

CORINTHIANS - The MORE EXCELLENT WAY



STUDY 12

HEADSHIP

But I want you to understand that Christ is the head of every man, and the man is the head of woman, and God is the head of Christ.

1 COR.11:3

Study 12a: AUTHORITY in the CHURCH (11:1-9)

11:1-3 How does Paul understand the principle of authority in the local church?

[v.1] ... Paul deals with the matter in a variety of ways, appealing (a) to the order of creation, (b) to a common sense of seemliness ... to the teaching of 'nature', (d) to the general practice of the churches. [Bruce 103]

11:4-6 What is the dispute with the head covering rule?

11:7-9 Even if the head covering ruling is a temporal situation, what must we be careful to note about Paul's basic argument? (cf.1 Tim.2:9-15)

[v.7] The woman has a place of her own, but it is not the man's place. She stands to the man in such a relation as does nothing else, and so she is called *the glory of the man*. This expression at one and the same time assures her of a high place in the scheme of things, and ensures that it is not man's place. [Morris 153]

Study 12b: HEADSHIP PROPERLY EXERCISED (11:10-16)

11:10-15 Notice Paul finds arguments in nature (i.e. creation) as well as Scripture (cf. Rom.1:26,27)

[v.10] It is not only a matter of what the men and women in the congregation see and think. The angels will observe what the woman does. She must not be unseemly before them. This is the more appropriate in that angels serve men (Heb.i.14), yet they do not rebel. [Morris 154; note that this subordination continues

despite the angels' greater power! - 2 Pet.2:11; Jude 9]

[v.13] A few decades later, if not as early as this, people were ready to believe the most scandalous rumours of what went on at Christian meetings; unnecessary breaches of customary propriety would be regarded as confirmation of such rumours. It was far better to give the lie to them by scrupulous maintenance of social decorum. Though the application of this principle may vary widely, the principle itself remains valid, especially where the public reputation of the believing community is likely to depend on such externalities. [Bruce 107]

11:16 A serious stumbling block for those who would argue that Paul's positions only have force in the 1st century or in the local situation

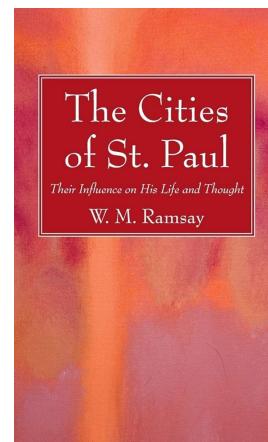
[v.16] A tendency on the part of the Corinthian church to be a law to itself, without reference to Christian procedure elsewhere, is implied below in 14.36. [Bruce 108]

Sign of subordination and authority -- not inferiority

... the **veil** is not a sign of the woman's submission to her husband's authority (cf. F. Godet, C. Hodge) nor even of her social dignity (cf. NEB margin) and immunity from molestation (cf. W.M. Ramsay, *The Cities of St. Paul* (1907), pp. 202ff.); it is a sign of her authority. In the synagogue service a woman could play no significant part: her presence would not even suffice to make up the requisite quorum of ten (all ten must be males). In Christ she received equality of status with man: she might pray or prophesy at meetings of the church, and her **veil**



Morna Hooker



Subordination not about superiority, but service

STUDY 13

Examine before eating

But let a man examine himself, and so let him eat of the bread and drink of the cup. 1 COR.11:28

Study 13a: SACRILEGE at the LORD'S SUPPER (11:17-34)

11:17-19 A bitter pill for those who seek the perfect church! (Matt.13; 1 Cor.1:10,11)

11:20-22 Note the Lord's supper and the agape feast were held together, which may indicate the relative frequency of its celebration

11:23-25 Compare the wording of Paul and the synoptic gospel accounts of the supper. To whom is Paul closest?

[v.23] It is practically certain that this Epistle was written before any of the Gospels, which means that this is the earliest account we have of the institution of the Holy Communion. Indeed, it is the earliest record of any words of our Lord. It is one of the very few incidents in the earthly life of our Lord which Paul describes in detail. There are some features of this account which we do not find elsewhere, for example, the command to continue the service 'till he come' (v.26). [Morris 159]

[v.24] Gk *eucharistesas*; from the verb *eucharisteo* (the commonest Gk word meaning 'I thank' or 'Thank you') as used in this context comes the term 'Eucharist' as a synonym for the Holy Communion. Lk 22.19 has the same verb; Mk 14.22 [cf.] Mt.26.26) has the synonymous *eulogesas* (cf.10.16). The common Jewish form of thanksgiving for bread was 'Blessed art thou, O Lord our God, King of the universe, who bringest forth bread from the earth' ... [Bruce 111]

[v.25] The longer Lukan text more probably combines an independent 'short' tradition with the tradition which Paul for his part reproduces here ... [Bruce 113]

The earliest record of the Lord's supper – even the Lord's words!

11:26-29 What should the believer examine before partaking of the Lord's supper?

[v.29] The context implies that his self-examination will be specially directed to ascertaining whether or not he is living and acting 'in love and charity' with his neighbours ... for certain members of the church to eat and drink their fill, in unbrotherly disregard of their poorer fellow-Christians, as some were doing at Corinth, was to eat and drink **without discerning the body**, without any consideration for the most elementary implications of their fellowship in Christ.

Such conduct was as serious a profanation of the holy supper as was the table-segregation between Jewish and Gentile Christians in Syrian Antioch, which Paul condemns in Gal.2.11ff.; it was not surprising that those guilty of it should incur divine judgment. [Bruce 115]

11:30-34 What sort of judgment does the careless partaker invite? (cf.5:5)

Because of their failure to come to the feast with due preparation, and observe it in its true way, these calamities of weakness and sickness and death have fallen upon them ... he urged the need for self-judgment, that is, deciding, condemning, and never resting until the judgment can be the acquittal of conscience. [Morgan 143]

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