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THE TIMING OF THE HEADCOVERING OBSERVANCE

I guess the simplest three views as to timing are covering: 1) All the time, 2) Only while actually praying (even silently) or actually prophesying (vs. merely hearing the prophesy) whether in or outside the assembly, and 3) Only and always during an assembly.

Only and Always During a Congregation Meeting

1) The context of 11a, like 11b ff, is the Assembly meeting. 11a and 11b are an inseparable unit bound by 1) "I praise you," and "I praise you not," in 11:2 and 11:17; and 2) "you ... keep the ordinances as I delivered them to you," and "the rest I will set in order when I come," in 11:2 and 11:34. Since 11b must go with the church meeting content of 12-14, 11a must go with it too. 12-13 doesn't mention a meeting but meetings were probably the primary place spiritual gifts were used. Meetings aren't clearly mentioned in 14 until verse 23, but the whole chapter seems to be the same topic. Therefore, "edifies the Assembly" in vs. 4 probably also refers to a meeting, as well as 14:1-3, and chapter 12. 1 Corinthians is primarily about "Assembly" issues, not "saint" issues, except for the specific questions the Assembly wrote Paul about. I think an outline something like this: 11-14 Church Meeting Issues. 11 The Two Church Meeting Observances 12-14 Spiritual Gifts (what a meeting should look like). 15 Resurrection. is a better outline than something like this: 11 Two Random Apostolic Transmissions (HC and LS). 12-14 Spiritual Gifts. 15 Another Apostolic Transmission (The Gospel). (Like the Headcovering and Lord's Supper, Paul received the gospel directly from Yeshua and passed on directly to all, "I declare to you the gospel ... for I delivered [ordinanced, transmitted, traditioned] to you first of all that which I also received," 1 Cor. 15:1-3. Why did Paul choose the Headcovering and Lord's Supper, and only those, out of all the apostolic transmissions he could have chosen to bind together in 1 Cor. 11 (via 11:2 and 11:17, and 11:2 and 11:34), while saving the Gospel apostolic transmission until chapter 15? Because they are the two, and only, Assembly meeting apostolic transmissions received from Yeshua in Acts 1:2 and Gal. 1:16-17.

Objection) John MacArthur says the "first" thing Paul says about meetings in 1 Cor. 11a is in verse 18, "For first of all, when you come together in the church, I hear that there are divisions among you." Rebuttal) The Lord's Supper topic of 11b begins in verse 17, not 18, "Now in this that I declare to you I praise you not, that you come together not for the better, but for the worse." The word "first" in verse 18 means the first thing Paul wants to say about the "Lord's Supper" meeting observance not the first thing he wants to say about "meetings." 11a is also about an Assembly meeting observance, because verse 16 says it observed in "all the Assemblies" not merely among "all the saints."

2) Vss. 4-6 is not a description of what the Headcovering observance is. The Corinthians already knew what it was and were doing an excellent job observing it, "I praise you," (vs. 2). Vss. 4-6 are supporting information about the -meaning- of the Headcovering, just like the verses on the chain-of-command, creation, angels, and natural hair length. We know this because they all come after the phrase, "but I would have you KNOW," vs. 3, i.e., understand the meaning of the

observance and its appropriateness to symbolize that meaning. Prayer and prophesy were only mentioned in the passage because they're the functions that seem to contradict the leadership structure of God - Messiah - Man - Woman, not because we're to be constantly putting on and taking off coverings throughout the assembly meeting every time we pray or prophesy, and only when we pray or prophesy. Prayer, speaking directly to God, and prophecy, hearing directly from God, appears to violate the chain of command God-Messiah-Man-Woman, but the layer of cloth on a woman's head symbolizes that the layer of male authority is still there even during prayer and prophesy.

3) The repeated mention of things like "shame" (4, 5, 6, 14), "beauty" (13), and "glory" (7, 15) rather than things like "disobedience," in 1 Cor. 11 implies the issue concerns public, not private, things.

4) Verse 16 says the 11a issue is an "Assemblies" issue. An "Assembly" is more than one saint, but "Assemblies" are more than one Assembly. The Headcovering is an "assembly by assembly," not a "saint by saint," issue. "Assemblies" doesn't mean "saints" in 11:17 just "Assemblies" doesn't mean "saints" in 14:34-35. "For God is not the author of confusion, but of peace, as in all Assemblies of the saints," doesn't mean "as in all the saints of the saints." "Let your women keep silence in the assemblies" doesn't mean "among the saints" as if they can't speak at home. Phrases like "all the Assemblies of the saints" shows Paul knows how to say "Assemblies" vs. "saints." "It's a shame for women to speak in the Assembly," (14:35) not "among the saints." We know God chose the words of scripture carefully and would have said "neither the saints of the Assemblies of God" if that's what he meant in 11:16.

Objection) 1 Cor. 14 and 1 Tim. 2 say women must be quiet in the meetings and not teach or lead men. We can understand how women can pray silently along with a man who leads in prayer or during a public time of silent prayer during a meeting, but how could women have been prophesying in Assembly meetings per 1 Cor. 11, since prophesy is the most authoritative speaking a person can do?

1) Women could have prophesied silently to themselves and to God during the assembly. Men prophesying new revelation, mysteries, via tongues did this per 1 Cor. 14:2, 28, 32. 1 Cor. 14:28, "Let him speak to himself." This doesn't mean speaking out loud to yourself at home or something. Only old people do that. (JK) Other verses verify it's possible to speak prophecy to one's self silently. Eph. 5:19, "Speaking to yourselves in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord." Gen. 8:21, "The Lord said in his heart, 'I will not again curse the ground.'" Gen. 17:17, "Abraham fell upon his face, and laughed, and said in his heart, 'Shall a child be born unto him that is an hundred years old?'" Gen. 24:45, "Before I had done speaking in mine heart, behold, Rebekah came forth." Gen. 27:41, "Esau said in his heart, 'The days of mourning for my father are at hand.'" Deut. 9:4, "Speak not thou in thine heart, after that the Lord thy God hath cast them out from before thee, saying, 'For my righteousness the Lord hath brought me in to possess this land'." Jdg. 1, "[Hannah] was in bitterness of soul, and prayed to the Lord, and ... said, O Lord of hosts," And it came to pass, as she continued praying before the Lord, that Eli marked her mouth. Now Hannah, she spake in her heart; only her lips moved, but her voice was not heard: therefore Eli thought she had been drunken. Etc. Like one can speak prayers to God silently in one's heart, one can also speak prophesy to oneself and to God silently in one's heart.

2) Prophets and prophetesses may have even looked different while they prophesied silently, like Balaam did in Num. 24:3-4, 15-16.

3) Women prophesied when they miraculously sang prophesy in the Spirit with the rest of the congregation without leading men, 1 Cor. 14:15. They also prophetically prayed out loud in the Spirit along with the men without leading men, 1 Cor. 14:15, Acts 4:24-31.

4) It wouldn't be appropriate for only the man leading in prayer to uncover his head, because the others also pray along silently; but it also doesn't seem appropriate for only the man actively speaking in prophecy to uncover his head, while the other men receive his prophecy with their caps on and the women to receive the prophecy uncovered.

All the Time

1) I think God would have given us more mention of the headcovering in passages like 1 Tim. 2 and 1 Pet. 3, for example, for such a life-changing ordinance to sisters as wearing headcoverings all the time would be.

2) If 1 Cor. 11a is only about times of prayer and prophecy, then it's unscriptural to expand that to all-the-time for "convenience" to pray. Pray without ceasing doesn't mean pray every second, nor some watered-down redefinition of prayer like "having an attitude of prayer." Also, the same interpreters who say women should be covered all the time don't also say men should never wear hats, because that's obviously impractical in cold, rainy, or desert places, etc.

3) I don't know if Jewish women always wore headcoverings in the first century, but if they did, it wouldn't be an apostolic ordinance to say, "keep on wearing them." The apostolic command for the men is certainly a new thing beginning with the birth of the church at Pentecost, because God used to command the male ministers in the temple to wear headcoverings. In contrast, even if women wore headcoverings in society, all the women being covered and all the men being uncovered at the same time, would be a clear church observance meant to symbolize something to the church and the world, versus just seeing one woman covered or one man uncovered somewhere.

Objection) The principles of male leadership and female submission that underlie the Headcovering apply all the time, not only during Assembly meetings. Rebuttal) Yes, but so do the principles of salvation and forgiveness of sin provided by the Lord's death underlying the Lord's Supper, yet we don't practice the Lord's Supper all the time as we go about our day.

Only and Always During Prayer and Prophecy

1) I would picture the practical assembly part of the implementation of this view as the women keeping their prayer shawls on their shoulders and only pulling them over their heads when certain things happen during the meeting, like the Jewish men currently do in synagogues. But women would have to be required to keep their heads uncovered most of the meeting, which doesn't seem appropriate, and men would have to be required to keep their heads covered most of the meeting, which doesn't seem appropriate, for there to be a clear contrast when each covers and uncovers to perform the observance when they pray or prophecy.

2) The other apostolic transmissions, Lord's Supper in 11b and gospel in 15, are new, church-related things. Paul doesn't state the specific apostolic transmissions "paradosis," he's talking about in 2 Thess. 2:15; 3:6, but if it's "we commanded you, that if any would not work, neither should he eat," 2 Thess. 3:10, this is a new command and a Assembly command because it's about who the church should feed through it's alms fund, and it's not only that men should work, which has always been true, but that if not they shouldn't eat, which may not have always been true. It doesn't seem as though private prayer and prophesy directions would rise to the same level as the other new, Assembly apostolic transmissions.

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