

引言 INTRODUCTION

What do you make of this passage? Sometimes when we read the Bible, it generates more questions than answers. Paul talks about head-cover here, but for many of us, it becomes a head-scratcher. What exactly was he trying to teach us? This is actually a great moment to revisit some basic Bible-interpretation skills. God gave us His Word so we could read it, understand it, and live it out. The Holy Spirit will help us comprehend what God wants to communicate. But we also have to remember that the Bible was written thousands of years ago in cultures very different from ours. Therefore, when we study a passage, the first thing we should ask is what the content meant to the original audience. Getting to know their customs and habits would be helpful. Next, we look for the common human issues we share with them—things like lack of faith, conflict or even sin. Then we look for the solutions the passage offers. And before we close the Bible, we identify the timeless principles that are still relevant today. In short, it is a three-step process of observation, interpretation, and application. With that in mind, let us look at what Paul wrote. Start with the obvious facts. First, the setting is a church gathering. Second, the issue is whether people should cover their heads when praying or prophesying. “Prophesying” can mean speaking God’s revelation about the future, but in a broader sense—like the Chinese Union Version translates it—it can also refer to preaching. Third, Paul says women, not men, should cover their heads. Those points are straightforward. From there, Paul gives three reasons why the women in Corinth should cover their heads in church.

解釋 EXPLANATION

1. 神的規定 Divine Conformation

I will call the first reason Paul gives as divine conformation. In simple terms, it is the order God Himself established. Paul explains by listing three relationships in verse 3: **But I want you to understand that the head of every man is Christ, the head of a wife is her husband, and the head of Christ is God.** Some English Bibles translate “husband and wife” as “man and woman.” Both interpretations are correct. What does Paul mean when he says A is the head of B? Think about your physical head. Your brain makes decisions and directs the rest of your body. That is why we say a CEO is the “head” of a company—he makes the final decisions and he is responsible for the results. Therefore, it is clear Paul is talking about authority, not hierarchy. Christ is the head of every person because He is our Savior and Lord. In another letter, Paul says Christ is the head of the church. It is the same idea. God the Father is the head of Christ because He sent the Son into the

world. Paul's point is that just as believers submit to Christ, and Christ submits to the Father, a wife should submit to her husband. Now, some sisters may feel uncomfortable at this point. But do not get upset — Paul is not saying men are superior. In Scripture, authority does not mean superiority. Jesus has the same glory, power and authority as the Father, yet He willingly submitted to the Father while on earth. God created men and women as equals, but He assigned them different roles. The husband's role is to lead the family toward the Lord, and God will hold him accountable for how he leads. Paul then applies this principle to worship. Since God places the man in a leadership role, it would dishonor that role if he covered his head while praying or preaching. When a man leads in worship, he represents God's authority, so he should not hide his head. In contrast, Paul says a woman should cover her head in church to show her respect for her husband's leadership. Back then, a head covering was simply a piece of cloth — more like a scarf, nothing like the coverings worn by some Muslim women today. Paul even adds that if a woman refuses to cover her head, she might as well shave her hair. But since shaving a woman's head was considered shameful, the better choice was to wear a covering. We also need to remember the cultural differences between Jews and Gentiles in Paul's day. Jewish women normally covered their heads in public. To them, an uncovered head could signal mourning, adultery, or even prostitution. Greek women, however, usually did not cover their heads. Because of these differences, the church could easily create distraction or conflict. A simple solution was for everyone to follow the same requirements. It was easier for those with more freedom to let go of their freedom. Fast-forward to today. Most churches, including ours, do not require women to cover their heads. We understand the cultural reasons behind Paul's instructions. We also accept casual clothing on Sundays. But some churches expect men to wear suits and women to wear long dresses. When you attend a church, you should respect its traditions. After all, we come to worship God. He should be the focus — not our fashion. Imagine a man walking in with no shirt, wearing only swim trunks and flip-flops, or a woman wearing a huge flashy hat, a sparkling dress, and perfume you can smell from fifty feet away. Even if those outfits are not sinful, they draw attention to the person instead of to God. Worship is a time to humble ourselves and give God the honor He deserves.

2. 神的創造 God's Creation

Besides pointing to divine conformation, Paul also argues from God's work in creation. In verse 8 he writes: **For man was not made from woman, but woman from man.** Genesis tells us that God created Adam first. Then God saw that it was not good for Adam to be alone, so He took a rib from Adam and made Eve. She was created to be a companion and partner to help him. God gave husbands and wives different roles, but that never meant men were above women. Both are created by God. Both are valuable and are unique. To reflect this distinction in creation, Paul says in verse 10: **That is why a wife ought to have a symbol of authority on her head, because of the angels.** The “symbol of authority” refers to a head covering. In Corinth, women covered their heads to show that they respected the authority God had given to their husbands. Then Paul adds the phrase

“because of the angels.” What does that mean? Most likely Paul is referring to the faithful angels who obey God. Paul implies that angels are present when God’s people gather to worship. By covering their heads, the Corinthian sisters were showing—even before the angels—that they honored God’s order in creation. But Paul feels that some women might feel that they were seen as second class citizens. Therefore, he adds balance in verses 11–12: **11 Nevertheless, in the Lord woman is not independent of man nor man of woman; 12 for as woman was made from man, so man is now born of woman. And all things are from God.** Eve came from Adam, but every person since Adam has come from a woman. God creates life, but mothers give birth. Paul’s point is simple: God does not show favoritism. Both genders are equally important, and God designed them to depend on each other – at home, in the church and in the world. Today, gender conversations can get complicated. Some people avoid defining what a woman is, while at the same time insisting that certain rights belong only to women. But God is never confused about gender. He created male and female with clear distinctions. They are equal in dignity and value, even though they are not identical. God gives each person strengths, gifts, and responsibilities that contribute to the good of the whole community. In the church, we should appreciate our differences so that we can work together. Brothers should treat sisters with honor and respect. Sisters should embrace the roles God gives them as well. Both men and women can serve effectively together in ministry, though often in different ways. Some people are naturally more analytical, others more relational. Some think in big-picture terms and others pay attention to details. Some are gifted teachers and others are gifted in caring for people. The key is that every believer should discover the gifts, talents and passions God has given them and use those them to build up the church. When we bring our different strengths together, we become like pieces of a beautiful puzzle—complete only when we work as one.

3. 社會習俗 Social Convention

Besides divine conformation and God’s creation, Paul gives a third reason for head coverings: social convention. In verses 14–15 he writes: **14 Does not nature itself teach you that if a man wears long hair it is a disgrace for him, 15 but if a woman has long hair, it is her glory? For her hair is given to her for a covering.** The Greek word for “nature” is where we get the English word physics. Therefore, when Paul talks about “nature,” he means the way God designed things to be. The opposite of “natural” would be “artificial.” In general, women’s hair naturally grows longer and fuller, while men’s hair tends to become thinner as they age. This natural difference shaped the social convention of Paul’s day: women usually kept long hair, and men cut theirs short. In the Roman world, long-haired guys were often viewed as immature or rebellious too. Paul’s readers would agree that long hair on men was considered disgraceful, while long hair on women was seen as beautiful. Paul’s point is simple: if even non-believers followed these customs in society, it should not be difficult for believers to follow them in church. In fact, long hair itself functioned as a natural covering for women, while a head covering made the distinction even clearer. The Corinthians could easily tell from a distance if a

person was a male or female. Paul's bottom line is that men and women should have distinct characteristics. The idea is consistent with God's command in Deuteronomy 22:5: "A woman shall not wear a man's garment, nor shall a man put on a woman's cloak, for whoever does these things is an abomination to the Lord your God." A person who intentionally dresses like the opposite sex would signal a rejection of the gender God has given them. At this point, you might wonder whether some of these instructions are outdated. Some women today prefer shorter hair because it feels cooler in the summer, not to mention that they will save money by using less water and shampoo, and from buying hair decorations. At the same time, some men have long hair. Some ladies do not dress in traditionally feminine styles. My own younger sister is an example. She never wears dresses except for school uniforms, though she keeps her hair long. The question is: how should modern Christians apply the principles Paul teaches? The first step is to set aside the cultural specifics. As we mentioned earlier, women today are not required to wear head coverings. Some practices in the Bible were tied to people's customs. For example, people greeted each other with a kiss on the cheek. Some cultures still do that today, but Chinese and Western cultures use handshakes instead. The point is the same: people express friendliness in ways that fit their culture. The same applies to hairstyles and clothing. Today, we accept women with short hair or wearing pants. We do not think twice when we see men with long hair. But most people still find it inappropriate for men to wear dresses, high heels or makeup, because that communicates an attempt to appear like women. That contradicts the gender God created them with. For Christians, it can also harm their gospel witness. When we are in public, we are representatives of God. When we gather in church, we come together as one body. Going to church is not like going to a movie theater. Our personal appearance and our collective witness can either draw people toward God or push them away. How Christians present themselves affects how unbelievers see the church. As such, the principles Paul introduces are still valid today. When we exercise our freedom, we should reflect God's glory and be mindful of people's reaction.

結論 CONCLUSION

As we wrap up, what lessons can we take away from this passage? Paul reminds us that Christian life should be about making more of God and less of ourselves. When we gather as a church, we honor God by obeying His Word and submitting to the authority He has put in place. Even though sisters do not need to wear head coverings today, they should gladly embrace the role God has given them. Moreover, both men and women should accept and appreciate the differences God has designed between the two genders. Rather than seeing those differences as a problem, we should view them as a gift from God. Men and women are different, yet they complement one another. As we value and respect those differences, we strengthen the unity of the church. The body of Christ is made up of all of us together. Our unity does not come from being identical; it comes from belonging to Christ and serving Him side by side. When we honor God's design and live according to His Word, we reflect His glory to the world around us.

引言 INTRODUCTION

聽完了這段經文之後你有什麼感覺呢？有時候我們讀聖經，答案還沒找到，反而冒出更多問題。保羅在這裡談到蒙頭，但對我們現代人來說，反而被搞到頭也懵了！到底他想教導我們什麼？這正是一個複習解經方法的好機會。神把祂的話語賜給我們，是要我們閱讀、明白，並且實踐出來。聖靈會幫助我們領會神要傳達的信息。不過我們也要記得，聖經是在幾千年前寫成的，那時候的文化和我們今天非常不同。因此，當我們讀一段經文時，第一步要問的是：這段話對當時的讀者有何意義？了解他們的風俗習慣會很有幫助。接著，我們再找找看，我們和他們面對什麼共同的問題——例如信心不足、人際衝突，甚至罪。然後，我們從經文中尋找神給的解答。在合上聖經之前，我們要找出那些今天仍然適用的原則。簡單來說，就是三個步驟：觀察、解釋、應用。有了基本認識之後，我們現在來看看保羅寫了什麼。先從明顯的事實開始。第一，場景是在教會的聚會。第二，保羅討論人在禱告或講道時，是否應該蒙頭。第三，保羅說應該蒙頭的是姐妹，而不是弟兄。這三點都很清楚。接下來，保羅提出三個理由，說明為什麼哥林多的姐妹在聚會中應該蒙頭。

解釋 EXPLANATION

1. 神的規定 Divine Conformation

我把保羅提出的第一個理由稱為神的規定。簡單來說，就是神所設立的秩序。保羅在第3節列出三種關係來解釋這一點：**我願意你們知道，基督是各人的頭；男人是女人的頭；神是基督的頭。**有些英文聖經把「男人和女人」翻成「丈夫和妻子」，兩種理解都正確。那麼，保羅說A是B的「頭」到底是什麼意思？想想我們的頭。大腦負責做決定，並指揮身體其他部分運作。因為我們也說總經理是公司的「頭」——他做最後的決定，也為結果負責。因此，很明顯保羅談的是權柄，而不是等次的高低。基督是每個人的頭，因為祂是我們的救主和生命的主宰。保羅在別的书信中也說基督是教會的頭，含義是一樣的。父神是基督的頭，因為祂差遣聖子到世上來。保羅的重點是：正如信徒順服基督、基督順服父神，妻子也應當順服丈夫。有些姐妹聽

到這裡可能會覺得不太舒服。但先別生氣——保羅並不是說男人比較高級。在聖經裡，權柄不等於優越。耶穌與父神擁有同等的榮耀、能力和權柄，但祂在世上時甘願順服父神。神創造男女都是平等的，只是祂賦予他們不同的角色。丈夫的角色是帶領全家跟隨主，神會評估丈夫是否盡到這個責任。接著，保羅把這個原則應用在敬拜上。既然神把領導的角色交給男人，那麼弟兄在禱告或講道時若蒙著頭，就會羞辱這個角色。當男人在敬拜中帶領，他代表的是神的權柄，因此不應遮蓋頭。相反地，保羅說女人在教會裡應該蒙頭，以表達她對丈夫領導的尊重。當時的頭巾可能只是一塊布——像圍巾一樣，不像今天一些回教徒婦女蒙頭的方式。保羅補充說，如果女人不願意蒙頭，那乾脆把頭髮剃掉算了。但既然剃光頭對女人來說是羞辱，那最好的選擇就是蒙頭。我們也要注意當時猶太人和外邦人的文化差異。猶太婦女在公共場合通常會蒙頭。對猶太人來說，女人若不蒙頭、頭髮散開，可能表示她在哀傷、犯了姦淫，甚至是個妓女。相比之下，希臘婦女通常不蒙頭。因為這些差異，教會裡很容易產生誤會或衝突。最簡單的解決方式，就是大家遵守同樣的規則。對於那些原本自由的人來說，放下自由會比較容易。今天大多數教會，包括我們的教會，都不要求姐妹蒙頭。我們明白保羅當時的指示有文化背景。我們也接受主日隨意穿著。但有些教會要求弟兄穿西裝、姐妹穿長裙。當你參加聚會時，應當尊重那一家教會的傳統。畢竟，我們來是要敬拜神。焦點應該在神，而不是我們的穿著。想像一位男士沒有穿上衣，只穿泳褲和拖鞋走進來；或一位女士戴著巨大華麗的帽子、穿著閃亮的裙子、在五十英尺外都聞得到她的香水。雖然這些穿著不是犯罪，也會讓人把注意力放在人身上，而不是神身上。敬拜是我們謙卑自己、把當得的榮耀歸給神的時刻。

2. 神的創造 God's Creation

除了指出神的規定之外，保羅也提到神的創造。他在第 8 節說：**起初，男人不是由女人而出，女人乃是由男人而出。**創世記告訴我們，神先造了亞當。後來，神看見亞當獨居不好，就從他的身上取出一根肋骨，造了夏娃。神創造夏娃是要她成為亞當的伴侶與幫手。神給丈夫和妻子不同的角色，但這從來不表示男人比女人高一等。兩者都是神所造，都是珍貴而獨特的。為了反映這個創造中的差異，保羅在第 10 節說：**因此，女人為天使的緣故，應當在頭上有服權柄的記號。**「服權柄的記號」指的就是頭巾。在哥林多，婦女蒙頭是為了表明她們尊重神所賜給丈夫的權柄。那麼「為了天使的緣故」是什麼意思呢？很可能保羅指的是那些順服神的天使。保羅暗示，當神的子民

聚集敬拜時，天使也在場。哥林多的姐妹藉著蒙頭，甚至在天使面前，表明她們尊重神在創造中所設立的秩序。但保羅擔心有些婦女可能會覺得自己是「二等公民」。因此，他在 11-12 節補充：**11 然而照主的安排，女也不是無男，男也不是無女。12 因為女人原是由男人而出，男人也是由女人而出；但萬有都是出乎神。**夏娃來自亞當，但從亞當以後的每一個人都是從女人而生。神賜下生命，但母親生孩子。保羅的重點很簡單：神不偏待人。男女同樣重要，神設計他們互相倚靠——在家中、在教會、在世界都是如此。今天，性別議題變得複雜。有些人不敢公開定義「女人」是什麼，同時又堅持某些權利只屬於女人。但神從不在性別上感到困惑。祂創造男性和女性各有獨特之處。兩者有同等的尊嚴和價值。神賜給每個人不同的優點、恩賜與責任，讓整個群體得著益處。在教會中，我們應該欣賞彼此的不同，好讓我們能一起服事。弟兄應當尊重姐妹，姐妹也應當接受神給她們的角色。男女都能在事工上有效地服事，只是每個人的分工不一樣。有些人天生較具分析能力，有些人較擅長建立關係；有些人擅長看大局，有些人注意細節；有些人有教導的恩賜，有些人擅長關懷。重點是：每位信徒都應當發揮神給他的恩賜、才能與熱情，並用來建造教會。當我們把不同的長處連合在一起時，就像拼圖的小片，呈現出美麗而完整的圖畫。

3. 社會習俗 Social Convention

除了神的規定和祂的創造之外，保羅提出第三個理由來解釋為什麼姐妹應該蒙頭：社會習俗。他在 14-15 節說：**14 你們的本性不也指示你們，男人若有長頭髮，便是他的羞辱嗎？15 但女人有長頭髮，乃是他的榮耀，因為這頭髮是給他作蓋頭的。**從希臘文「本性」這個字我們得到英文物理 (physics) 這個字。因此，當保羅談到「本性」的時候，他指的是神所設計的自然規律。

「自然」的相反就是「人造的」。一般來說，女人的頭髮天生比較長、比較濃密，而男人的頭髮隨著年紀往往會變得稀疏。這種自然差異形成了保羅時代的社會習俗：女人通常留長頭髮，男人則剪短頭髮。在羅馬時代，長髮的男人常被視為不成熟或叛逆。因此，保羅的讀者自然會同意：男人留長髮便會被視為他們的羞辱，而女人留長髮則被視為美麗。保羅的重點是：既然連非信徒在社會中都遵守這些習俗，信徒在教會中也更應該遵守。事實上，長髮本身就像是女人的天然遮蓋，而頭巾則使這種區別更加明顯。哥林多人在聚會中，就算從遠處看背影，也能輕易分辨男女。保羅的結論是：男女應當有明顯的差異。這與申命記 22:5 的命令一致：**「婦女不可穿戴男子所穿戴的，男子也不可穿婦女的衣服，因為這樣行都是耶和華你神所憎惡的。」**一

個人若刻意打扮成異性的樣子，就是在否定神所賜給他的性別。這個時候你可能會想：這些要求會不會太過時了？今天有些姐妹喜歡剪短頭髮，因為在夏天比較涼快，也能省水、省洗髮精，還可以少買頭髮的裝飾。同樣，有些男士留長頭髮。另外，有些女孩子的穿著也不那麼傳統女性化。我的妹妹就是一個例子——除了校服，她從來不穿裙子，但她仍然保留長頭髮。那麼，現代基督徒應該如何應用保羅所教導的原則呢？第一步是把文化的細節放在一旁。正如前面提到的，今天的姐妹不再需要蒙頭。聖經中的一些做法都與當時的文化習俗有關。例如，人們彼此問安時會親吻臉頰。今天有些文化仍然這樣做，但華人和西方人則習慣握手。重點都是一樣：人們用符合自己文化的方式表達友善。髮型和穿著也是如此。今天我們接受女性短頭髮或穿褲子，也不會對長髮的男性感到驚訝。但大多數人仍然認為男人穿裙子、高跟鞋或化妝是不恰當的，因為那是刻意把自己打扮成一個女生，與神所賜的性別不相符。對基督徒而言，這也可能損害他們的福音見證。當我們在公共場合時，我們是神的代表。當我們在教會聚會時，我們是一個身體。去教會不像去電影院。我們的個人外表和整體見證，可以吸引人親近神，也可能讓人遠離神。基督徒的形象，會影響非信徒對教會的印象。因此，保羅的原則今天仍然適用。當我們運用個人自由時，我們必須反映神的榮耀，並且注意人們的反應。

結論 CONCLUSION

作為總結，這段經文要給我們什麼提醒呢？保羅告訴我們，基督徒的生活應該是高舉神、謙卑自己。當我們在教會聚會時，我們藉著遵行神的話、順服祂所設立的權柄來尊崇祂。雖然今天的姐妹不再需要蒙頭，但她們仍然應該樂意接受神給她們的角色。同樣地，男女雙方都應當接納並欣賞神設計兩個性別的差異。這些差異不是問題，而是神所賜的禮物。男人和女人不同，卻能彼此互補。當我們珍惜並尊重這些差異時，就更能堅固教會的合一。基督的身體是由我們所有人一起組成的。我們的合一不是因為大家都完全一樣，而是因為我們都屬於基督，並同心服事祂。當我們尊重神的設計、按祂的話語而行之時，我們便能把祂的榮耀反映給周圍的世界。