

Biblical teaching about the heads of men and women in the Church.

Biblical teaching about the heads of men and women in the Church.

What, according to the Apostle Paul, is a sign of submission to God's order while praying and prophesying in the congregation, as well as in a daily Christian living?

I think many would like to know the biblical answer to the question whether Christian woman in the church or outside of the congregation, should impose on head an object which will be covering her head, or as others say: covering her hair? Whether it is enough when her hair is falling down on her neck? If it is a biblical question, there must be also a biblical answer. Let's think, how would look like the teaching about turning the other cheek if teacher by his own would not show, how it should be (see Matt. 5, 39 and John 18, 22.23). Correct understanding of each place from the Bible, thus this one as well, depends on the sincere listening to the Only Teacher, Jesus Christ. I would like to indicate that the ap. Paul was brought up, on the teachings of the Old Testament. However, as a disciple of Jesus Christ, and for that as a wise householder (see Matt. 13, 52), he was using firstly the New Testament, and based on a relevant cautions for certain topic, also from the Old Testament, as in the case of: I Cor. 9, 3-10 "(...)or saith not the law the same also?(...)". So we need to, knowing ap. Paul, check the roots of the teaching about covering head by a Christian woman while praying or prophesying. I'm surprised that we are reaching the Bible with such a small eagerness to find other places touching this subject, and despite that conclusions are drawn conclusions which, according to certain teacher, have to decide whether a sister is godly or godless. The teacher, Jesus Christ, when on the road to Emmaus he was talking with his disciples, he said to them: *"Then he said unto them, O fools, and slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have spoken, Ought not Christ to have suffered these things, and to enter into his glory? And beginning at Moses and all the prophets, he expounded unto them in all the scriptures the things concerning himself.(...) And they said one to another, Did not our heart burn within us, while he talked with us by the way, and while he opened to us the scriptures?"* (Luk. 24, 25-27 and 32 KJV). While talking, he was opening the Scriptures before them. Well, let's listen to Him, how He will open the Scriptures in matter, with which we will be dealing now.

In the following considerations I shall mainly deal with that, what it is covering and for what is it used, I will not deal with the whole writing of ap. Paul's about brothers and sisters from 11 Chapter, 1 Corinthians, verses from 1- 16.

Therefore, I will return to biblical teaching. First, let's think, how God has solved the problem of covering the head, as sign of Nazarite. In Numbers chapter 6, verses 1 to 21, we read:

"And the LORD spake unto Moses, saying, Speak unto the children of Israel, and say unto them, When either man or woman shall separate themselves to vow a vow of a Nazarite, to separate themselves unto the LORD, (...)All the days of the vow of his separation there shall no razor come upon his head: until the days be fulfilled, in the which he separateth himself unto the LORD, he shall be holy, and shall let the locks of the hair of his head grow(...)because the consecration of his God is upon his head(...)"[\[1\]](#)

What then was the sign of Nazarite? Longer hair. How Long? Such, that you could see the difference between consecrated to the LORD, and unconsecrated. Hair length was therefore depending to the duration of the consecration to God. When the time has passed, the sign had to be removed from the head by shaving.

Let us turn our attention to another fragment from Numbers 5, 11-31:

"(...)the priest shall set the woman before the LORD, and uncover the woman's head, (in other translations: [let\[the hair of\]headgoloose](#), unbind the hair [[\[2\]](#)]) and put the offering of memorial in her hands, which is the jealousy offering; and the priest shall have in his hand the bitter water that causeth the curse: And the priest shall charge her by an oath, and say unto the woman, If no man have lain with thee, and if thou hast not gone aside to uncleanness with another instead of thy husband, be thou free from this bitter water that causeth the curse: But if thou hast gone aside to another instead of thy husband (...) And this water that causeth the curse shall go into thy bowels, to make thy belly to swell, and thy thigh to rot: And the woman shall say, Amen, amen.(...)" [[3](#)]

What should a priest do when a woman stands before God with the offering of memorial in her hands and has to answer for the words of the priest: Amen, amen? According to many he should cover her head with some covering (Greek '**peribolaion**' – covering, garment, clothes), but the priest, instructed by God, is unbinding her hair to freely falling down.

Is this a Biblical commandment, very important to clarify the words written by apostle Paul, or just giving us nothing, description of priestly activities?

The Apostle Paul, in another place writes: *"All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: That the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works."* [[4](#)] Thus, the Sacred Scripture is an inspired work, and not our human speculation (supposition).

Apostle Paul was very familiar with these places from the Bible. No wonder, then, that while arranging things in God's church, he also raised the issue of coming before God by brothers and sisters. The New Covenant is also a new order of assembling, other than in the Old Covenant. Christians from the beginning are gathering in their homes, so brothers and sisters are there together. (Acts. 1, 12-14)

Coming back to the place of 1 Corinthians Chapter 11, we can see that ap. Paul uses two different words concerning appearance of the sisters heads while praying (cover and clothing):

v. 13: "Judge in yourselves: is it comely that a woman pray unto God uncovered (uncovered gr. '**akatakaluptos**': '**a**' – un-, without; '**kata**' – against, down from, throughout; '**kalupto**' – I veil, hide, conceal) [[5](#)]? [[6](#)]"

Something from above is moved down to as well cover that, what is below, Solomon wrote like that: *"Behold, thou art fair, my love; behold, thou art fair; thou hast doves' eyes within thy locks: thy hair is as a flock of goats, that appear from mount Gilead."* (Song of Solomon 4:1, KJV). Hair descending down make a woman in the congregation, in a visible manner, ready, according to biblical teaching, to pray or to prophesy. A woman, for the will of God, has hair always with her, because they are part of her self. She was created along with them when no one else ever thought about any headscarf. Did not the Creator has highlighted the difference between a man and a woman from the beginning and that is why you can see it, in the midst of the entire human race, as if "by nature"? Hence the apostle Paul teaches that believers should use this difference, when they pray to God (1 Cor. 11, 13-15). We can see, after all, that a woman has hair more protected from a man, so often you see bald and balding men, but very rarely a bald woman. The Creator made her very well, and called her "woman". Man called her "woman" (Gen. 2, 18-24). In the book of Revelation we read: *" And they had hair as the hair of women, (...)"* (Revelation 9, 8a. KJV).

Similarity was used, cause they have as long hair as a woman.

and in v. 15: *“But if a woman have long hair, it is a glory to her: for her hair is given her for a covering. (gr. ‘peribolaïou’ – covering, mantle, veil).”* [[71](#)]

In other translations of the Bible, this verse is written like below:

WB - *but if a woman nourish long hair, it is glory to her, for hairs be given to her for covering.* [[81](#)]

TB - *and a praise to a woman if she have long hair? For her hair is given her to cover her withal.* [[91](#)]

D-R B - *But if a woman nourish her hair, it is a glory to her; for her hair is given to her for a covering.* [[101](#)]

KJV 2000 - *But if a woman has long hair, it is a glory to her: for her hair is given her for a covering.* [[111](#)]

ERV - *But if a woman have long hair, it is a glory to her: for her hair is given her for a covering.* [[121](#)]

NLT - *And isn't long hair a woman's pride and joy? For it has been given to her as a covering.* [[131](#)]

YLT - *and a woman, if she have long hair, a glory it is to her, because the hair instead of a covering hath been given to her;* [[141](#)]

So we see that instead of the word "for, as" is used " instead". The Greek word 'anti' in KJV is translated "for", and in the Greek-English Dictionary - " instead, in the place of".[[151](#)]

I am quoting these Greek words just because, to make more clearer the argument for the fact that the hair are given instead of covering i.e. instead of something which is not a part of the same woman, for example, instead of shawl, headscarf, etc. Therefore, there were used two different words: covering - clothing. Let her covers the covering, which are her own hair.

Verse 6: *“For if the woman be not covered, let her also be shorn: but if it be a shame for a woman to be shorn or shaven, let her be covered.”* [[161](#)] If a shameful thing for a woman is to be cropped or shaved, it is also wrong to stand before God with hair wrapped or plaited. And it is because that God wants women to pray to Him in the spirit of modesty and restraint.

Apostle Paul also in 1 Timothy (2:8-10) writes about the appearance of a woman's head during a meeting, at which the brothers while praying should lift up clean hands, and women should inter alia *“adorn...not with broided hair”* [[17](#)]/Used in this place Greek word 'plegmasin' is translated into English as " what is woven, plaited, or twisted together; a web, plait, braid"/[18](#)/

Pay attention to another very important element of teaching of the Apostle Paul about the head of a woman during the congregation. It was given to Timothy, to teach this in congregations meeting in any place. When we connect this passage with the teaching contained in the Epistle to the Corinthians, the idea of Apostle Paul will be brighten up for us , and thereby we will more easily understand him. We see that also in this apostolic teaching there is no mention about headscarf or something similar to that. Thus, a woman should not have at the time of congregation meeting hair wrapped, intertwined or plaited, but falling freely down.

Apostle Paul, in all these places, as well as Moses (Numbers 5, 18 KJV) describing the appearance of a woman's head during prayer, is indicating that her hair should be freely falling down.

In addition, this passage about power and angels: *“For this cause ought the woman to have power on her head because of the angels.”* (1 Cor. 11,10 KJV). In the Young's Literal Translation word „power” has been translated as „a token of authority”. We understand that having a power over ourselves is not tantamount to the fact that we are totally submitted to it in all. Apostle Paul is writting about God`s order lik that: *„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.”*(1 Cor. 11,3 KJV). We know for sure that Jesus Christ is fully submitted to the power of the Father. Worse is shown in the case of submission man to Jesus Christ and a woman to a man. If the point would be just a sign of submission, then only Jesus Christ could be able to wear it on Himself. The point is therefore about the order of God, in recognition of the authority of God over all and through all who have received it from God. Who does not accept that, alone, also will be not accepted.

Take for example a CEO in a large company, whose will toward all employees, is transferred to those who are closest to his position, i.e. the directors of the various departments in the company. And they shall transfer, this CEO`s will, not their own will, as a task to all managers with production project confirmed by the CEO. Managers, in the unchanged way, have to convey that to masters, masters to shift leaders, these are transferring that to production workers. And so, no way changed, the authority of CEO, expressed in his ordinances and saved in a project must reach out to all of his employees. The practical implementation of these regulations will be found out in the production fruits. If everything run out in a submission to the authority of CEO, then what he purposed, will be implemented by the done work. What does the director, when he sees that the product is not such that he wanted to have? Will he not start looking for the culprit? And what if the product will be exactly how he wanted? He will definitely be satisfied and willing to grant the award.

The order of God in the hierarchy of authority is a condition to maintain the Church in Christ, and through Christ in God. God reigns over Christ Jesus, Jesus Christ reigns over a man, and a man reigns over a woman. When everyone, i.e., Jesus Christ and the man submit entirely to the authority of their head, who reign over a woman? The answer is one: God And it is God's order, which is ensured by the Spirit of God. God's authority is the power of truth, love, holiness, justice, faithfulness, i.e. the saving authority. Outward sign of this authority hierarchy are "short hair", i.e. shorn hair in men case and "long hair", i.e. not shorn in men style, in a woman case. In prayer, Jesus pronounced these words: "*As thou hast given him power over all flesh, that he should give eternal life to as many as thou hast given him.*" (John 17,2 KJV). So also on our body should be revealed His authority over our bodies. And this sign of the body, which apostle Paul dealt with , is hair of a man and of a woman. How good it is, when the order of authority is maintained at every level among the people of God. Let`s then imitate God, having the power of God, let`s serve to our subordinate in their experiences, remaining in compliance with the will of God, according to his order.

Let`s think about that why apostle Paul writes, that it is supposed to be done also for angels.

The Angels, who have not violated the order of the God`s authority, are watching us outwardly, and for them precisely, the length of hair on the head of a man and a woman praying and prophesying, is an external sign of recognition order of God`s authority. Of course, the angels also look at the fruit of the Spirit in us, but here Paul is talking about hair. The angels of God are not trying to get inside of the man, as demons, but they are waiting, totally belonging to God, to the visible fruit of the action of God in man, and they are rejoicing seeing us agreeing with the authority of God over us. "*(...)which things the angels desire to look into.*" (1 Peter 1,12 KJV), and great unveiling of the secret God's plan: "*Unto me, who am less than the least of all saints, is this grace given, that I should preach among the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ; And to make all men see what is the fellowship of the mystery, which from the beginning of the world hath been hid in God, who created all things by Jesus Christ: To the intent that now unto the principalities and powers in heavenly places might be known by the church the manifold wisdom of God, According to the eternal purpose which he purposed in Christ Jesus our Lord: In whom we have boldness and access with confidence by the faith of him.*" (Eph. 3,8-12 KJV). Angels admire the new humanity of man and woman, living longer no thanks to themselves, but thanks to Jesus Christ in God's order, as subjects with gratitude to his power.

Then Apostle Paul is saying; "*Judge in yourselves*", in other words, I am humanly speaking to you now, that you will well understand this, because in this are hidden powerful spiritual values, but now I judge this according to the flesh, and thus judge ye yourselves and recognize, this what I say to you, "*Doth not even nature itself*" - means the entire fleshly history from Adam and Eve to the present times "*teach you, that, if a man have long hair, it is a shame unto him? , But if a woman have long hair, it is a glory to her?*". The translators use the word "*nature*", "*instinct*" and "*innate tendency*" and these words point us to Adam and Eve as the first fruits of humanity. The Firstfruits shows us the order, because God created them to be very good in the flesh and in the likeness of His.

Apostle Paul says that if a woman does not use correctly the covering, she should take it off by a haircut or

shave. Does the material object, in this case often used headscarf, could be shaved? Apostle Paul taught about it and that he cared about, to especially during the meeting of the congregation, it was clear that the man is "*the image and glory of God*", and about that testified his shorn ' *not long* "hair. It should, therefore, be seen, obstructed by nothing. The woman whereas is "the glory of man" and it should be visible at the meeting. Nothing should cover it. In her case sign of that are her "*long*" hair. A sign, worn at the meeting by a man and a woman should be thus visible, if it has to fulfill its mission.

So standing to pray or prophesy according to the recognized authority, is shown by the view of man and woman head, which is visible length of our hair. It was a case that dealt with apostle Paul writing these words, and that has been resolved, for all generations of Christians.

Thus, comparing with each other passages from the Old and New Testament on the subject "What really should be covering, which covers a sister? Whether a man can have hair on his head as they should have a woman? "- I try to base my faith on the Word of God taken from the whole Scripture. Because after all a mirror for every believer who wants to know the truth about himself, is the Word of God, not his own understanding that often results from religion or culture in which they live. The Word of God is the foundation of faith, not guesses, even if they were called convictions.

Apostle Paul in Romans 14, 23, wrote: "(...) *for whatsoever is not of faith is sin.*" [\[19\]](#)

"So then faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God." [\[20\]](#).

I undertook this topic, not to argue, but to refer the matter to the source. Let the Word of God decide, not our conjectures or tradition. Brothers and sisters, covering the head with headscarf or hair will not make the sister holy. She is holy just by living of Holy Spirit in her, manifested in the fruit of living Jesus Christ in her (1 Peter 3.3-4). That what she use to cover depends on her cognition, but let her do it in love and not in making herself great. Let us remember that knowledge puffs up, but charity edifies, and apostle Paul wrote this, in the same letter, in which he undertook the topic of covering heads by women and the prohibition of covering heads by men (1 Cor. 8,1). It is very good to have a proper knowledge of the Word of God and live in harmony with this Word, but if you have incomplete knowledge, you should live according to the cognition which you have currently, may it only be based on the Word of God. Knowledge is always the result of the work of the Word of God in the believer. Being obedient to God, in whatever we know from Scripture, you can be sure that He Himself will help you further to grow in understanding and discipleship of the Lord Jesus Christ.

Lord Jesus said: "(...) *To this end was I born, and for this cause came I into the world, that I should bear*

witness unto the truth. Every one that is of the truth heareth my voice.” (John 18,37b KJV), and “ (...)If ye continue in my word, then are ye my disciples indeed; And ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free.” (John 8, 31b. 32 KJV). Those from Berea “(...) in that they received the word with all readiness of mind, and searched the scriptures daily, whether those things were so.” (Acts 17,11 KJV).

At the end I would like to remind instruction from the Letter of James: *“Who is a wise man and endued with knowledge among you? let him shew out of a good conversation his works with meekness of wisdom. But if ye have bitter envying and strife in your hearts, glory not, and lie not against the truth. This wisdom descendeth not from above, but is earthly, sensual, devilish. For where envying and strife is, there is confusion and every evil work. But the wisdom that is from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, and easy to be intreated, full of mercy and good fruits, without partiality, and without hypocrisy. And the fruit of righteousness is sown in peace of them that make peace.” (Jac. 3,13-18 KJV).*

Let us imitate the good not evil.

I greet opponents and agreeing, in the name of Jesus Christ.

Your brother in Jesus Christ.

[1] King James Bible, Great Britain, Collins, ISBN 978-0-00-741406-2, p.182

[2] King James Bible Text courtesy of BibleProtector.com, New American Standard Bible, The ESV Bible (The Holy Bible, English Standard Version), The Orthodox Jewish Bible.

3 King James Bible, Great Britain, Collins, ISBN 978-0-00-741406-2, p.181

4 ibidem, p. 1345

6 King James Bible, Great Britain, Collins, ISBN 978-0-00-741406-2, p.1292

7 King James Bible, Great Britain, Collins, ISBN 978-0-00-741406-2, p.1292

8 Bible. N.T. English (Middle English). Wycliffe. 2001 Wycliffe's New Testament translated by John Wycliffe and John Purvey, page 717.

9 Bible. N.T. Translated by William Tyndale and friends, page 229

10 Douay-Rheims Bible [Section Headings Courtesy INT Bible © 2013, Used by Permission](#)

11 [The King James 2000 Bible, copyright © Doctor of Theology Robert A. Couric 2000, 2003](#)

12 English Revised Version, 1885 [Section Headings Courtesy INT Bible © 2013, Used by Permission](#)

13 Holy Bible, New Living Translation, copyright ©1996, 2004, 2007. Used by permission of [Tyndale House Publishers, Inc.](#), Carol Stream, Illinois 60188.

14 Young's Literal Translation [Section Headings Courtesy INT Bible © 2013, Used by Permission.](#)

15 LSJ The Online Liddell-Scott-Jones Greek-English Lexicon

16 King James Bible, Great Britain, Collins, ISBN 978-0-00-741406-2, p.1292

17 Ibidem, p.1339

18 THAYER'S GREEK LEXICON, Electronic Database. Copyright © 2002, 2003, 2006, 2011 by Biblesoft, Inc.

[\[19\]](#) King James Bible, Great Britain, Collins, ISBN 978-0-00-741406-2, p.1280

[\[20\]](#) Ibidem p. 1276