

1 Corinthians 11:10

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

For this cause ought the woman to have power on her head because of the angels.

Analysis

For this cause ought the woman to have power on her head because of the angels—One of Scripture's most enigmatic verses. Ἐξουσίαν ἔχειν ἐπὶ τῆς κεφαλῆς (to have authority on the head) likely means the symbol of authority (the covering itself), not autonomous power. The head covering represents a woman's acceptance of her place in the created order—her exousia (authority/right) to participate in worship while honoring God's design.

Because of the angels (διὰ τοὺς ἀγγέλους)—interpreters propose:

1. angels as guardians of worship order (cf. Isaiah 6, Revelation 4-5), who observe human worship and are offended by disorder
2. fallen angels who sinned by crossing boundaries (Genesis 6:1-4, 2 Peter 2:4, Jude 6), making proper boundaries essential
3. angels as messengers/ministers whom women must not tempt or distract.

Most likely, angels as witnesses to worship (Ephesians 3:10, 1 Timothy 5:21) require proper order that reflects heavenly realities. The covering signals submission to cosmic order, not merely social convention.

Historical Context

Jewish tradition held that angels were present during worship and Scripture reading (Hebrews 12:22). Qumran texts (Dead Sea Scrolls) excluded physically disabled men from worship 'because holy angels are in their congregation' (1QSa

2:8-9). Paul assumes angelic presence during Christian worship and argues that gender confusion in worship offends not just human sensibilities but cosmic order observed by heavenly beings. This elevates the head-covering issue from cultural trivia to theological significance.

Related Passages

Romans 1:17 — The righteous shall live by faith

Hebrews 11:1 — Definition of faith

Study Questions

1. How does awareness of angels observing worship change your approach to corporate gatherings?
2. What does this verse teach about the cosmic significance of how we worship, not just our private devotions?
3. In what ways do modern casual approaches to worship fail to reflect the weightiness of participating in heavenly realities?

Interlinear Text

διὰ	τούτο	οφείλει	ἡ	γυνή	ἐξουσίαν	ἔχειν	ἐπὶ
because	For this	ought	G3588	the woman	power	to have	on
G1223	G5124	G3784		G1135	G1849	G2192	G1909
τῆς	κεφαλῆς	διὰ	τοὺς	ἁγγέλους			
G3588	her head	because	G3588	of the angels			
	G2776	G1223		G32			

Additional Cross-References

Hebrews 1:14 (Parallel theme): Are they not all ministering spirits, sent forth to minister for them who shall be heirs of salvation?

