metaphorical way, Paul suggests a connection with the metaphorical use of that word in verse 3. (3) Paul says in verse 7 that “woman is the glory of man.” He probably means by glory that the woman is intended to bring honor to the man. She should honor him because he is the head, i.e., the authority (11:3). This suggests that a woman disgraces her head, i.e., man, by not wearing a head covering (11:5), and man disgraces his head, Christ, by wearing a head covering (11:4).

Paul might have intended both senses here. They are not mutually exclusive. A woman who does not wear a head covering both disgraces herself and brings dishonor on her authority, who is man. A man who wears a head covering dishonors himself and his authority, Jesus Christ. If one does not conform to the role God intended, one brings dishonor on oneself and on one’s authority. A child who rebels against a parent brings grief on himself and his parents (Proverbs 10:1; 17:25). We can conclude, then, that if a woman failed to wear a head covering and so dressed like a man, she brought shame both on herself and—because her behavior was a symbol of her rebellion against the created order, i.e., the intended relation between man and woman—on the man. Her failure to wear a head covering communicated rebellion and independence to everyone present in worship.¹⁹

We should pause to note here that Paul allows women to pray and prophesy in public assembly, according to 11:5. Some scholars have thought that women’s prayer and

prophecy were permitted only in private, since Paul says women should keep silent in church (1 Corinthians 14:34). But the praying and prophesying were probably in the public assembly for the following reasons: (1) The context favors the idea these chapters describe public worship. The subsequent topics focus on the Lord's Supper (11:17-34) and spiritual gifts (12:1-14:40), and these relate to public worship. (2) Prophecy was given to edify the community when gathered (1 Corinthians 14:1-5, 29-33a); it was not a private gift to be exercised alone. (3) Even if the meetings were in a home, such meetings would have been considered public assemblies, since many churches met in houses (cf. Romans 16:5; Philemon 2). (4) First Corinthians 14:33b-36 is best understood not to forbid all speaking by women in public, but only their speaking in the course of the congregation's judging prophecies (cf. 14:29-33a). Understood in this way, it does not contradict 11:5. It simply prohibits an abuse (women speaking up and judging prophecies in church) that Paul wanted to prevent in the church at Corinth.

So, Paul thinks women should pray and prophesy in public. Yet he wants them to do so with a head covering. I understand the major burden of 11:3-6, then, to be as follows: Women can pray and prophesy in public, but they must do so with a demeanor and attitude that supports male headship because in that culture wearing a head covering communicated a submissive demeanor and feminine adornment.²⁰ Thus, Paul does not forbid women to participate in public worship, yet he does insist that in their participation they should evidence a demeanor that is humble and submissive to male leadership.

The Function of 11:7-10 in the Argument

In verses 7-10, Paul explains further why he wants the women to wear head coverings and why the men should not wear them. A man (verse 7a) should not wear a covering "since he is the image and glory of God." But a woman should wear a covering because she "is the glory of man" (verse 7b). Paul is not denying that women are created in God's image, for he is referring to the creation accounts here and was well aware that Genesis teaches that both men and women are created in God's image (Genesis 1:26-27). The focus here is on the word glory, which is used in both parts of the sentence. What does Paul mean when he says that man is the glory of God, while woman is the glory of man? Both the subsequent and preceding verses give us some clue. We will investigate the succeeding verses first.

In verses 8-9, two reasons are given why women are the glory of men. First, in verse 8, Paul writes that women are the glory of men because "man did not come from woman, but woman from man." Paul is obviously thinking of Genesis 2:21-23, where woman is made out of man's rib. What is Paul's point here? Since woman came from man, she was meant to be his glory, i.e., she should honor him. That "honor" is the meaning of the glory is suggested also by verses 14-15. Paul says that long hair is a woman's "glory" in verse 15. Conversely, he says that "if a man has long hair, it is a dishonor to him." It is clear that these two verses function as a contrast. It is glorious for a woman to have long hair, but dishonorable for a man. From the contrast between the words dishonor and glory, we can conclude that another way of translating glory in verse 15 would be with the word honor. Paul's point is that one should always honor and respect the source from which one came. And woman honors man by wearing a head covering, thereby showing that man is the head, i.e., the authority.

Second, verse 9 explains that woman is man's glory since man was not created because of woman, but woman because of man. Paul once again alludes to Genesis 2. Woman was created to accompany man (Genesis 2:18) and in order to be a helper for him (2:20). If woman was created for man's sake, i.e., to help him in the tasks God gave him, then it follows that woman should honor man.

The thrust of 11:7b-9 is that women should wear a head covering because she is man's glory, i.e., she was created to honor him. Now we have already seen that if she does not wear a head covering (11:5-6), she dishonors her head, i.e., she does not honor

him and she brings dishonor on herself. Thus, the use of the word dishonor in 11:4-6 supports the notion that glory in verse 7 has the meaning honor. But how do we know that woman was created to bring honor to man? Paul proves this in 11:8-9. Woman was created to bring honor to man because (1) the source of woman is man (this should not be confused with saying that the source of a wife is her husband, a wrong view of Ephesians 5:23 with which we have already dealt), and such an origin indicates a different role in the created order, and (2) woman was created because of man, i.e., in order help him in his tasks.

We ought to note in particular the significance of 11:8-9 in the argument. Evangelical feminists often claim that any role distinctions between males and females are due only to the fall. But their argument fails for two reasons.

First, Paul argues from creation, not from the fall. The distinctions between male and female are part of the created order, and Paul apparently did not think redemption in Christ negated creation. Feminists also often contend that the creation accounts in Genesis 1-2 do not support any role distinctions between the sexes. They think the creation accounts prove egalitarianism.²¹ Nevertheless, Paul obviously interpreted Genesis 2 as revealing a distinction in roles between men and women. This is clear not only in 1 Corinthians 11, but also in 1 Timothy 2:8-15. The burden of proof lies squarely on the evangelical feminists, for they need to demonstrate clearly that Paul was not appealing to creation in order to justify role distinctions between men and women. Thus far they have not argued their case satisfactorily.

Second, Paul explicitly uses the argument from source in 11:8 to argue for the wearing of coverings by women. Thus, contrary to evangelical feminists, Paul uses an argument from source, which is rooted in the order of creation, to support the idea of a difference in roles between men and women. We have already argued that Paul means “authority” by the word head in verse 3, and here Paul even employs an argument from source to defend a distinction between the roles of men and women.

How does verse 10 fit into the structure of the argument? Paul says, “Therefore the woman ought to have a symbol of authority on her head, because of the angels” (nasb). The verse is controversial, but it seems to be another argument in favor of women wearing head coverings. The word therefore (nasb) (*dia touto*) points back to verses 8-9. We should note the structure of verses 7-10. Paul begins (11:7) by saying that man should not wear a head covering “since he is the image and glory of God.” Woman, though, “is the glory of man.” Then, in verses 8-9, Paul explains why men should not wear head coverings and why women are the glory of men. We have already seen that he grounds the distinction between men and women in creation. Finally, in verse 10 he draws an inference from verses 8-9: that women should wear head coverings. It would be easy to miss the structure of these verses because verses 8-9 function as a parenthesis and support the commands in both verse 7 and verse 10. It might help to show the structure of the verses as follows: (1) Men ought not to wear head coverings (11:7). (2) Support for this command (11:8-9). (3) Therefore, women ought to wear head coverings (11:10). Verses 7 and 10 are substantially parallel. Paul begins the passage by saying that men “ought not” (*ouk opheilei*) to wear head coverings (11:7), and he concludes it by saying that women “ought” (*opheilei*) to wear head coverings (verse 10). The reasons given in verses 8-9 support both commands.

But what does Paul mean when he speaks of a woman having authority on her head? English versions often have added a word to the Greek text in order to make the meaning plainer. Thus, the nasb translates verse 10 to say that “the woman ought to have a symbol of authority on her head.” The rsv says that a woman should “have a veil on her head,” and the niv says a woman should have “a sign of authority on her head.” But the Greek text literally says “the woman ought to have authority on her head.” The words symbol (nasb), veil (rsv), and sign (niv) are not in the Greek text. All the text says is that a

woman should have authority (*exousia*) on her head. The word authority has been translated by the English versions in a passive sense so that Paul seems to be saying that a woman should have a sign or symbol of a man's authority on her head, namely, a head covering or veil.

But M. Hooker has contended that such translations are misguided. She says that the word authority nowhere else has a passive meaning; it is always active.²² What she means is that the word must refer to a woman's own authority over her head: she has the right and authority to prophesy. Thus, according to Hooker, the verse is not saying that a woman must wear a head covering to show her submission to a man's authority. Instead, wearing a head covering indicates that a woman has the right to prophecy. If Hooker is correct, Paul here is trumpeting the authority of women, not requiring their submission to men.

Hooker's view, however, should be rejected for seven reasons. (1) As we pointed out above, the structure of the text is such that verses 7 and 10 are parallel. A man should not wear a head covering (11:7), but a woman should (11:10). The therefore in verse 10 refers back to verses 8-9, which explain why a woman should have a sign of authority: because woman came from man and was created for man. The reasons given in verses 8-9 for wearing a head covering, which is required in verse 10, clearly show that the issue is a woman's proper role relationship to a man. (2) Hooker's view focuses on the authority or right, i.e., the freedom of a woman to prophesy, but the focus of the verse is not on freedom. Instead, the text says "the woman ought (*opheilei*) to have authority on her head." The word ought shows that a command is being given here to women as to how they ought to adorn themselves when they prophesy (cf. 11:5); it communicates an obligation, not a freedom.

(3) Understanding Paul as commanding women to wear a head covering as a sign of submitting to male authority fits best with the preceding verses in the passage. Nothing is clearer in verses 3-9 than that Paul wants the woman to wear a head covering because such adornment appropriately distinguishes women from men. Indeed, the focus on male headship over women in verse 3 shows that Paul wants women to wear a head covering in order to show that they are submissive to male headship. If Paul were suddenly focusing on the "right" and "authority" of women, as Hooker thinks, he would be contradicting what he has said in the preceding verses.²³ (4) The qualification given in verse 11 (see explanation below) fits best with a command for women to have a head covering as a symbol of submission to men. Paul begins verse 11 with However. In verses 11-12, he guards against the misunderstanding that women are somehow inferior to men. But he would not need to say this if he had just affirmed women's authority and right to prophesy in such strong terms in verse 10. But since, in verse 10, Paul really concludes his argument as to why women should wear head coverings as a sign of submission to male headship, he senses a need to qualify his point in verses 11-12.

(5) Furthermore, it is not at all strained to see *exousia* in verse 10 as "sign of authority" or "symbol of authority." The standard lexicon for New Testament literature sees such a symbolic understanding of *exousia* as a viable possibility.²⁴ One can easily see why something worn on the head can become a sign or symbol of something. The dragon, in Revelation 12:3, has seven heads on which are seven crowns. Clearly, these crowns symbolize the dragon's authority and power. When Jesus returns on a white horse (Revelation 19:11-12) "on his head are many crowns," symbolizing His kingly authority. In an example very similar to 1 Corinthians 11:10, Diodorus of Sicily (1.47.5, written ca. b.c. 60-30) refers to a stone statue that has "three kingdoms on its head (*echontōn treis basileias epi tēs kephalēs*)," but it clearly means in the context that the statue has three crowns, which are symbols of governing kingdoms. We can conclude, then, that it is not at all unusual for something on the head to be a symbol of something else.

(6) Hooker, however, says that the word authority always refers to a person's own authority, not the authority of someone else. The problem with Hooker's analysis is that *exousia* in most other contexts does not refer to a physical symbol of some authority. It is the particular context of this paragraph, as verses 4-9 show, that makes it clear that Paul is speaking of a symbol of authority.²⁵ To say there are no other examples of *exousia* being used this way is not decisive, since there are not many other parallel examples of authority even being used symbolically. Moreover, the example from Diodorus is also helpful here. The text describes a statue of the mother of King Osymandias, and reads as follows:

There is also another statue of his mother standing alone, a monolith twenty cubits high, and it has three kingdoms on its head, signifying that she was both daughter and wife and mother of a king (1.47.5).

Here the three crowns (which Diodorus calls kingdoms) all represent someone else's authority—the authority of the woman's father (who was a king), husband (who was a king), and son (who was a king). In no case is the woman's own authority symbolized by the crowns she wears. Similarly, the head covering of the woman in 1 Corinthians 11 may well represent the authority of the man to whom she is subject in authority.

(7) Even if authority has an active meaning here, it refers to the man's authority, not the woman's, in this context. Paul explicitly says the woman "ought" to have "authority" on her head, and the most sensible explanation is that she ought to wear a head covering as a symbol of man's authority over her.

In verse 10, Paul also gives a new reason for wearing the coverings: "because of the angels." What does he mean? We don't know for sure. The best solution is probably that the angels are good angels who assist in worship and desire to see the order of creation maintained.²⁶

The Qualification in 11:11-12

First Corinthians 11:3-10 is a sustained argument in favor of male headship and female submission, yet with full participation in worship for women (something Christians today need to remember more often). Verses 11-12 function as a qualification so that the Corinthians will not misunderstand Paul's argument. Woman and man stand in interdependence in the Lord (11:11). Paul proves this statement in verse 12. Man is the source of woman, but all men ever since Adam have come into the world through women. Paul anticipates the problem that could arise if one stressed his argument in verses 3-10 too rigidly. Male and female could almost be construed as different species, and men as more valuable than women. That is not Paul's point at all. There is a profound interdependence and mutuality present in the male-female relationship, and neither sex can boast over the other because the sexes are interdependent. Ultimately "everything comes from God."

Verses 11-12 demonstrate that Paul would utterly reject the notion that women are inferior or lesser human beings. Sad to say, some traditionalists have treated women in this way. Mutuality is also an element of the relationship between men and women. Women are created in the image of God, and men have no greater worth because of their God-given responsibility to lead.

At the opposite extreme, some evangelical feminists have drawn a wrong deduction from verses 11-12. For example, Bilezikian asserts that if Paul sees men and women as equal and both created in God's image, then any role distinctions must be eliminated because they would contradict the affirmation of equality.²⁷ Such a distinctively modern way of thinking has little to do with how Paul thought. The text before us makes it plain that Paul thought role distinctions and equality were not contradictory. People can be equal in essence and yet have different functions. The fairest way to read Paul is to let his own writings strike the balance. Verses 3-10 make it clear that he believed in role

distinctions; verses 11-12 show that he did not thereby believe women were inferior or less important. Those who focus only on verses 11-12 effectively shut out verses 3-10. It is a mistake to exclude either teaching; we must hold them together as Paul did.

The Concluding Argument for Head Coverings in 11:13-16

Paul returns in the final paragraph (verses 13-16) to the main burden of the text: women's wearing head coverings. This is another indication that verses 11-12 do not cancel out the commands given in verses 4-9. Here Paul appeals to the Corinthians' own judgment (11:13), confident that "the very nature of things" will instruct them with respect to what is fitting or proper. What is the content of the instruction given by nature? Nature teaches that "if a man has long hair, it is a disgrace to him," while "if a woman has long hair, it is her glory."

What is the meaning of the word nature (*physis*) here? Is Paul simply saying that human tradition and customs have made a distinction between the hair length of men and women? The use of the word practice (*sune⁻theia*) in 11:16 could support this interpretation. But Paul's use of nature elsewhere and the use of teach suggest that he is referring to the natural and instinctive sense of right and wrong that God has planted in us, especially with respect to sexuality. This sense of what is appropriate or fitting has been implanted in human beings from creation.²⁸ Romans 1:26-27 is an illuminating parallel because the same word is used. Women and men involved in a homosexual relationship have exchanged the natural function of sexuality for what is contrary to nature, i.e., they have violated the God-given created order and natural instinct, and therefore are engaging in sexual relations with others of the same sex.

Nature teaches, then, in the sense that the natural instincts and psychological perceptions of masculinity and femininity are manifested in particular cultural situations. Thus, a male instinctively and naturally shrinks away from doing anything that his culture labels as feminine. So, too, females have a natural inclination to dress like women rather than men. Paul's point, then, is that how men and women wear their hair is a significant indication of whether they are abiding by the created order. Of course, what constitutes long hair is often debated-what is appropriately masculine or feminine in hairstyle may vary widely from culture to culture.²⁹

The function of verses 13-15 in the argument is to show that the wearing of a head covering by a woman is in accord with the God-given sense that women and men are different. For a woman to dress like a man is inappropriate because it violates the distinction God has ordained between the sexes. And, according to Paul, if a woman prophesies in church without wearing the symbol of being under male authority-i.e., if she prophesies while dressed like a man-she is in effect negating the distinction between men and women that God has ordained from creation.

In verse 16, Paul concludes his argument by saying, "But if one is inclined to be contentious, we have no other practice, nor have the churches of God." Now, some have said that Paul actually rejects the wearing of head coverings by women with these words because the Greek literally says "we have no such practice" (*toiaute⁻n sune⁻theian*), and thus they conclude that the practice of wearing head coverings is renounced here by Paul. But such an understanding is surely wrong. Paul in this verse is addressing the contentious, who, the previous context makes clear, do not want to wear a head covering. The practice of certain Corinthian women who refuse to wear a head covering is what Paul refers to when he says "we have no such practice." Thus, he says to the contentious that both the apostolic circle ("we") and the rest of the churches adhere to the custom of head coverings. The instructions Paul has given reflect his own view of the matter and the practice of the other churches. Those who see this advice as limited only to the Corinthian situation have failed to take this verse seriously enough. Paul perceives his instructions here as binding for all churches in the Greco-Roman world. Indeed, the other churches already adhere to the practice Paul recommends here. Such a universal word at

the conclusion of the text is a strong indication that the principle that underlies this passage cannot simply be dismissed as cultural.

Significance of This Text for Today's World

The significance of this text for the twentieth century must be examined briefly. Am I suggesting that women return to wearing coverings or veils? No.³⁰ We must distinguish between the fundamental principle that underlies a text and the application of that principle in a specific culture. The fundamental principle is that the sexes, although equal, are also different. God has ordained that men have the responsibility to lead, while women have a complementary and supportive role. More specifically, if women pray and prophesy in church, they should do so under the authority of male headship. Now, in the first century, failure to wear a covering sent a signal to the congregation that a woman was rejecting the authority of male leadership. Paul was concerned about head coverings only because of the message they sent to people in that culture.

Today, except in certain religious groups, if a woman fails to wear a head covering while praying or prophesying, no one thinks she is in rebellion. Lack of head coverings sends no message at all in our culture. Nevertheless, that does not mean that this text does not apply to our culture. The principle still stands that women should pray and prophesy in a manner that makes it clear that they submit to male leadership. Clearly the attitude and the demeanor with which a woman prays and prophesies will be one indication of whether she is humble and submissive. The principle enunciated here should be applied in a variety of ways given the diversity of the human situation.

Moreover, both men and women today should dress so that they do not look like the opposite sex. Confusion of the sexes is contrary to the God-given sense that the sexes are distinct. For example, it would be wrong for a twentieth-century American male to wear a dress in public. It would violate his masculinity. Everything within a man would cry out against doing this because it would violate his appropriate sense of what it means to be a man. The point is not that women should not wear jeans or pants, but that in every culture there are certain kinds of adornment which become culturally acceptable norms of dress for men and women.

Finally, we should note that there is a connection forged in this passage between femininity and the proper submission of women to men. The women in Corinth, by prophesying without a head covering, were sending a signal that they were no longer submitting to male authority. Paul sees this problem as severe because the arrogation of male leadership roles by women ultimately dissolves the distinction between men and women. Thus, this text speaks volumes to our culture today, because one of the problems with women taking full leadership is that it inevitably involves a collapsing of the distinctions between the sexes. It is hardly surprising, as the example of the Evangelical Woman's Caucus demonstrates, that one of the next steps is to accept lesbianism.³¹ Paul rightly saw, as he shows in this text, that there is a direct link between women appropriating leadership and the loss of femininity. It is no accident that Paul addresses the issues of feminine adornment and submission to male leadership in the same passage.

In conclusion, we should affirm the participation of women in prayer and prophecy in the church. Their contribution should not be slighted or ignored. Nevertheless, women should participate in these activities with hearts that are submissive to male leadership, and they should dress so that they retain their femininity.

Endnotes to Chapter Five

1. Against Pauline authorship it has become quite common to regard this passage as an interpolation—a later insertion by a scribe—rather than an original Pauline passage. But this passage should be viewed as an interpolation only if there are convincing textual arguments, and this is hardly the case here. For bibliographical data on this question, see

Gordon D. Fee, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians* (NICNT; Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1987), p. 492, n. 3. Some scholars believe the first part of the passage (11:3-7b, Padgett; 11:2-9, Shoemaker) reflects the Corinthian position, and the last section of the passage (11:7c-16 and 11:10-16, respectively) is Paul's response to the Corinthians. In effect, then, Paul is an egalitarian and rejects the notion that women have to be veiled. See A. Padgett, "Paul on Women in the Church: The Contradictions of Coiffure in 1 Corinthians 11:2-16," *Journal for the Study of the New Testament* 20 (1984): 69-86; T. P. Shoemaker, "Unveiling of Equality: 1 Corinthians 11:2-16," *Biblical Theology Bulletin* 17 (1987): 60-63. The problem with this view of a Corinthian quotation in the first section is that the citation becomes incredibly long. Moreover there is no indication that Paul is citing the Corinthians in the first part of the text.

2. See especially James B. Hurley, "Did Paul Require Veils or the Silence of Women? A Consideration of 1 Cor. 11:2-16 and 1 Cor. 14:33b-36," *Westminster Theological Journal* 35 (1973): 193-200; cf. also James B. Hurley, *Man and Woman in Biblical Perspective* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1981), pp. 254-271; J. Murphy-O'Connor, "Sex and Logic in 1 Corinthians 11:2-16," *Catholic Biblical Quarterly* 42 (1980): 488-489.

3. This reading is only found in a correction to the Alexandrinus text, not in the other early texts of the Septuagint.

4. The following arguments are largely taken from Fee (1 Corinthians, pp. 506-512). His footnotes on these pages are invaluable for a defense of his argument.

5. For some references to *katakalupto* in the LXX see: Exodus 26:34; Numbers 22:5; Leviticus 9:19; Esther 6:12 (variant reading); Habakkuk 2:14; Isaiah 11:9; Jeremiah 26:8; 28:42; Ezekiel 26:10, 19; 32:7; 38:9; Daniel 12:9; Sirach 24:3; Susannah 32 (T). In virtually every case the translation "cover" or "hide" is appropriate.

6. In the text, Plutarch refers to Scipio the Younger as *kata te's kephale's echo'n to himation* ("having a toga covering his head") [Mor. 200ff). However, the addition of the word *himation* ("toga") makes this passage easier to comprehend.

7. The preposition *anti* in 11:15 need not refer to substitution. It can also indicate equivalence. The latter makes better sense in the context. See Walter Bauer, *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature* (henceforward BAGD), trans. William F. Arndt and F. Wilbur Gingrich, ed. F. Wilbur Gingrich and Frederick W. Danker, 2nd ed. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1979), p. 73, 2.

8. So Fee, p. 529.

9. For a defense of the translation source, see Fee, pp. 502-505 and nn. 42-46 on these pages; Berkeley and Alvera Mickelsen, "What does *Kephale* Mean in the New Testament?" in *Women, Authority and the Bible*, ed. Alvera Mickelsen (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1986), pp. 97-110; C. C. Kroeger, "Appendix III: The Classical Concept of Head as 'Source,'" in *Equal to Serve: Women and Men in the Church and Home*, Gretchen Gaebelien Hull (Old Tappan, NJ: Fleming H. Revell, 1987) pp. 267-283.

For the translation of head by authority, see Wayne Grudem, "Does *Kephale* Mean 'Source' or 'Authority Over' in Greek Literature? A Survey of 2,336 Examples," 6 (1985): 38-59, and Appendix 1 in this volume.

W. L. Liefeld seems to prefer the meaning "honor" for *kephale* ("Women, Submission and Ministry in 1 Corinthians," in *Women, Authority and the Bible*, ed. Mickelsen, pp. 137-140), although he does not exclude the meaning "authority." He gives no example, though, of the word head meaning "honor." Liefeld makes the mistake here of confusing what is given to an authority—honor—with the position or status of an authority. In other words, just because the man as head deserves honor, it does not follow

that the word head means “honor.” All the lexical evidence suggests that the word head means authority, and therefore a woman should honor man as the authority.

10. Mickelsen and Mickelsen, “Kephale²,” p. 104.

11. Kroeger, “Head as ‘Source,’” pp. 282-283.

12. R. C. and C. C. Kroeger, “Subordinationism,” in *Evangelical Dictionary of Theology*, ed. Walter A. Elwell (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book House, 1984), p. 1058.

13. *Ibid.*

14. G. Bilezikian, *Beyond Sex Roles: A Guide for the Study of Female Roles in the Bible* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book House, 1985), p. 241.

15. R. C. and C. C. Kroeger, “Subordinationism,” p. 1058.

16. John Calvin, *Institutes*, XII.6.128; see also XII.18.143-144 and XII.24.152.

17. Charles Hodge, *Systematic Theology* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book House, 1975 rpt.), p. 462 (*italics mine*). Hodge argues (pp. 462-467) that we must distinguish between the Nicene Creed itself and the explanation of the Creed. He thinks the Creed is fully Biblical, although the explanation of that Creed by the Nicene fathers is more problematic.

18. Louis Berkhof, *Systematic Theology* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1941), p. 88. The *italics* in the last part of the quotation are mine.

19. It may be that the Corinthian women had fallen prey to an overrealized eschatology, and they thought they were like the angels in heaven (Matthew 22:30), transcending sexual distinctions.

20. It is important to note that prophecy is not equivalent to either teaching or preaching. For an explanation of the distinction, see Wayne Grudem, “Prophecy—Yes, But Teaching—No: Paul’s Consistent Advocacy of Women’s Participation Without Governing Authority,” *The Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society* 30 (1987): 11-23.

21. Bilezikian, pp. 21-41, presents such an exposition of Genesis 1-2.

22. See M. D. Hooker, “Authority on Her Head: An Examination of I Cor. xi. 10,” *New Testament Studies* 10 (1964): 410-416.

23. Objections two and three also apply to A. Padgett’s view (“‘Authority Over Her Head:’ Toward A Feminist Reading of St. Paul,” *Daughters of Sarah* 12 [1986]: 5-9) that Paul is giving the woman here the right or freedom to do whatever she wants with her head, i.e., she can wear her hair in whatever way she desires.

24. BAGD, p. 278, 5.

25. That the text was understood in such a way in the early church is indicated by the early variant reading *kalumma*, which means “veil.” This reading is not original, but it probably arose because early readers understood authority to refer to wearing a veil.

26. See J. A. Fitzmyer, “A Feature of Qumran Angelology and the Angels of I Cor. xi. 10,” *New Testament Studies* 4 (1957): 48-58. Incidentally, uncertainty on this point does not affect the significance of the passage for today since the main burden of the text is quite clear. For similar references to angels as observing the created order, see 1 Timothy 5:21 and 1 Peter 1:12.

27. See Bilezikian, pp. 143-144.

28. The word *phusis* in Paul often refers to what something is by virtue of creation. Thus, Paul can speak of Jews “by nature,” i.e., Jews by birth (Galatians 2:15). Humans are “children of wrath by nature” because they are born in sin (Ephesians 2:3). Natural branches are those that are originally part of a tree, while branches contrary to nature are

grafted in (Romans 11:21, 24). Romans 2:14 refers to Gentiles who do the law instinctively, i.e., by nature. Romans 2:27 refers to Gentiles who are uncircumcised by nature, i.e., physically. Galatians 4:8 speaks of those who are not gods by nature, i.e., they are not really gods at all. Of course, all of the uses of phusis do not have precisely the same meaning. For example, Romans 1:26-27 and 1 Corinthians 11:14 indicate how people should act due to the order intended by God from the beginning, while in Ephesians 2:3 the focus is on what man is by nature, not what he should be.

29. This does not mean that homosexuality could be culturally acceptable in some situations. Any homosexual relations are fundamentally contrary to nature according to Romans 1:26-27.

30. The failure to distinguish adequately between what speaks to the first-century situation and today's church leads some to the conclusion that women should wear coverings in church today. Cf. Bruce Waltke, "1 Corinthians 11:2-16: An Interpretation," *Bibliotheca Sacra* 135 (1978): 46-57; S. T. Foh, "A Male Leadership View: The Head of the Woman Is the Man," *Women in Ministry: Four Views*, ed. B. Clouse and R. G. Clouse (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1989), pp. 86-87. R. D. Culver, in "Traditional View: Let the Women Keep Silence," in Clouse and Clouse, pp. 29-32, 48, seems to prefer the wearing of head coverings as well, although he allows some liberty on the question.

31. See Beth Spring, "Gay Rights Resolution Divides Membership of Evangelical Woman's Caucus," *Christianity Today* 30 (October 3, 1986): 40-42. For other indications of the acceptance of lesbianism in evangelical feminism, see K. E. Corley and K. J. Torjesen, "Sexuality, Hierarchy and Evangelicalism," *TSF Bulletin* 10 (March/April 1987): 23-25. Two issues of *Daughters of Sarah*, volume 14 reflect the same tendency: May/June and September/October 1988.