

Women, Make up, Fashion etc...in the Church of God

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"for where no law is, *there is* NO transgression." (Rom 4:15).

Are women allowed to wear make up in the church? What about women wearing certain clothes and dresses? What about hair lengths for women and men? What about music, and sports? These are the questions that have divided the church of God in this modern day. What does the Bible say about these different subjects? There are certain things that the law *does not* speak of like fashion, styles, color choices, Birthdays, music, dancing, and sports. The Christian can make his or her own choices according to ones likes and dislikes *without* violating the law of God, "for where no law is, *there is* no transgression." (Rom 4:15).

Make Up & Appearance

What of makeup? My wife wears makeup, and we have been married for 25 years. She wears it not because she is trying to deceive any one, or to entice men. She wears it to be presentable at work and for me her husband. It is her choice to do so. Is she violating the Law of God wearing makeup? What do the scriptures say?

First, what are the origins of makeup and its original purpose?

Civilizations have used forms of cosmetics-though not always recognizable to cosmetics users today -- *to enhance beauty, and to promote good health*. Cosmetic usage throughout history can be indicative of a civilization's practical concerns, such as protection from the sun; class system; or of its conventions of beauty.

Men and women in Egypt use scented oils and ointments to clean and soften their skin and mask body odor. *Cosmetics are an integral part of Egyptian hygiene and health*. Oils and creams are used for protection against the hot Egyptian sun and dry winds. Myrrh, thyme, marjoram, chamomile, lavender, lily, peppermint, rosemary, cedar, rose, aloe, olive oil, sesame oil, and almond oil provide the basic ingredients of most perfumes. The whole purpose for makeup was to promote good health and hygiene, *not* to worship any pagan god. They groomed themselves to look good *for* the gods, but it wasn't a ritual to *worship* their gods, like sacrificing children *to* their gods. So basically it was to promote good hygiene and health. This source writes, "At one time, decorative face painting became associated with beautification, social status and preserving youthfulness, and from the 18th century onward, more closely linked to fashion" (Face Paint: The Story of Makeup, By Lisa Eldridge, Prologue).

Notice this quote, "A woman without paint is like food without salt."- Roman philosopher, Plautus

Some Greek societies believed that a woman without makeup might as well be nude.

The Bible even says that people who groom themselves and make themselves up; the purpose was to look good and enhance beauty. Jeremiah says, "And *when* thou *art* spoiled, what wilt thou do? *Though* thou *clothest* thyself with crimson, *though* thou *deckest* thee with ornaments of gold, *though* thou *rentest* thy face with painting, ***in vain shalt thou make thyself fair***; thy lovers will despise thee, they will seek thy life." (Jer 4:30). God says you are making yourself "fair" in vain.

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He wasn't condemning the practice of dressing up and putting on makeup; he just said in "vain" you are making yourself "fair" or "beautiful" (Strong's #3302). This was the purpose and the motive for makeup and jewelry, *not* to worship a god. So Deuteronomy 30:29-31 *cannot* apply to this. The same can be said for Ezekiel 23:40 and Hosea 2:13. They beautified themselves *for* pagan gods, but it *wasn't a way* to worship a god. Just like today people get dressed up to go to a certain occasion be it religious or secular, to dress up and look good for the occasion. These are social customs *not* religious customs.

King David, at the death of King Saul and Jonathon lamented and said, "Ye daughters of Israel, weep over Saul, who clothed you in scarlet, with *other* delights, who put on ornaments of gold upon your apparel." (2 Sam 1:24). King David never condemned anyone for wearing makeup, jewelry or nice clothes.

One of Job's beautiful daughters was named, "Kerenhappuch." (Job 42:14). This meant 'horn of stibium,' a paint with which females dyed their eyelids; in contrast to his 'horn defiled in the dust' (Job 16:15). The names also imply the *beauty of his daughters.*" (JFB Commentary, emphasis added).

Ezekiel 16 describes God symbolically adorning his bride, Israel, with jewelry and silk. Notice the motive, "Then *washed I thee with water*; yea, I thoroughly washed away thy blood from thee, and I anointed thee with oil.

"I clothed thee also with brodered work, and shod thee with badgers' skin, and I girded thee about with fine linen, and I covered thee with silk.

"*I decked thee also with ornaments, and I put bracelets upon thy hands, and a chain on thy neck. And I put a jewel on thy forehead, and earrings in thine ears, and a beautiful crown upon thine head.*

"Thus wast thou decked with gold and silver; and thy raiment *was of* fine linen, and silk, and brodered work; thou didst eat fine flour, and honey, and oil: *and thou wast exceeding beautiful, and thou didst prosper into a kingdom.*" (vv.9-13). Obviously the motive was hygiene and beautification of his bride.

This is the main reason why women for centuries put on makeup, to beautify themselves and make themselves look good for *different* reasons and occasions; to attract men (*men groom themselves for the same reason to attract women*), which is a good thing-that way men and women can date fall in love and marry. Many times makeup was used for special occasions, like banquets and feasts to look good for the occasion. Sometimes however it is used for evil reasons like harlotry and prostitution. Some evangelists believed that the custom of makeup originated in harlotry, but this is simply not the case.

What of the phrase "wanton eyes" in Isaiah 3:16? This is describing a woman's flirtatious or suggestive look, *not* her makeup. Notice what Proverbs 6:25 says, "Lust not after her beauty in thine heart; neither let her *take thee with her eyelids.*" "...i.e. *do not let her captivate thee with her amorous glances.* The Hebrew verb, lakakh, is 'to captivate' with blandishments, 'to allure, beguile;' (cf. Prov 11:30) LXX, mhde agreuyhv... *The eyelids are the instruments by which the amorous woman beguiles or catches her victims. She allures him by her glances.* So St. Jerome says, "The eye of a harlot is the snare of her lover.' *The wanton glance is expressed in the Vulgate*

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by nutibus illius; cf. 'The whoredom of a woman may be known in her haughty looks and eyelids' (Ecc 26:9)." (Pulpit Commentary, emphasis added). It's not about makeup, but to lure a man into a sexual encounter with her, and it is done by *enticing glances*. Makeup is just a *tool* they use to beautify the eyes. As noted above makeup is used for *various reasons*, like anything else, sometime people used these things and *channel it for evil instead of good*.

What of the reference to Jezebel in 2 Kings 9:30 to her excessive use of eye shadow? Jezebel was condemned for her wrong motivation and her evil actions rather than the use of makeup per se. "She endeavored to improve the appearance of her complexion by paint..." (Clarke's Commentary). She did this, "not with a view to *tempt Jehu*, which she could not expect, being an aged woman; *but for grandeur and majesty, and in the pride and haughtiness of her spirit, which she retained to the last, and resolved to keep up and show in her extremity and calamity*:" (Gill's Commentary, emphasis added). This was her sin, not makeup and putting on a head dress. Again, there are different reason why people use these things to beautify themselves, and many times it is not for good, but for vanity, lust and pride.

The Bible says there is nothing wrong about men and woman wanting to groom themselves, and beautifying themselves and using things to do it. The *motive* is what matters.

In Matthew 6 Jesus spoke of fasting. The Jews of the day believed that when they fasted they should not groom themselves to show people that they were fasting. But Jesus said, "But thou, when thou fastest, *anoint thine head, and wash thy face*; That thou appear not unto men to fast..." (v.17, 18). Jesus said to "anoint thine head, and wash thy face" this meant, "Jesus' instructs to *take care of ourselves as usual* and to make the fast something of a secret before God." (Guzik Commentary). We are to be well groomed on a daily basis and take care of our bodies.

The Apostle Peter makes an interesting statement about women beautifying themselves, "While they behold your chaste conversation *coupled* with fear.

"Whose adorning *let it not be that outward adorning* of plaiting the hair, and of wearing of gold, or of putting on of apparel;

"But let it be the hidden man of the heart, in that which is not corruptible, *even the ornament* of a meek and quiet spirit, which is in the sight of God of great price.

"For after this manner in the old time the holy women also, who trusted in God, *adorned themselves*, being in subjection unto their own husbands:" (1 Peter 3:3-5). The Apostle says about personal appearance that it should not "*be the main or principal thing; let not her heart be set on this*. The apostle does not say that she should wholly neglect her personal appearance..." (Barnes's Notes, emphasis added).

The most importance is the "heart" your character and personality. Peter then says, "the holy women also, who trusted in God, *adorned themselves*." They beautified themselves in the Old Testament, the holy women of God. Abraham was "rich" (Gen 13:2; 14:23). Sarah was a beautiful woman to look upon (Gen 12:11, 14). No doubt that Sarah beautified herself since Abraham was rich, and the Apostle Peter said they "adorn themselves."

BUT, "being in subjection unto their own husbands:" The character was most important. They obeyed God and their husbands and showed godly character.

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The letter of James, again apparel and jewelry is brought into view but the wearing of it was not condemned, "For if there come unto your assembly a man *with a gold ring, in goodly apparel*, and there come in also a poor man in vile raiment;

"*And ye have respect to him that weareth the gay clothing*, and say unto him, Sit thou here in a good place; and say to the poor, Stand thou there, or sit here under my footstool:

"Are ye not then partial in yourselves, and are become judges of evil thoughts?" (James 2:2-4).

James does not condemn what the man wears, but how he is *treated* in the church. He should not receive more respect than a poor person in the church.

The Apostle Paul also speaks of the appearance of women and says, "In like manner also, that *women adorn themselves in modest apparel*, with shamefacedness and sobriety; not with broided hair, or gold, or pearls, or costly array;

"But (which becometh women professing godliness) with good works." (1 Tim 2:9-10). The word for "apparel" is "katastolē" (Strong's #2689). The Pulpit Commentary notes about the word "modest" it says, "Modest (kosmiov); only found in the New Testament here and in, 1Tim 3:2, where it is rendered '*of good behavior*' in the A.V, and 'modest' in the margin, 'orderly' in the R.V It is common in classical Greek in the sense of '*well-ordered, well-behaved.*'" (emphasis added).

The word "apparel" is only here in the New Testament and it does mean "apparel," but as the Pulpit Commentary notes, "...it may also mean 'steadiness' or 'quietness' of demeanor; and then the phrase *will be exactly parallel to 1Peter 3:5*, 'The incorruptible *apparel* of a meek and quiet spirit.'" (emphasis added). This is the true intent of the scripture, and the meaning will be, "Let Christian women adorn themselves with a *decent and well-ordered quietness of demeanor*, in strict accordance with or, 'together with' shame-fastness and sobriety meta, 'in strict accord with,' or 'together with' not with 'braided hair,' etc. A woman's true ornament is not the finery which she gets from the milliner, but the chaste discretion which she has from the Spirit of God." (emphasis added; see also Vincent Word Studies and Jamieson Fausset & Brown's Commentary).

Like the Apostle Peter, Paul is saying that true apparel is a women's character and not what she wears and makes herself up (*he is not condemning it*). There is no sin wanting to look good and be well groomed. The sin is vanity, lust, or her appearance is what is important to her and not her heart.

What about women wearing pants or trousers?

Deut 22:5 is *not* applicable; It is simply saying that there should be clear *gender distinctions in our dressing*. The Bible does not condemn use of trousers by women. *There are men's and women's trousers (or pants)*. Just as men in certain cultures wear skirts (Scotland, Bermuda, etc.). All the passage is saying is that there should be gender role *differentiation* in our dressing, and it is more on the subject of transgenderism, than with dress.

"God designed that there should be a plain distinction between the dress of men and women ... for the same *dress worn by both sexes would cause confusion* and great increase of crime." (Child Guidance, p. 427, emphasis added).

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Jewelry

As Noted above The Bible is *not* opposed to the use of jewelry in all instances.

Again the "the purpose of wearing jewelry always remained the same - they enabled wearer to express himself non-verbally, *showcase wealth, rank, political and religious affiliation or affections toward someone*. This enabled jewelry to become timeless and a target for constant development and refinement." (History of Jewelry- All About Jewelry). It had various reasons, but mostly it was to "beautify" the body and head just like makeup. It was mostly a social custom rather than a religious custom. But some people however use these trinkets for evil rather than for good.

The Bible shows the same purposes for Jewelry as well. In the Exodus, the Israelites had Jewelry on, or in possession, (see Ex 32:2, 24; 33:4). There were at least five appropriate usage of jewelry that were not condemned. However, in two instances the Bible is opposed:

1. Use of Jewelry in Sanctuary/Temple --For Utensils & Services, use as Offerings. OT: Num 31:50; NT: Matt 2:11

2. Use of Jewelry as Currency—to pay for services or valuables. OT: Gen 24:22, 53; 1 Chron 21:21-25; NT: Matt 10:9; (cf. Mark 6:8; Luke 9:3); Acts 3:6; 20:33; cf. 1 Pet 1:18, 19

3. Use of Jewelry as Evidence of Wealth—to indicate economic or financial well-being. OT: Gen 24:35 (cf. 10, 22); 1 Kings 10:2; 2 Chron 32:27; NT: Rev 18:16; 5:3; James 2:2

4. Use of Jewelry by Kings, Queens, & Royalty -- as Symbol of Civil Power/Authority. Crown, Signet ring; symbolized their authority & blessings of the Lord. (Examples of such use of jewelry by Joseph, Solomon, the Queen in Ezekiel 16, and the Prodigal Son in Luke 15). OT: Gen 38:18, 25; 41:42-2 Sam 1:10; 2 Kings 11:12; Esther 3:10, 12; 8:2, 10, 15; Ps 21:3; 89:39; 132:18; Eze 16:10-13; Zech 6:11-13; cf. 2 Sam 12:30; Jer 13:18; Ezek 21:26; cf. Isa 3:21 NT: Luke 15:22

5. Use of Jewelry by High Priests—as Symbol of Religious Authority. The jewelry worn by kings and high priests in the Old Testament (the priestly garments, diadem, and breastplate) symbolized that the priests were holy to God. (cf. Numbers 15:37-41; see Numbers 15:37-41; see also Exo 28; Num 13:23; 15:37-41; Deut 8:8; Zech 6:11. NT: Rev 3:11; Rev 19:12.

While the Bible accepts *appropriate* uses of jewelry (temple, currency, kings, high priests, and simply wearing jewelry), the Bible, however, consistently condemns two uses of jewelry.

1. For Idolatrous and Magical Purposes—to protect (charms and amulets) (Gen 35:2; Josh 24:14, 23; Isa 3:3, 20; Hosea 2:13

2. As Bodily Adornment--to entice for sexual appeal Isa 3:16-23; Jer 4:30;

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NOTE: In the Bible, the willful use of jewelry for evil such as vanity was a sign of pride, backsliding or apostasy from God's ways. "The removal of ornaments was a *mark* of mourning and grief: Ezekiel 24:17; Ezekiel 26:16, Jdt 10:3 f. (Kn.) [(Ex 33:4).]" (Cambridge Bible for Schools and Colleges, emphasis added). Nothing is wrong with jewelry, but there was a time when jewelry was in appropriate, a time when people needed to repent and humble themselves before God.

Whether or not one wears makeup, jewelry, nice dresses or suits it is a matter of *personal preference and depending on the occasion as well*; going to a presidential state dinner one must wear his or hers best attire. Even God would not have the Israelites come to public worship in rags, and in dirty and filthy garments, but that their bodies should be covered with clean and decent raiment; so the Israelites washed their clothes that they *might be ready to meet the Lord at Mount Sinai, see Exodus 19:14*. The Jews always appeared in their best clothes on the Sabbath day; this is one of their rules (Maimon. Hilch. Subbat. c. 30. sect. 3).

Some women prefer not to wear makeup or jewelry; Some men like to wear jewelry, some don't, it's all up to the individual; the church ministers can give an opinion on it, but that is it! It is *not* up to the ministry but the individual! God wants us to "dress and keep" our bodies and make the most of what He has given us. And makeup, jewelry, dresses, suits worn *in good taste* can be beneficial to a one's appearance. As Paul says, "for where no law is, there is no transgression." (Rom 4:15), decide for yourself; The Bible is neither yea or nay on these things, the Christian can make his or her own choices according to ones likes and dislikes without violating the law of God.

Hair Lengths

What about hair?

The Apostle Paul writes about men, "Doth not even nature itself teach you, that, *if a man have long hair, it is a shame unto him?*" (2 Corinth 11:14). Does this not contradict the scriptures that show the Israelites had long hair?

Notice what the International Standard Bible Dictionary says, "*...the Hebrew people, like their Babylonian neighbors (Herod. i.195), affected long and well-cared-for, bushy curls of hair as emblems of manly beauty*. Proofs thereof are not infrequent in the Scriptures and elsewhere. Samson's (Jdg 16:13, Jdg 16:19) and Absalom's (2Sam 14:26) long luxuriant hair is specially mentioned, and the Shulammitte sings of the locks of her beloved which are 'bushy' (the Revised Version, margin 'curling'), and 'black as a raven' (Song 5:11). Josephus (*Ant.*, VIII, vii, 3 (185) reports that Solomon's body-guard was distinguished by youthful beauty and 'luxuriant heads of hair.' In the history of Samson we read of 'the seven locks of his head' (Jdg 16:19). It is likely that the expression signifies the plaits of hair which are even now often worn by the young Bedouin warrior of the desert." (article "Hair," emphasis added).

Only the Priests were to cut their hair often so it would not grow long (see Ezekiel 44:20) keep it in moderate size.

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Even beards, this same source says, "The mustache (Hebrew *sāphām*, 'beard'), according to 2 Sam 19:24, received regular 'trimming' (Thus English Versions of the Bible after the Vulgate, but the Hebrew is generic, not specific: 'He had neither dressed his feet, nor trimmed his beard'). (4) In one case (1Sam 21:13, 1Sam 21:14) the neglect of the beard is set down as a sign of madness: '(He) let his spittle fall down upon his beard. Then said Achish,... Lo, ye see the man is mad.'"(article "Beard" emphasis added). The Hebrews had neatly trimmed beards groomed and kept regularly.



This is the only known image of an Israelite king. Jehu, king of the northern Israelites, is shown bowing down to. Shalmanesar, king of the Assyrians on the Black Obelisk discovered by archaeologists at Nimrud in Northern Iraq.

This depicts the Israelite king with a full beard and long hair groomed and kept.

So what of Paul? What is the context of what he wrote? One must remember that it was written at least 20 years *after* the death of Jesus. "Hair was worn in different fashions by the Orientals of Biblical times, and not always in the same way among the same people in different epochs." (International Standard Bible Encyclopedia, under article "hair" emphasis added). Styles change with the trend setters.

The Hellenistic Jews-a large segment of the Jewish population was Greek-speaking and Hellenistic in outlook. (See John 12:20; Acts 6:1.) The Greek Hellenistic style for men was to wear the hair short (Cornfeld, pp. 15, 146). On page 146 of *Daniel to Paul* is a picture of a "marble statuette of an unidentified man of the Hellenistic period - a time of close contacts between the Jewish and Hellenistic civilizations in thought, art, and everyday life. Whether Jewish or Gentile, he evokes his age and environment." The Roman Emperor and other people of great influence set the styles for the entire empire, and the Hellenistic Jews followed those trends.

What about the *non*-Hellenistic Jews? Did they wear their hair short or long? Some did, some did *not*. Others followed the Biblical examples cited above. Some even had a "unplaited ponytail - a hairstyle favored by young men at that time." (Albert "Kim" Dreisbach, a biblical scholar, theologian).

Part of the problem in discussing hair length is how *long is long*? We know from archeological materials such as Middle Eastern carvings and Egyptian tomb paintings that Jews wore what *we would consider today as long hair and beards*. Hair reached down to the *shoulders* on men. Women wore hair down to the *waist*.

Paul was telling Corinthian men that *wearing hair down to the waist as women did would be effeminate and contrary to what natural law would suggest*, especially considering the physical

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demands of many first-century male occupations. It is easy for us today to assume the length and cut of a Jewish man's hair in the first century *to be as it is for most men today*, but that's a misconception that can result in our *misreading* Paul.

So did Paul mean we should carry our hair short like the Romans? No! He meant men should groom their hair a lot shorter than women, who had their hair down to their waist. Men kept their hair short like the Romans or shoulder length like the men in the Bible and this is how we men should keep their hair; short enough to *differentiate* "between men and women." (see Jewish Law in Gentile Churches, p.133, Markus Bockmuehl). *This is the primary point Paul is trying to make. The "shame" Paul spoke of, meant that men were not to look like a woman, but a man, this violates the law of Deuteronomy 22:5.*

Coverings

The Apostle also wrote about "coverings." He said, "Every man praying or prophesying, having *his* head covered, dishonoureth his head.

"But every woman that prayeth or prophesieth with *her* head uncovered dishonoureth her head: for that is even all one as if she were shaven." What are these "coverings" and should women wear them in church? The interpretations of this passage vary among believers concerning whether the covering is spiritual, a garment, or hair.

A few quick notes about what it is *not* saying:

1. It is not speaking of any garment of any kind, like the Jewish *tallith*. The Jewish worshipper in praying always covers his head with his *tallith*-a four-cornered shawl having fringes consisting of eight threads, each knotted five times, and worn over the head in prayer. It was placed upon the worshipper's head at his entrance into the synagogue.

"The notion that Paul in this place referred to the [Hebrew: tallith] (shawl), or [Greek: yarmelke] (skull cap) worn by Jewish worshipers is refuted by the fact that the *Greek New Testament does not indicate in this verse an artificial covering of any kind.*" (James B. Coffman's Commentaries on the Bible emphasis added).

Referring to coverings in verse 5, Coffman wrote, "With her head unveiled... The word here rendered 'unveiled' is [Greek: akatakalyptos]. *There is no intrinsic meaning in this word which suggests either the covering material or the object covered; it is simply a general word.*' (See under 1 Corinthians 11:15.) Only in 1 Cor. 11:15 does Paul mention any kind of garment ([Greek: peribolaion]) *and even there he stated that the woman's hair took the place of it.* [Katakalyptos] means covered completely. [Akatakalyptos] means not completely covered. Thus again, *the passage falls short of mentioning any kind of garment. To suppose that Paul here meant 'mantle' or 'veil' or any such thing is to import into this text what is not in it*" (emphasis added). So any types of veils or caps and garments are not meant here in these texts.

2. What does it mean to "prophesying" or "praying" (1 Corinth 11:4-5)?

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Barnes's Notes says, "The word 'prophesying' here means, evidently, 'teaching;' or publicly speaking to the people on the subject of religion; see the note at Acts 2:17." According to Acts 2:17 this implies the *whole church of God, men and women*. All members of the church of God "pray and prophesied" or preach and teach the word of God; this is done *because* of the Holy Spirit that dwells in them (Num 11:25; Acts 2:17; 1 Sam 10:10; 1 Corinth 14:15). All people that have the spirit of God are members of God's church (see Rom 8:9). Notice that Paul says "every" man and "every" woman. All members teach and pray, and not just in church, but to friends and family, and strangers. In other words, Paul, when he is speaking about these coverings, he is speaking of *every* man and *every* woman member in the church of God, because all have the spirit of God.

3. *Hair* is the **only** covering that Paul specifically mentioned in 1 Corinthians 11. The text reveals, "But if a woman has long hair, it is a glory to her; for her hair is given to her for a covering" (1 Corinth 11:15).

Coffman's Commentary says, "We may therefore interpret this verse as a simple admonition that it was a disgrace for any long-haired Christian male to participate in praying and prophesying; *and this interpretation certainly harmonizes with verse 14...* We have seen that he was speaking of 'hair' in 1 Cor. 11:4; and that is exactly what he is speaking of here. 'Not completely covered' would then refer to the disgraceful conduct of the Corinthian women in cropping their hair, after the manner of the notorious Corinthian prostitutes; which, if they did it, was exactly the same kind of disgrace as if they had shaved their heads. *It is crystal clear that Paul is not speaking of any kind of garment; because he said in 1 Cor. 11:15, below, 'For her hair is given her instead of a covering.'*" (emphasis added).

Coffman goes on to say, "If Paul meant 'hair,' why did he use the word 'covered'? The answer is that in the *vocabulary of the Old Testament* 'to uncover the head' was *to shave off the hair*. When Nadab and Abihu sinned (Leviticus 10:1ff), God commanded Aaron not to 'uncover his head' in mourning at their death; and this meant *not to cut off his hair* (the customary sign of mourning). Job shaved his head when he learned his children were dead (Job 1:20). Many examples of this usage could be cited." (emphasis added).

Now with these false assumptions cleared up one can understand what the Apostle is teaching the church about "coverings."

To begin, Paul is speaking of keeping "the ordinances, as I delivered *them* to you." (v.2). These were, in *Greek*, "traditions," that is, apostolic directions given by word of mouth or in writing (1Cor 11:23; 1Cor 15:3; 2 Thess 2:15).

Then he speaks of the headship in the church. "But I would have you know, that the head of every man is Christ; and the head of the woman *is* the man; and the head of Christ *is* God." This headship *is not dominance* of one over another, but like God's headship is to Christ or Christ's headship to man. Headship implied *servant* leadership (Mark 10:42-45).

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Then Paul says, "**Every** man praying or prophesying [every *male* member of God's church], having *his* head covered, dishonoureth his head." (v.4). As noted, hair is the only covering Paul speaks of; he says a man having his head "covered" dishonors his *head*, meaning Jesus Christ (v.3). A head "uncovered" means "short hair," according to the Old Testament. So a head "covered" means "long hair," as clearly indicated by the apostle's words a moment later: "If a man have long hair, it is a dishonor to him" (Young's Lit Transl.1 Corinthians 11:14).

Coffman comments about other versions of the Bible about this verse, "Here is where the misunderstanding of this passage begins. This clause, as rendered in the popular versions, is *commentary*, not Bible. As Echols noted: 'Having his head covered' is a *commentary*, not a *translation*. Lenski translated the sense correctly: 'having something down from his head.' What the 'something' is, is neither stated nor implied in 1 Corinthians 11:4." (emphasis added). The logical understanding of this would refer it to "long hair," being long enough to hang down from the head, as clearly indicated by the apostle in verse 14.

The ancients accepted Paul's dictum on this and went so far as to define the length of hair that was considered an infraction of Paul's words.

"The hair of the head may not grow so long as to come down and interfere with the eyes ... cropping is to be adopted ... let not twisted locks hang far down from the head, gliding into womanish ringlets." (Clement of Alexandria, in the Ante Nicene Fathers, Vol. II, p. 286.)

Significantly, the words "hang far down" strongly resemble Paul's words "having something down from his head."

As noted above the women of the day had hair down to their backs, men were to be groomed and have their hair significantly shorter, shoulder length, or even like the Romans, groomed and kept. So Paul was saying every male member of God's church should be groomed *and look like a man*, and not effeminate; *not* telling the difference between a man and woman, this is a "shame" unto him violating the law of God in Deuteronomy 22:5. Paul said to the members of God's church, "Know ye not that the unrighteous shall not inherit the kingdom of God? Be not deceived: neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, *nor effeminate*, nor abusers of themselves with mankind" (1 Corinth 6:9).

Now for women he says, "But **every** woman that prayeth or prophesieth [every *female* member of God's church] with *her* head uncovered dishonoureth her head: for that is even all one as if she were shaven." (v.5). Female members in God's church who are "uncovered" dishonors her "head" the man- her husband or father (v.3).

In verses 5&6 Paul is affirming that women with short hair-meaning short hair *looking like a man*, (*the context is shown in verses 7-9*) is the *same* as being cropped or shaved head, (*a symbol of shame see 2 Sam 10:4; Ezra 9:3; Isa 22:12; Ezekiel 7:18, see also Dictionary of Bible Themes under "Shame"*). A literal translation is: "Every woman praying or prophesying with head uncovered disgraces her head; *for this is also one and the same* as being shaved. For if the woman is not covered, she must *also* become sheared; and if this is a disgrace to the woman to become sheared or shaved, she must remain covered." (Young's Literal Trans.1 Corinth 11:5-6).

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What is the main point? Paul is saying the same thing he said about the men, It is a "shame" for a man to look like a woman; and so women should *not* look like men; females in God's church must keep the law of Deuteronomy 22:5, and look like females and show a gender difference between the two. Women today do cut their hair short, but like the trousers mentioned above, there are female trousers and male trousers, same thing with hairstyles. The women in the church at Corinth had a cropped hairstyle that *resembled* men, this was a "shame" unto them. One must remember that these people came out of pagan lifestyles where transgenderism was common, and Paul was telling the church not to follow their old sinful ways, and keep the Law of God. Verses 7-9 Paul gives the reason why-that God created man and woman and the genders must remain distinct.

Paul continues in verse 10 and says, "For this cause ought the woman *to have power on her head* because of the angels." This scripture reveals women who preach the word, they have authority, or "power" on their head. The woman who "prophesied" also receives revelation from God *through angels to prophesy* (Heb 2:2; Rev 1:1) and the woman has her prayers delivered by angels (Rev 8:3-4). This instruction has to do with the woman's service in prayer and teaching before God. She is to preach and teach in humility because she is under the authority of God when she is teaching the church or the public God's will. Therefore "every woman praying or prophesying with her head uncovered dishonors her head" (1 Corinth 11:5). By looking like a man, the Christian woman dishonors her "head" be it her husband, father, whatever the case may be, being that God created her as the *glory* of man and in the image of God and that must be maintained or else one is in violation of the Law of God which is sin (1 John 3:4).

Paul then asks, "Judge in yourselves: is it comely that a woman pray unto God uncovered?" (v.13). Is it right for a woman to look like a man and present herself to God in this manner? This is the principle theme Paul is getting across to the church, not hairstyles but *lifestyles*.

Paul then says, "Doth not *even nature itself* teach you, that, if a man have long hair, it is a shame unto him?" (v.14). Of course as noted, the "shame" is, the simple fact that there is a difference between men and women, and it should be shown because, "...he is the image and glory of God: *but* the woman is the glory of the man.

"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." (vv.7-9). So man must be a man, and show his glory which is the glory of God; and a woman must be a woman, and should show her glory (two different glories), which is the glory of a man.

Notice in verse 13 how Paul expressed, "for yourselves: is it *proper* for a woman to pray to God with her head uncovered?" (NSAB). The use of the word "proper" indicates the custom for which Paul is referring, which is whatever is modest and respects authority.

In 1 Timothy 2:10, Paul revealed what is proper that Christian women are to adorn themselves with good works "as is proper for women making a claim to godliness." The translators interpret "proper" from the Greek word *prepo* meaning "becoming," "appropriate," or "fitting" (cf. Matt 3:15; Eph 5:3; Titus 2:1; Heb 2:10; 7:26). Therefore, these Christian women were to pray with their heads covered (a feminine look) as is *proper* or *fitting* for demonstrating the headship that

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God established. In this setting, these Christian women were to look and be feminine and be in their proper genders roles as women should as their God-given covering and glory.

Paul concludes, "But if any man seem to be contentious, we have no such custom, neither the churches of God." (v.16). Coffman writes, "This was Paul's way of saying, 'Look, we do not intend to argue this question endlessly; the whole matter is already solved by the type of behavior which marks God's churches everywhere.' This is grounds for holding that in this whole passage it is decorous conduct with which Paul is concerned, since it touched on the all-important question of the proper submission of women to their husbands, and was also related to the prevailing opinion of the people in that community." (emphasis added).

For other issues about women read our article Paul and Women in the Church at www.british-israel.ca.

Music, Dancing

What of music and dancing? Can a Christian listen to music and dance? Are not the Psalms the song book of Israel? Were not some prophecies sung with a musical instrument? Did not David set up instruments and song for the praising of God? Did not David dance before God and the ark? (2 Sam 6:14). Did not Jesus and the disciples sing a hymn when they went to the Mt. of Olives? (Mathew 26:30). There are so many examples of music, instruments and song when it pertains to God, this should not even be an issue. If a Christian wants to dance and sing or play an instrument let it be their choice, as long as it does not violate God's law, "for where no law is, *there is no transgression.*" (Rom 4:15).

Sports

What I deal with when it comes to sports is *priorities* and idol worship of sports figures. Society is obsessed with sports and sports figures. This is what is wrong with sports. But sports itself there is nothing wrong with it "for where no law is, *there is no transgression.*" (Rom 4:15).

Did not Paul say, "*Exercise is good for your body*, but religion helps you in every way. It promises life now and forever." (1 Tim 4:8, Contemporary English Version).

Birthdays

Can a Christian celebrate his or her birthday? Yes, a Christian can celebrate birthdays if he or she *chooses* to. There is no Biblical admonition to not have a celebration about one's birth, "for where no law is, *there is no transgression.*" (Rom 4:15). Birthday observance as a doctrine is not discussed in the Bible. In short, birthdays are not condemned in Scripture as being sinful. Celebrating one's birthday is a *social custom, not a religious one.*

Those who say that the Bible condemns birthday celebrations point to the fact that when it mentions birthdays it also mentions some terrible deeds. The Bible describes murder-executions as occurring on the birthdays of Pharaoh and Herod. However, *tragedies linked with birthdays do not show that the proper observance of a birthday is displeasing to God.* Pharaoh and Herod had

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people executed whenever they pleased. The fact that they chose to do this on one of their birthdays does not mean it is wrong to observe a birthday.

Some point to these references of the Egyptian Pharaoh in Joseph's time (Genesis 40:20), and King Herod in Jesus' time (Matthew 14:6; Mark 6:21) as evidence that celebrating birthdays is wrong; since both men were non-believing individuals, their birthday celebrations are seen as some form of pagan ritual. However, that conclusion is not readily drawn from either passage. The Bible does not even hint that it was wrong for Pharaoh or Herod to celebrate his birthday. Neither does Scripture anywhere discourage a Christian from celebrating a birthday.

Some quote Ecclesiastes 7:1, that says, "A good name *is* better than precious ointment; and the day of death than the day of one's birth." But this is not putting down being born. The context is what a man has accomplished throughout his or her life. At birth, nothing has been accomplished, no "good name" has been established yet, it has nothing to do with attitude towards birthdays .

Pentecost is referred to as the Birthday of the church, and Israel in the Old Testament.

The doctrine of being "born again" is spoken of as a great day when Christians will be born into the Kingdom.

Jeremiah said that when babies were born the Israelites were "glad" of the news (Jer 20:15).

What of Eve when Cain was born? She rejoiced at the birth of the first human being. She spoke with praise and exaltation, saying: "*I have gotten a man from the Lord*" (Genesis 4:1). She was excited about this new baby. Excitement shows up in many places in the Word of God at the birth of a son or daughter. A baby's birthday is nothing more than remembrance of the day God gave life to the child.

In Job 1:4 etc., we read that Job's sons "feasted everyone his day." The Pulpit commentary says of this verse, "Most commentators regard these feasts as birthday festivities. Each son in his turn, when his birthday arrived, entertained his six brothers. Others think that each of the seven brothers had his own special day of the week on which, he received his brothers at his table, so that the feasting was continuous. But this scarcely suits the context. And it is admitted that 'his day' (*in Job 3:1*) means 'his birthday.' *The celebration of birthdays by means of a feast was a very widespread custom in the East. (Gen 40:20; Herod., 1:133 9:110 Mark 14:21)* And sent and called for their three sisters to eat and to drink with them. This by itself is sufficient to show that the feasts were occasional, not continuous. Constant absence of daughters, day after day, from the parental board is inconceivable." (emphasis added).

Did they not rejoice when the Savior was born in Bethlehem? (Luke 2:10-14). The angelic hosts in God's own heaven were rejoicing—celebrating—this greatest of all human births. This *does not* relate at all to human pagan practices. Job's children were rejoicing and having a feast on their birthdays *without* the paganism that people put around it.

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Did Job find it sinful? No! Why? Birthdays are a *social* custom *not* a *religious* custom, There's a difference! Notice the text, "*It may be that my sons have sinned*, and cursed God in their hearts. Thus did Job continually." (v.5). It says "it may be" that his sons were sinning. If they were celebrating their birthdays, then they have *already* sinned if celebrating their birthdays was a sin, but it was not.

The only problem with birthdays is what the pagans have *added* to birthday celebrations. They have *added* magic, astrology, celebrating pagan gods birthdays etc...and not just celebrating it the way Job's children did of just acknowledging ones birthday and celebrating it with friends and family *without all the paganism* which is what Job was *concerned* about. The pagans "*...adding any number of pagan superstitions...*" (Is It a Sin to Observe Birthdays, article by GTA, emphasis added), to birthdays, and make it grossly overdone.

So if one *chooses* to do so, one can, "for where no law is, *there is* no transgression." (Rom 4:15).

Social Customs are different from Religious customs

There is no such thing as even a veiled reference to Jesus Christ condemning social and cultural customs such as certain banquets and festivals on important occasions. Rather, the first miracle of Jesus is performed in the context of supplying additional wine for a great "wedding feast" at Cana, in Galilee!

Jesus, by His presence at this feast (it may well have been the marriage of a close family member, and Mary may have been involved in its preparation), distinctly shows it is perfectly acceptable for Christians to take part in such social customs.

Surely it is not wrong to give gifts! No Christian believes its "wrong" to give a gift to his or her children, husband or wife, loved ones or friends, or, for that matter, completely unknown poor people.

The occasions for such gift—giving? Perhaps one of God's annual Holy Days, such as the Feast of Tabernacles (a good time to give your children a gift!). Perhaps at the beginning of school; on one's anniversary, at a wedding or a baby shower, a "going-away" present, or when one moves into a new home.

WHY, if all of these occasions are perfectly "right" and "Christian" occasions to give a gift, is it taboo, and viewed by some as a SIN, to give your child a gift on the anniversary of a certain number of years of life?

The wise men, when arriving at the bedside of Jesus Christ, gave to Christ their gifts! Simply because there were three categories of gifts given—frankincense, gold and myrrh—many have assumed there were only three wise men. Not so. There may have been many more than that, or there could have been only two.

However, it is obvious they gave gifts OF GREAT value!

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One could argue until he is blue in the face that these were "Persians," and therefore pagan! They may even try to distort and twist the Bible to the point they deny that the family of Jesus used the valuable gifts for His clothing, education or their own personal needs.

But this would, in fact, be twisting and wresting of the Scriptures—would be utter nonsense—and would deliberately ignore the FACT that on the occasion (it could easily have been one year after His birth) of Jesus' birth, gifts of great value were given!

There is a familiar argument that, since Jesus was a KING, and since it is "custom" never to appear in the presence of a king without a gift, the Magi brought gifts!

However, this is not merely a casual visit to a king at any month, during any season, or on any day. It was the fact and occasion of His birth! No amount of reasoning can do away with the fact that these gifts were BIRTHDAY GIFTS! Birthdays are a *social* custom *not* a *religious* custom, There's a difference!

There simply is no teaching in the Bible concerning birthday celebration one way or the other. Anything can be grossly overdone; any custom can become "paganized" by *adding* any number of pagan superstitions, like "wishing" when blowing out the candles of a cake etc...*which is what the pagans have done to a social custom.* "for where no law is, *there is* no transgression." (Rom 4:15).