

Understanding the Head Covering

As baptised believers we are part of the ecclesia of God. A people called out from the world, to follow God. We have a spiritual and privileged relationship with God, expressed through Christ. And Christ can save us and protect us from the consequence of our sin. Romans 6:23, tells us that the consequence of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ. This salvation from sin is essential in the Gospel of Christ (Rom 1:6).

In order for Christ to save us, he has to forgive us for our sins. When we are forgiven for sin, it is like a covering which makes the sin invisible. **Psalm 32:1** says "Blessed is he whose transgression is forgiven, Whose sin is covered". Also **Psalm 85:2** tells of how God forgave the sin of his people, it says that he "covered all their sin".

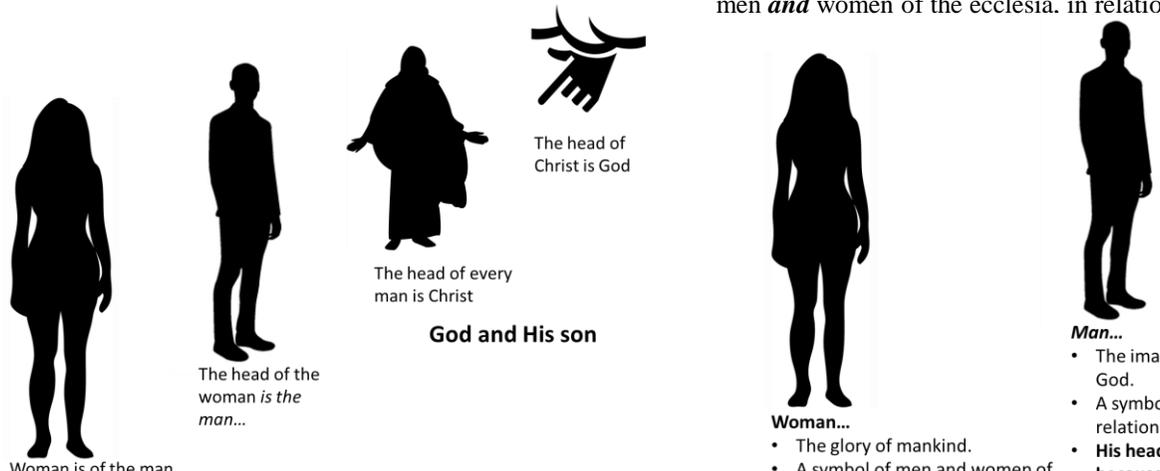


The head covering constantly reminds us of the covering or forgiveness of sin, that we all need. It reminds us of our salvation from death to live forever in the kingdom of God. And it reminds us of God's grace. It is a visible sign that we acknowledge our sin, and accept God's forgiveness. God wishes us to do this simple symbolic act in order to strengthen our bond with him, and with Christ His son, who is our head as well as our saviour.

Ephesians 5:23 "...Christ is head of the ecclesia; and he is the saviour of the body." Christ is our enduring saviour, through being committed to us like a husband to his wife, and he cherishes us like his own body.

Ephesians 5:28-30 Tells us that "...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 ecclesia. For we are members of His body, of His flesh and of His bones." This is an expression of how Christ loves us and cares for us. But we are not His equal.

1 Corinthians 11:3 "... 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."



Men and women of the Ecclesia

The head symbolizes leadership, and the Bible is telling us that, the body of Christ is led by God (1 Cor 11:3); The body of the ecclesia is led by Christ (Eph 5:23); And within the ecclesia, the responsibility of headship is given to males (1 Cor 11:3). This is the structure which God has put in place. Even the first woman was created from the man Adam, to help him, and to be led by him (Eph 5:22). God made her to be a companion counterpart, to help him (Gen 2:18). In return, he was to love her (Eph 5:25) and bond with her so strongly that they become as one (Gen 2:24/Eph 5:31).

Our relationship with God through Christ is like a marriage, with all of the same principles. Christ has a bond of love with us so powerful that he gave himself for us (Eph 5:25). He cares for us so intensely that we are like his own body (Eph 5:28-29). Our purpose as His ecclesia is to help Him, to obey Him and to please Him (Eph 5:24) because He is our head (Col 1:18).

1 Corinthians 11:7 "...a man indeed ought not to cover his head, forasmuch as he is the image and glory of God: but the woman is the glory of the man (meaning mankind)".

This tells us that men in the ecclesia symbolise and represent God in relation to of the ecclesia. It also tells us that women in the ecclesia symbolise and represent both men **and** women of the ecclesia. in relation to God.

- The glory of mankind.
 - A symbol of men and women of the Ecclesia in relation to God.
 - Her head is covered on all our behalf because our sin is covered.
- The image and glory of God.
 - A symbol of God in relation to mankind.
 - His head is uncovered because God has no sin to cover.

1 Corinthians 11:4 *“Every man praying or prophesying, having his head covered (meaning veiled), dishonors his head.”*

This is not telling us that men in the ecclesia ought to remove their hair to pray! The man's head remains symbolically uncovered even when he has hair. But it is telling us that if men in the ecclesia have their head covered or veiled, when we gather together as an ecclesia before God, then they symbolically dishonour God. The covering represents forgiveness of sin. Therefore, if the man symbolizes God, then by covering his head, he is saying in symbol that God needs forgiveness for sin. In this way he dishonours God.

1 Corinthians 11:5 *“But every woman who prays or prophesies with her head uncovered (meaning unveiled) dishonors her head.”*

Just as the man's head remains symbolically uncovered even when he has hair. so it is with the woman. The covering, or veil, for the sister in Christ is something additional to the hair which she has been blessed with as her glory and mantle (*1 Cor 11:15*). And if the woman keeps her head uncovered or unveiled, when we gather together as an ecclesia before God, then she symbolically rejects God's forgiveness and covering for sin, not just for herself, but on behalf of the whole ecclesia. In this way she dishonours the ecclesia whom she represents. The head covering represents God's enduring mercy, which we all need.

1 Corinthians 11:11–12 ... *“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.”*

Sisters wear the head covering on behalf of both men and women of the Ecclesia. Brothers have their heads uncovered on behalf of Jesus and God.

This symbol of God's grace and mercy towards us can only be truly complete when both men and women agree and act together to make it so.

The head covering is not about human culture, or any kind of rivalry or power struggle between men and women. But it is about the relationship of the Ecclesia, with God, through Christ.

For those who understand and believe, the head covering for sisters, along with the head uncovered for brothers in Christ, is not simply a law, or a thing imposed. But it is “the answer of a good conscience towards God.” (*1 Pet 3:21*). It is a reasoned and voluntary act in as much as we voluntarily obey God, who does not *force* anyone to honour Him. It is the spiritual response of a people who have been transformed in their thinking by the the word of God, and who both comprehend and agree with what is acceptable to God. (*Rom 12:2*).

We do it whenever we gather and meet as an ecclesia, or even when Christ is in the midst of us because a few of us gather together in his name (*Matt 18:20*). But we always do it under the gaze of the Angels of the Lord who encamp around those who revere and worship Him. (*1 Cor 11:10, Ps 34:7*). It is a token of The Gospel, which is as relevant as baptism, and sharing the bread and the wine. And just as with baptism and the emblems, the people of God's ecclesia do not argue with it, but we embrace it, and we do not do things in any other way (*1 Cor 11:16*). It is a reminder of the headship of Christ over his ecclesia, and of the covering for sin which we receive through his headship.

For those who understand and believe, the head covering strengthens our bond with God. And it unifies men and women of the one true faith.

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