

-Save This Page as a PDF-

Man is Born of Woman

11: 13-16

Man is born of Woman DIG: What was the real issue that Paul was concerned about, the Corinthian women wearing a head covering? Or something bigger than that? What are the last two reasons why Paul wanted the women believers in Corinth to wear a head covering?

REFLECT: What issue is there in your place of worship that might be causing some of the immature believers to stumble, or cause believers to lose their testimony in your community, thus not being able to reach the lost? Who can you help this week to overcome that issue?

**For as the woman was made from the man,
so also the man is now born through the woman.**

There was no reason for believers to needlessly scoff at accepted cultural **traditions** that did not violate Scripture. **The Corinthian women** had every right to not wear **head coverings** in the worship service because of **their** freedom in **Messiah**; but by refusing to voluntarily yield **their** right for the sake of others, **they stumbled other weak believers and ruined their testimony with unbelievers in the community.**³⁰⁸ **Thus, they** violated Paul's basic principle: **With all kinds of people, both Jews and Gentiles, I have become all kinds of things, so that in all kinds of circumstances I might save at least some of them (9:22b).**



Dear Great Heavenly **Father**, How fantastic it is to have such a **loving**, wise and wonderful **Father!** You abide in **Your children** and are always there to guide and **love** us. **For God Himself has said, "I will never leave you or forsake you" (Hebrews 13:5c).** It is so wonderful to never be alone but always have **You** with me. It is a joy to please **You**. One way to please **You** is when **Your children love** one another. **So, we have come to know and trust in the love that God has for us. God is love. Now whoever abides in love abides in God, and God abides in him (1 John 4:16).** Pleasing ourselves is so natural, but it is so much wiser and better to please **You**. The law of **love** is what **You** want us to follow. **And Yeshua said to him, "You shall love Adonai your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind." This is the first and greatest commandment. And the second is like it, "You shall love your neighbor as yourself" (Matthew 22:37-39).** I want to please **You** by **loving** others ahead of myself. In **Your** holy **Son's** name and power of **His** resurrection Amen.

Paul changes direction and introduces a caveat to **his** argument. What follows is not integral to **his** case (**to see link click Bw - The Head of a Wife is Her Husband**), but is inserted to offer some balance to the previous emphasis on **women's** secondary role in creation. **He** does this by observing that **the man is now born through the woman**. In other words, **men** are dependent on **women** for **their** existence.³⁰⁹ Every **man** has a **mother**, and this reduces the temptation of **men** to think themselves free from the obligation to honor **women**. The principle of honoring **mothers** (see the commentary on **Exodus Do - Honor Your Father and Your Mother**) implies that **husbands** ought to have a high regard and honor for **their wives**. Therefore, when all is said and done, **we** need each other.³¹⁰

Paul offered five reasons in verses 2-16 why women should wear head coverings in public worship.

4. The fourth reason was to emphasize the distinction between sexes (11:11-15):

Lest anyone mistake **his** description of **headship** in **11:3**, **Paul** makes it clear that **women (wives)** also have a direct relationship with **God**. **Nevertheless, in union with the Lord neither is woman independent of man nor is man independent of woman; for as the woman was made from the man, so also the man is now born through the woman.** While **Eve** did **come from Adam**, so too are **male children born through female mothers**. **Paul** reminded **the Corinthians** that **everything comes from God (11:11-12)**. In other words, that fact that **Eve came from Adam's rib** does not contradict that fact that **God Himself** fashioned **the first woman**.

To be sure, **husbands** have a headship role because they are held responsible for what goes on in **their** marriage (see the commentary on **Romans Bm - The Consequences of Adam**), this does not eliminate the need for **wives** to cultivate their own relationship with **Messiah**. **Wives** worship and honor **ADONAI** directly because **there is neither . . . male or female (Galatians 3:28)**. Moreover, this common origin implies a commonality of worship; the distinctions between the sexes in their worship roles does not imply complete separation. Both **men** and **women** must fulfill their proper roles together if worship is to be acceptable.³¹¹

This section begins with an unusual expression: **Decide for yourselves (11:13a)**. By these words **Paul** did not encourage **the Corinthians** to ignore **his** instructions. Rather, he meant that **they** should not blindly obey **his** directives, **they** were to think through the issue. **Paul** said this because **he** was convinced the believers in **Corinth** had the ability to think properly on this issue. **He** hoped **they** would reason through the issues with **him** and see how he came to **his** conclusions. In fact, since this was an area in which **he** knew the church was following **his** instructions, **he** probably expected the majority of **his** readers to agree with **his** position.

Paul then circled back to the main point of **his** argument: **Is it appropriate for a woman to pray to God when she is uncovered**, akin to a prostitute advertising **her** wares **(11:13)**? Within **their** new found freedom in **Messiah**, some of the “liberated” **women** in the **Corinthian** church adopted the “**for me, everything is permitted**” **(6:12a)** attitude, and were **praying** and **prophesying** with **uncovered heads**, contrary to the cultural norms of the time. As a result, **Paul** wanted **the Corinthian women** to wear a **head covering** in public worship because **their** actions were damaging to **the women themselves**, the **Corinthian** church, the **Corinthian** community, and most of all to **God Himself**. **Other spiritually immature believers in the church were being stumbled upon; and in addition, those women were losing their testimony in the community**. Thus, **they** violated **Paul’s** basic principle: **With all kinds of people, both Jews and Gentiles, I have become all kinds of things, so that in all kinds of circumstances I might save at least some of them (9:22b)**.

To clinch **his** case, **Paul** throws in a final argument by appealing to **nature**, which is assumed to reveal what is fitting, honorable and glorifying. **Doesn’t the nature of things itself teach you that a man who wears his hair long degrades himself?** The mentioning of **hair** only serves as a final illustration as to why **women (wives)** should have a **cover** on **their heads**, but **men (husbands)** should not.³¹² **Long hair was a woman’s glory** because it gave **her** the visible expression to the differentiation of the sexes. This was

Paul's point in noting that **long hair is given to her as a covering (11:14-15)**. Since **she** had a natural **covering, her hair, she** followed the custom of wearing a physical **covering, a veil**, in public worship. Whether **women** today should wear a **head covering** or **men** should wear a hat depends on the customs where **they** live.

When **Paul** speaks of **nature, he** means what **his** society at the time understood to be **natural**. In general, it was shameful for **men in his** culture to have long **hair**. The only surviving statues from **Corinth** portraying **men** wearing long **hair**, besides male deities, were those appearing in the façade of the captives in the forum in Roman Corinth. **Their** long **hair** was intended to portray those captives were weak, soft and effeminate.

The Corinthian women went to war against **their** culture and what society considered **natural** at the time. **Paul** only brought up **hair** as an analogy. **God** has given **women** a glorious, **natural head covering**, namely, **their hair**. Therefore, **Paul** wanted **the Corinthian women (wives)** to follow the lead of **nature**, as defined by social custom at that time, and **cover their heads. Men (husbands)**, on the other hand, did not use **their hair** as **their cover**, since **it** was **shameful** for **them** to have long **hair** in **their** culture.³¹³

5. The fifth reason was the universal practice (11:16): It was time to wrap things up. So, **Paul** brought to a close **his** argument over the rightness of **the Corinthian women** maintaining **the tradition** of **covering their heads** in the worship service. Some of **the women** were being contentious about this. **However, Paul** refused to be contentious back. It was not **his** way to **argue** back and forth. Therefore, **he** concluded: **If anyone wants to argue about it, the fact remains that we have no such custom, nor do the Messianic communities of God (11:16). Paul** was not trying to force a new behavioral pattern on **the Corinthians**, but simply to hold the line against self-indulgent individual excess in the name of freedom in **Messiah**. As in the case of food sacrificed to idols (see **Bj - Concerning Our Freedom in Messiah**), **Paul** dealt with the immediate issue, but also put **his** finger on the root of the problem, **the Corinthian** pursuit of self-interest which was unwilling to voluntarily give up **their** "rights" for the needs of others (**10:24**) or **the glory of God (10:31)**. For **the women** not to wear a **head covering** in the worship service was an act of rebelliousness which discredited **ADONAI**.³¹⁴