

# (The Head Covering) 05 - What Is a Headcovering?

by Tom Chaplin

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*The head covering is a symbol of a woman's subjection to her husband and her place in God's chain of command, as revealed in 1 Corinthians 11 and developed throughout Scripture.*

**Duration:** 1:08:41

**Topics:** "Head Covering"

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## Description

In this sermon, the speaker discusses the concept of the head cover and presents two different views. The first view is that the head cover refers to an item of clothing to be worn over the head, while the second view is that it refers to long hair as the covering. The speaker argues that it is difficult to understand Paul's argument if he is only referring to hair. The main issue seems to be that women were cutting their hair short, which was seen as a problem. The speaker encourages the audience to think about why Paul only mentions the issue in relation to praying and prophesying.

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## Transcript

...11 in Old Testament Scriptures concerning the head covering. The name of our study has been the head covering the whole Bible approach. Today we really want to look at 1 Corinthians chapter 11 in depth.

We'll begin looking at it in depth anyway. We won't get very far, but at least we'll start. And today, our lesson, I've entitled it 1 Corinthians chapter 11 on what is a head covering.

So, that will be the main topic of conversation as we begin. But before we do get into the actual scriptures, again, let's ask the Lord to bless our time and have another word of prayer. Father, we do thank you for this day.

Again, Lord, we thank you for the privilege we have of just gathering together in peace and tranquility to be able to turn our minds to a consideration of your word. Lord, in many places that wouldn't be the case. We do thank you for this country in which we live and the fact that we can still gather together and do such a thing.

And Lord, we just pray that you would meet with us, that you would help us as we look at this subject that admittedly is a difficult subject, and just give us your mind. Open these scriptures up to us, correct us where we need correcting, and just show us what you have for us concerning this subject. Please do bless us, especially now as we'll be looking at 1 Corinthians chapter 11, the New Testament, teaching concerning the head covering, and just make it plain to us.

Please just bless it unto our hearts and unto our edification. So we'd ask it in Jesus' name and for his sake. Amen.

Well, as I usually do, let me spend just a minute in review. Last week we considered the Old Testament evidence relating to the head covering. And the scriptures we considered were Genesis chapter 3, 21, verse 21, in conjunction with 2 Samuel 13, 18.

We look at Numbers 5, verses 12 through 31, Song of Solomon chapter 5, verses 1 through 7, and Isaiah 47, verses 1 through 3. And some of the important points that I'd like us to recall to memory from the Old Testament, from those passages, these are some of them, and let me just go over them briefly with you. What were some of the things we saw from those passages? Well, number one, I would say this. We saw from passages such as Numbers and Song of Solomon and Isaiah, it was expected that a respectable woman would cover her head.

We saw how in the Song of Solomon, how the watchmen, when they saw this woman out after dark, which is what you wouldn't have expected of a respectable woman, they came and they stripped her head covering from her. So we see from the Old Testament that it was expected that a woman would cover her head if she was a respectable woman. We also saw that the uncovered head of a woman was associated with rebellion and a breaking of God's chain of command.

In the Numbers passage, the trial by bitter waters, the woman was accused of being in rebellion against her husband, of being unfaithful. And in that case, her head covering was taken off. We saw that for a woman to have an uncovered head was considered shameful by God.

In Isaiah 47, 1 through 3, for instance, those terms are used, shame and nakedness, the uncovering of the locks. The head covering was to be worn generally in public and not just to religious services. That was clear in the case in Numbers, where it was not a synagogue service that the woman had her head covered, but it was a public arena where she was dealing with the priest.

And also we saw the case of Isaiah was a public humiliation. It obviously didn't have anything to do with a worship service, as God was dealing with a pagan. We also saw that the head covering of the head included the covering of the hair.

That was brought out in Isaiah 47, where it speaks of uncovering the locks. And we also saw that all mature women were to wear the covering. There was a debate historically over whether or not women other than married women needed to wear a head covering.

And as we saw in Isaiah 47, 1 through 3, there God says even for a virgin it was shameful for her to have her hair uncovered. So from a biblical perspective, it would seem that the head covering was to be worn by mature women, whether they were married or not. And finally, the last point I'd like us to call to remembrance is this, that this teaching is completely in line with and explained by general principles of biblical modesty, which instruct women to dress in accordance with their place in God's chain of

command.

Remember we looked at several weeks ago, we looked at the passages in Timothy and in Peter, which commanded a woman to dress modestly with shamefacedness. And in that passage the context was, again, this dressing in accordance with your place in God's chain of command. And if you understand all these Old Testament passages in light of that, it makes complete sense.

Okay, so keep that in mind, because now we're going to come to the New Testament, and we're going to look and see what happens to these concepts when we get into the New Testament. And one last thing you might recall we spoke about was this issue of progressive revelation. We talked last week about a doctrine like salvation and how it begins in Genesis, with a very obscure statement.

Let's see if I wrote that down. You know, it says in Genesis 3, 15, God says to the serpent, And I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed. It shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel.

Now, that's obscure, and yet that is the first prophecy of the Lord Jesus Christ, isn't it? The first mention we have of the fact that God planned to send a Redeemer to us to save us from our sins. And so you have this little seed right there in Genesis. It's not explained very much, but it's there.

It's a seed. And as we go through the rest of Scripture and we consider the sacrificial system and the law, and we read Isaiah 53 and the prophets, and then we come to the Gospels, and finally to Paul where he totally explodes and expounds the doctrine of salvation, we see that from that little seed, we see it just progressively unfold into a beautiful flower, the doctrine of salvation, of our salvation. That's what we mean when we talk about progressive revelation.

Well, we sought to show how this concept applied to the issue of the head covering in modesty. You see, when we deal with Genesis, what are we introduced to? And it's not very, they don't tell us very much. Basically, it's just a few words.

But what concepts are we introduced to? We're introduced to the concept of shame, right? Adam and Eve are running and trying to hide from the shame of their sin. We have the concept of nakedness mentioned in Genesis, but we're not told a lot about what that really is to be considered to be. And clothing is mentioned.

We're told that God slew an animal and clothed Adam and Eve. But now we're not told much more than that. We're not told what that clothing was exactly.

We're not told how much clothing it was. But we're told that there's such a thing as nakedness and shame and clothing in Genesis. Now, that's the seed.

But now as we go through the scriptures, that seed again explodes into a rose, as it were. It's developed into this beautiful doctrine. At least if, in fact, we're dealing with a doctrine, which I believe we are.

And what we did last week was we traced that through the Law and the Prophets. And we saw what God said about it in Numbers, in the Law. And then we went to Isaiah, and we looked at the Song of Solomon.

And so we saw how this doctrine was being developed. Well, now, we're coming to the New Testament now. What happens when we get there? This principle of progressive revelation, how does it apply? Well,

what would we expect if, in fact, it is a progressive doctrine, that we're dealing with a moral theological issue that's being developed throughout scripture? Now, we've looked at the Old Testament development.

Now, what are we going to expect to find when we get to the New Testament? What do you think? I think we should expect to find about three things. We should expect to see continuity. In other words, if we started out with a rose, we're not going to end up with a tulip.

You follow me? That this doctrine that began in the Old Testament, we would expect to see it basically remain the same and not be radically different from what we saw in the Old. I mean, that first promise of the Savior in Genesis, did it change when we got to the New Testament? No, it just expanded into a greater doctrine. And so we would expect continuity.

We'd also expect to see further development of thought. Theologians will tell you that what is implicit in the Old is made explicit in the New many times. And by that we mean we had the sacrificial system and we had this lamb.

What does it mean? When we come to the New Testament, it says, Behold, the lamb slain from the foundation of the world. That little picture that we didn't really know perhaps what exactly it meant when we get to the New Testament, it's fully explained to us. So we'd maybe expect to see the same thing that, yeah, we have these truths in the Old Testament, and maybe they're a little bit hazy, but we'd expect when we get to the New Testament that they're cleared up and fully explained and made clear to us.

We'd expect to see development of the things that we saw in the Old Testament. And finally, we'd expect to see that there were no contradictions. We wouldn't expect to see that if we're dealing with a moral issue, a theological issue that God is developing, we wouldn't expect to see that there would be a different concept in the New than what we saw in the Old.

It should all flow together and be harmonious. Okay? Now, is that what we find? Let's take a look and see. Now we're going to do just a brief overview of some of the things that we will see in 1 Corinthians.

Do we see continuity? Well, let's consider this concept of shame and nakedness. We see that first in Genesis, don't we? We see shame. We see nakedness.

Well, we come to Isaiah, and what do we see? Shame and nakedness, don't we? Now, what do we see when we come to 1 Corinthians 11, the New Testament development of this doctrine? Well, if you look in 1 Corinthians 11, verses 5 through 7, see what it says here. It says, Here we go again. Here's this concept of shame.

It's right back in the New Testament in 1 Corinthians 11. I suggest that that shows you a continuity of thought, that what we're dealing with when we deal with the head covering in the New Testament is not something radically different from what we saw in the Old. The same concepts, the same words even, are reappearing in the New Testament that we saw in Isaiah and in Numbers and in Genesis.

Well, let's take another concept that we saw in the Old Testament, this idea of God's chain of command. Remember, we've been talking a lot about that. Now, in Genesis, what did we see? We saw that the, what was the origin of clubs? What was the origin? It was when Eve listened to the serpent, and then Adam listened to Eve, and God was nowhere to be found.

A complete reversal of the chain of command, right? The chain of command is God, man, woman, and then the creation, the serpent. But we saw in Genesis, serpent, woman, man, and God. So the origin of clothing was a total overthrow of the chain of command.

That was what it originated with. And also in Genesis, we had that chain of command explicitly stated, for, you know, after the fall, God says to the man that he's going to, well, he says to the woman that the man shall rule over you, right? So even in Genesis, the chain of command is asserted. Well, now we come to Numbers 5, verses 12 through 31, the Song of Solomon, 5, verses 1 through 7, and Isaiah 47, 1 through 3. And what did we see in those passages? We saw that the uncovered head of a woman was what? It was tied to her rebellion against the chain of command.

The woman in Numbers, what? She was accused of adultery. Her head covering was taken off. In the case of the virgin daughter of Babylon, Babylon was in rebellion against God.

Her head covering was to be taken off, right? In the Song of Solomon, the woman was out after dark. She looked like a harlot. Her head covering was taken off.

What's the whole concept there in the Old Testament? It's that this woman is in rebellion against God's chain of command. She's not in subjection to men, to her husband. Well, now what happens when we come to 1 Corinthians, chapter 11? What do we see there? Let me read.

Right at the very first part of this chapter, it says this, Now I praise you, brethren, that ye remember me in all things, and keep the ordinances as I delivered them to you. But I would have you to 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. That's right at the very top of the passage.

God's chain of command. And as we go through, you'll see that's the very fundamental teaching by which he deals with the head covering, saying that, you know, it should be worn. So, what do you think? Is there continuity? Is there? There is, isn't there? It's amazing to me as I look at these passages how when we get to the New Testament, we really are.

We're just looking at an explosion of a truth that began in Genesis. We're not dealing with something new. Paul's just, in many respects, making explicit, as we say up there, what is implicit in the Old Testament.

He's explaining it more fully, this whole concept of the head covering. So we see the continuity. But what about development? Do we see development? Well, yes, I mean, as we will see, this whole concept of the chain of command, it's developed in great depth in 1 Corinthians 11, and we'll see that as we go through it.

Also we have in 1 Corinthians 11 this whole idea that angels are somehow related to this whole issue. The teaching of nature is brought in. So we see where God isn't, or Paul isn't really taking away anything that we have in the Old Testament, but he is expanding and giving us more detail, more important information about this teaching of the head covering.

And then we remember 1 Timothy 2 and 1 Peter 3. That's New Testament teaching, but in those passages, that's where the concepts of modesty are really given to us and explained in terms of the chain of command. That's New Testament teaching there. So we see how this Old Testament teaching is in fact, like I said, it's exploded and explained in the New Testament.

But it's nothing but, as we say, progressive revelation. And there is an organic connection between what we have in the Old and what we see in the New. So my question to you is this.

Should we pit the Old and New Testaments against one another? Do you think so? Because if you find somebody that's rejected the head covering, I guarantee you he's rejected the Old Testament teaching. And many of the divisions, many of the divisions over what 1 Corinthians 11 means, such as when do you wear the head cover? Do you wear it in church? Do you wear it all the time? You know, from my perspective, if you assume a continuity between the Old and New Testaments, those really aren't difficult questions to answer. But if you don't assume a continuity, they can be somewhat more difficult.

But if we understand that the New Testament is not taking away or changing anything that the Old taught, but is rather expanding and explaining it, then you have a basis for coming to a full understanding of that teaching on the head covering. Okay? So it's important that we properly understand these things. How about the third thing? No contradictions.

I think if we go through the passage, hopefully we'll see that there aren't any contradictions and that 1 Corinthians chapter 11 really fits perfectly like a glove with what we've already learned. So we'll let that develop as we go through 1 Corinthians 11. Any questions about that? What I'm doing now is I'm setting the stage for you.

I'm setting the context in which we're going to look at this passage. It is nothing but a further development of a doctrine that started in Genesis. And so we can look at this passage in the light of everything we've seen about it throughout Scripture.

And that will help us to understand what it actually means. Any questions? Well, now let's look specifically at the passage. And let me just read it.

I'll read the whole passage to begin here. Be ye followers of me, even as I also am of Christ. Now I praise you, brethren, that ye remember me in all things and keep the ordinances as I delivered them to you.

But I would have you to 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. Every man praying or prophesying, having his head covered, dishonoreth his head. But every woman that prayeth or prophesieth with her head uncovered dishonoreth her head, for that is even all one as if she were shaven.

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. For a man indeed ought not to cover his head, forasmuch as he is the image and glory of God, but the woman is the glory of the man.

For the man is not of the woman, but the woman of the man. Neither was the man created for the woman, but the woman for the man. For this cause ought the woman to have power on her head because of the angels.

Nevertheless, neither is the man without the woman, neither the woman without the man in the Lord. For as the woman is of the man, even so is the man also by the woman, but all things of God. Judge in yourself.

Is it comely that a woman pray unto God uncovered? Doth not even nature itself 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, for her hair is

given her for a covering. But if any man seem to be contentious, we have no such custom, neither the churches of God. Now, we have already looked, I think it was in lesson three, at verse three where it speaks of the chain of command, and I won't go over that again since we've already expounded it.

But the issue I want to address today as we begin this study is this, just what is the head covering? Just what are we dealing with here? Now, I think probably you all are familiar with this passage and have looked at it already to some extent anyway. And you probably already know that there are basically two answers that people have given to that question. One of the answers is this, that it's referring to long hair.

The fact is the head covering. Okay? Has everybody heard that before? Now, why do people believe that that is a proper approach to this subject? Well, if you consider the Greek word that is used for covered or uncovered in verses three through 13, it is the word *katakaloiptos*, in the case of covered. Now, if it's uncovered, they just add an A in front of it and make it *akatakaloiptos*.

Okay, so covered is *katakaloiptos* and uncovered is *akatakaloiptos*. That's the Greek word. Now, if you go and look at the Greek Septuagint, and the Greek Septuagint is kind of like our King James Bible.

It was a Greek translation of the Old Testament that they used, the Jews used in the first, you know, in the centuries around the time of Christ. And you'll find that word used in the law. For instance, it'll talk about the entrails were covered with fat.

Okay, it's the same word there. Well, obviously, the word itself is just generic. It isn't referring to a piece of clothing necessary.

It's just covered with something. In the case of the Old Testament, in that instance I mentioned, it's fat was the covering. Well, so, if we look at that word and we see it's talking about covering, but it's not specifically telling us it's clothing, some have looked at that, and then they've gone to verse 14, where it says, does not nature itself 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, for her hair is given her for a covering.

And they use the fact that the word is just covering, and not specifically referring to an item of clothes, and then they go to that verse 14, 15, and see that it says hair is a covering, and they make the connection, and they say that the passage is referring to hair. And it's not really at all dealing with a covering of cloth, such as like my wife is wearing now. So that's how they come to that position, simply.

You know, that's a simple explanation. And that's one way this passage has been looked at. The other way is what I would call the traditional view, and that view is that this passage is referring to an item of clothing that was to be worn over the head.

Now, the position I take, and what I believe the Bible to actually be saying, is that it is a piece of clothing to be worn on the head. Well, why do I believe that, rather than the idea that it's referring just to long hair as the covering? Well, I have four basic reasons. I think I've got them all there.

Number one, frankly, it's just really difficult to understand Paul's argument if he's only referring to hair. Let me try and explain to you why I feel that's the case. Now, you stop and think about this.

Get your head thinking. If Paul was referring to hair, what had to have been happening in corn? What had to have been happening? Think about that for a second. See, I'll tell you what I think the answer is.

The problem had to have been that women were cutting their hair short. I mean, is that a stretch or is that just follow? It seems to me that it's obvious. If he's talking about hair, and he's talking about you don't need to cut your hair, then that's the problem, like some of them were.

But, and this is what I'd like you all to think about, if this is the case, why does Paul only talk about the issue in terms of praying and prophesying? Because really short hair on a woman is not something you can just take off and put back on, is it? I mean, Joy, if you were to get some scissors out and cut your hair off, you're going to have short hair for a while, right? I mean, you can't just pray, you can't cut your hair off and then pray or prophesy and then put it back on. I mean, you're going to be stuck with short hair and it's going to follow you all through your waking day, right? I mean, you're going to have, if short hair is wrong, it's going to be more than just concerning prayer and prophesying, it's continuous. You've got a continuous problem.

Once hair is cut, it's cut. And so, the problem I have is this, if the fact is the problem in Corinth was women were cutting their hair off, why does he just restrict the argument to praying and prophesying? Because really you've got a general problem there. You've got a problem that's going to affect the way the woman lives her life, continuously.

Because short hair is something you can't get rid of once you've got it, at least for a while. He should have addressed it in a general form rather than restricting the argument or his concerns to just praying and prophesying. Because it seems like whatever was happening in Corinth was just occurring in relationship to praying and prophesying.

Okay? That's what it looks like to me anyway. Now, however, you see, if Paul is referring to a problem that involved a cloth head covering, then we don't have any problems like that, do we? Then we can understand him addressing it in only a narrow sense, such as praying and prophesying, since a cloth head covering can what? It can be put on and put off, right? So you could have a problem that just involved those two activities, right, in Corinth. And this putting on and putting off could relate just to those two activities.

But if you're dealing with hair being cut off, that's a broader issue. And so it's hard to understand how Paul, why he argues the way he does. That's my first argument, first reason.

The second thing is this. The idea that what Paul is talking about is hair causes some real interpretive problems with 1 Corinthians 11, verse 6. And let's look at that for a second. Let me put this up here for a second so you can see it.

If you have your Bible, you might want to look at that verse. 1 Corinthians 11, verse 6 says, Therefore 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.

Now let's assume that what we're dealing with here is hair, and that's the covering. If that's the case, then a head that's covered is a head that has long hair, and a head that isn't covered is a head that has short hair, okay? So you see my second paragraph there. If cover equals long hair and uncovered equals short hair, then we can legitimately substitute for the words in Scripture, be not covered, the words have short hair.

Are you following me? They're equivalent. If I'm not covered, I have short hair. So let's change the rendering of that verse this way.

For if the woman have short hair, be not covered, let her also be given short hair, be shorn. Because that's what it means to be shorn. Now that just doesn't make any sense, does it? If a woman have short hair, let her also be given short hair? No, it doesn't make sense to me.

But if it be a shame for a woman to be shorn, have short hair, or to have her head actually shaved, let her be covered. Let her have short hair? I don't know, what do you think? That verse is rather difficult. However, if you understand it to be a cloth head covering, it's no problem.

Because if a woman won't wear that cloth head covering, then she needs to have her hair cut off. If it's a shameful thing for that to be, and it was, then she should put that thing back on her head. Okay? So that's a very big, in my opinion, very big interpretive problem with the idea that what we're dealing with here is hair.

Now, I will get to this verse, verse 14 and 15, you know, as we go through the passage. But these two arguments in and of themselves have been very strong reasons why commentators down through the years have just not really thought that this passage was referring to hair. Well, anyway, those are my first two concerns.

Another thing we need to note, though, is that the view that we're dealing with a cloth head covering, it fits the historical data. And I want to give you that data right now. As best I've been able to find, I can't find any historical information that indicates that there was a big movement in Corinth at any time for women to cut their hair off.

You know, I can't find that. And now I'm going to show you some historical data that indicates that there were problems in Corinth of the type that Paul's dealing with, if you consider it to be an actual head covering. Now, I'm going to give you a lot of information here.

And I would usually just give you a handout. But since we're taping this, I want to, I'm going to read it. And I can't find my handout on the Jewish veiling practice as I've misplaced it.

So I'll just have to read it to you. Let's consider the culture. Let's consider what it was like in the times that these passages were given to us.

And first, let's look at the Jewish passages or the Jewish practices. And I'm going to read several quotes to you. And I'll tell you right off the bat that they don't all necessarily agree with one another.

Now, that could, I guess, is to be expected because we're looking back through time and we don't necessarily know everything. And so different historians interpret things differently. But there is a pretty good consistency.

But I'm just going to give you the raw stuff. I'm not going to doctor it. You'll see exactly what various people have said about this issue.

Let's look at the Jews. I'm quoting man and women in biblical perspective in the author's James B. Hurley. And he says this about Jewish practices.

Archeology has provided us with very little of help in identifying Hebrew practice. There is, however, a monument of Sennacherib. Now, Sennacherib was an Assyrian king and he reigned from 705 B.C. to 681 B.C. He was the king that besieged Jerusalem under the reign of Hezekiah in 2 Kings, chapters 18 and 19, and the Lord destroyed his army.

But anyway, it says that there is a monument of Sennacherib which shows captive Hebrew women wearing garments like the Roman palla or the Greek hymation, which are draped over the head and extended to the feet. Let me show you what he's referring to. That would be a hymation.

That's a Greek woman, an ancient Greek woman. And you need to notice the characteristics of this garment. You see how long it is? It's actually an outer garment like a coat that we would use as a coat.

This was their coat. And what they did was they threw part of that coat up over their head. It's not at all like you look at my wife and you see a separate head covering, which in Greek would be a thaluma.

But in the ancient world, this was a very common type of head covering. It was actually an entire outer garment that was just thrown up over the head. But that's called a hymation.

And various other words that we'll look at, too. Periglion, that word will come up later on as we get into 1 Corinthians 11. I'll leave that up for a second.

But anyway, back here to this passage. Hebrew women wearing garments like the Roman palla or the Greek hymation, which are draped over their heads and extended to their feet. And that's the type of covering, that's the type of garment that the ancient Hebrews wore back in the days of Hezekiah.

This relief demonstrates that Hebrews of that period knew such garments and that they did not practice total veiling after the Islamic style. There's really not a lot of evidence that they wore facial veils, but they did cover their heads. Okay, let's look at another historical quote by Leonard Schwindler, Women in Judaism.

He says, In the story of Susanna, in the Book of Daniel, written after 160 B.C., there is clear evidence that it was customary for women to cover their heads and faces in public. I don't know about that. But anyway, when Susanna was brought to trial by the two lecherous elders, it was said of her, Now Susanna was a woman of great beauty and delicate feeling.

She was closely veiled, but those scoundrels ordered her to be unveiled so that they might feast their eyes on her beauty. And that's a quote from, I think it's apocryphal literature. Apparently, many women kept their heads covered even when in their own house or courtyard.

For during the early rabbinic period, this would have been 17 B.C. or so, the rabbis once asked the mother of the high priest, Ishmael ben Kenneth, what she had done to merit so much glory, the source of her glory being that two of her sons had served as high priests in one day? She answered, Throughout the days of my life, the beams of my house have not seen the plates of my hair. Such a statement alone would lead to the conclusion that such behavior was unusual. But the rabbi's immediate response confirmed the opposite.

They said to her, There were many who did likewise and yet did not succeed. Meaning they didn't get their sons to be high priests. And this was around 17 B.C. So we're getting into the time of our Lord.

And then you have a quote from Josephus. He was a Jewish historian and he has written a very famous work called *The Antiquities*. And as you might recall, we talked about the account of the bitter water ceremony.

Remember back in Numbers? Well, he gives an account of that in his day, which was around A.D. 93 and 94. So he's given an account of an event that probably happened during the same time as, you know, right before the temple was destroyed. He says of that ceremony, One of the priests stations her, i.e. the suspected woman, at the gates which face the temple and after removing the veil, the tohanation, again that's what we're talking about there, from her head inscribes the name of God upon a skin, parchment.

He then bids her declare upon oath that she has done her husband no wrong. So I think we can see that in that general time frame, back in the early centuries, back in the time of our Lord and the Apostles and shortly before, that at least concerning the Hebrews, they wore a cloth head covering extensively. And that was the Jewish practice.

And apparently was the practice, as we might expect clear back in the *Antiquities*. And so at the time, I think, of the letters to Corinth, that's what we probably had in the Corinthian church. The Jews were still pretty veiled.

But what about Greek and Roman civilization? What about them? I'm quoting from *Roman Women*, a book by J.P.V.B. Bouston. In early Republican Rome, a woman, when out of doors, revealed no more of her body than does a nun today. And it was reputedly on the simple ground that she had appeared in public with her head uncovered, that at some early date, C. Sulpicius Gallus divorced his wife because she went outside without her head covered.

A woman stola extended to the ground, her palla might cover her head. But by Augustus' time, and that would have been Caesar Augustus, getting toward the time of our Lord, by Augustus' time, as the sculptures of the Ara Passus show, it was a matter of indifference whether women pulled the palla up over their head or not. Now that's something I need to share with you.

There is debate among scholars. If you read some scholars, they will talk about how the Greeks and Romans covered their heads. If you read others, they'll talk about they didn't.

And I think you would find it depends on what sources of evidence they're looking at. This here is some art. I don't know if it's Greek or Roman.

It's one or the other. And you see that in this case, the woman's head is not covered. Okay? A lot of the art and sculptures that you have during that period of time, the woman's head isn't covered.

And so various scholars have determined from that that it wasn't common for women to wear a head covering among the Greeks and the Romans. But now if you read what the actual writers of the period say, they give you a different picture. And I don't know how to fully reconcile all this.

I have a friend, Dr. Rob Spinney, who's a historian. He teaches at a Christian university, and I talked to him about it. And he said, well, it's most likely the case that, as it is today, who are the wildest people in your society? They're the artists, aren't they? They're the rich.

They're the aristocrats. And you'll notice those are musicians. Okay? And so in ancient society, you probably had a similar situation as you do today.

Your old country folks were very conservative. And when you got to the city and got to some of the highfalutin folks, they were more radical and more liberal. And they would be the ones that would be inclined to throw off the conservative values and not cover their heads.

But we'll see as we go through several of these quotes that it does seem to have been the general practice for the women to cover their heads. Okay. I'm quoting from *Life in the Roman World of Nero* in St. Paul by T.G. Tucker.

When a lady left the house, she threw over the indoor dress a large mantle or shawl much resembling the toga of the men, except that its color was apparently what she pleased. This article was passed over the left shoulder and under the right arm, which was left free. It then fell in graceful folds to the feet.

Works of art show that a fold of the shawl was frequently laid over the top and back of the head for which no less becoming covering had yet been introduced. That picture we had up there of the woman with that part of her outer garment thrown over her head. Commentary on 1 Corinthians by Godet.

He says this. The ancients in general laid down a difference between the bearing of men and that of women in their appearances in public. Plutarch in a publication which I cannot pronounce it's Q-U-O-E-S-T dot and then it's Romans 9 whatever that means relates that at the funeral ceremony of parents, the sons appeared with their heads covered, the daughters with their heads uncovered and their hair flowing loose.

This author adds by way of explanation to mourning belongs the extraordinary. That is to say what is done on this occasion is the opposite of what is done in general. What would be improper at an ordinary time becomes proper then.

Plutarch also relates that among the Greeks it was customary for the women in circumstances of distress to cut off their hair whereas the men allowed it to grow. Why so? Because the custom of the latter is to cut it and of the former to let it grow. So Plutarch says that the normal case was for men to have short hair and women to have long hair.

And the normal case was for the men to be uncovered and the women to be covered in public. In regard to acts of public worship there existed a remarkable difference between the Greeks and the Romans. Now this is important.

The Greeks prayed with his head uncovered whereas the Romans veiled his head. Plutarch, I have another quote that I don't have up here on the overhead, but Plutarch in another place noted that it is more usual for women to go forth in public with their heads covered and men with their heads uncovered. Tertullian on the veiling of virgins, and that's something you all would be very interested to read.

He has an entire article on this whole subject of head coverings. And it's really instructive to read this work because, a lot of because of what he doesn't say. I mean he doesn't even have any inkling that the head covering is hair.

What he's dealing with is not what is the head covering but who should wear it. Should virgins wear it as well as married women? And that's the whole basis of this whole article and it's a very extensive article. But he says this, a female would rather see than be seen.

And for this reason a certain Roman queen said that they were most unhappy and that they could more easily fall in love than be fallen in love with. So again, he's given comment on the whole attitude towards

women appearing in public in the ancient world. They hid themselves in a sense.

They couldn't be seen well. Chrysostom, he was a Christian pastor. His homily 26 on 1 Corinthians says this, having finished therefore all the discourse concerning all these things, after this he next proceeds also to another accusation.

He's speaking of Paul and his argument in 1 Corinthians 11. And what is this? Their women used to pray, both to pray and prophesy unveiled and with their head bare. For then women also used to prophesy.

But the men went so far as to wear long hair as having spent their time in philosophy and covered their heads when praying or prophesying, each of which was a Grecian custom. Now here you have a contradiction between Chrysostom and Plutarch or Godet's commentary anyway. Godet says that the men prayed uncovered whereas Chrysostom said it was the custom to pray covered.

I don't know how you resolve that. That's again, you get into problems and you look back in history and it could be in Corinth they did it one way and in Rome they did it another. I don't know.

But there's no universal agreement on some of these things. One more very important comment, though, from Vine in his Expository Dictionary of Biblical Words concerning the word unveiled in Corinthians. He says, The injunctions were neither Jewish, which required men to be veiled in prayer, nor Greek, by which men and women were alike unveiled.

So what Vines has said and what I've read in other places is that for women anyway it was not the practice for them to worship with their heads covered in a pagan temple. In other words, these pagan women and the Greek and Roman women, their normal custom, whereas obviously it was normal for them to cover their heads out in public, like the Hebrews, when they prayed in their pagan temples or they worshiped wherever, they'd uncover their heads. They had a different worship practice versus their general practice.

Now that's important. That's very important because it helps us to understand what was going on in Corinth. Let's finish up with Christian veiling practices.

Of course we're dealing with Christians that were Greeks and Romans, so I think we can assume that they were involved in the general practice of covering their heads in public. Let's see what some of the church fathers say about this subject. Clement of Alexandria, he lived from AD 150 to 220, he said, women and men are to go to church decently attired with natural step, embracing silence, possessing unfeigned love, pure in body, pure in heart, fit to pray to God.

Let the woman observe this further, let her be entirely covered unless she happened to be at home, for that style of dress is grave and protects from being gazed at, and she will never fall who puts before her eyes modesty in her shawl, nor will she invite another to fall into sin by uncovering her face. Some of the early fathers were very conservative. For this is the wish of the word, since it is becoming for her to pray veiled.

Tertullian on the veiling of virgins, he lived from AD 160 to 215. So too did the Corinthians understand him. Now this is an important point because Tertullian actually gives us some historical information on the church at Corinth in the year 200.

Now we're dealing with the church at Corinth in this book. How did they understand Paul? So too did the Corinthians understand him. The Apostle Paul, that unmarried girls as well as married women should be

veiled.

In fact, at this day, at the day that Tertullian was writing this letter, the Corinthians do veil their virgins. So the practice at Corinth was, you cover your head with a cloth covering. What the apostles taught according to Tertullian, their disciples approved.

So how did the Corinthians understand Paul? They went so far as in AD 200 and that's not a lot of time for change to occur. Normally when change occurs it goes the other direction. You know, we don't usually get more conservative, we just get more liberal.

And in this case, we see in AD 200, which isn't that far removed from the Apostle Paul, in the church at Corinth they were still wearing the head covering. Tertullian gives us some more stuff. And this is interesting too because it shows that Tertullian understood this passage as being for all time.

I will show in Latin also that it behooves our virgins to be veiled from the time that they have passed the turning point of their age. That this observance is exacted by truth on which no one can impose prescription. Or space of times, no influence of persons, no privilege of religions, of regions.

For these, for the most part, are the sources whence from some ignorance or simplicity, custom finds its beginning. And then it is successfully confirmed by usage and thus is maintained in opposition to truth. But our Lord Christ surnamed himself truth, not custom.

So Tertullian here is saying that this practice of veiling of virgins was founded not in custom but it was a universal practice for all people of all times and founded on truth. I'll move on. I've got more Tertullian but I'll do this for the sake of time.

One thing I don't have on this list is that in 208 A.D. the church passed a canon law. And that law was that no woman could appear in church uncovered. It was a rule of the church.

And this canon was enforced by the Roman Catholic church clear until Vatican II which was just recently in this century. Now notice it was done in A.D. 208. Now that was before Constantine.

That was before we had the harlot church developing. This was a ruling that was made prior to that. And the church ruled that no woman could come to church without something on her head.

And that was the universal practice among the Catholics anyway clear until this century. If somebody here has a Catholic background and they look back they'll remember that their mommies went to church and they always had a hat or something on their head. Hippolytus in A.D. 236 I think that's when he died.

But he said this and let all the women have their heads covered with an opaque cloth not with a veil of thin linen for this is not a true covering. The constitutions of the holy apostles somewhere written in A.D. 250 to 325 finally let me suggest that there are fragments of the apostle Paul's instruction everywhere scattered throughout his epistles such as the minute canon concerning the veiling of women in acts of worship insisting upon it with a length of argument which in one of the apostolic fathers would be considered childish. Now you see what he's saying here? The people that wrote this I don't know who they were but the constitutions of the holy apostles when they look at 1 Corinthians 11 they can't understand why Paul had to spend so much time on this subject.

He said we know this? Why do we need all this instruction? That's what he's saying. He said he spent so much time that the fathers would have considered what he was doing in childhood. We know he wasn't though don't we? It's very necessary.

Most people don't think he spent enough time on it today. He also insisted that his tradition was this from the Lord. You therefore who are Christian women do not imitate such as these this is another quote from another place in that document but thou who designest to be faithful to thine own husband take care to please him alone and when thou art in the streets cover thy head for by such a covering thou wilt avoid being viewed as idle persons.

Augustine in 354 to 430 somewhere in that period said it is not becoming even in married women to uncover their hair since the apostle commands the women to keep their heads covered.

And when I was doing this study several years ago I went to a major library and they have volumes of church fathers and in the back of the volumes they have indexes they have scriptural indexes and they have subject indexes and what I did was I went to those indexes and I looked up any topic that might be related to a head covering and I looked up all the scripture references to things like 1st Corinthians chapter 11 and I wanted to get everything I could find on this subject and I haven't given you everything that I found but I can truthfully tell you that if you were to do what I did and you go and you look at what the early church taught about the head covering you will find that there is a unanimous consent that it was referring to a cloth covering that should be worn not only in

worship but in public at all times there is no disagreement none at all these are just some illustrations of what I did find at that time we might also want to look briefly at some of the Christian art you might find this interesting a number of these pictures were taken off the catacombs you can see the first picture that's veiled woman the catacomb of Priscilla in A.D. 220 that's when they date that picture this is from the tomb of two women the catacomb of Thraso they say that's about the 4th century somewhere in there here you have veiled woman Comertia Maeus late 3rd century as you can see they all are veiled I don't know if that's a catacomb picture but there you have two Christian women one from a Jewish background and the other from a Gentile background that's from Rome in the 5th

century those catacomb pictures are very interesting I wasn't able to find all that I wanted to find but there are also in the catacombs you'll have pictures of the Samaritan woman at the well you remember the story of her she was the woman who had five husbands or whatever and she is portrayed usually without any head covering I've read that there are actual pictures of the wise and foolish virgins parable and at least in some of the pictures the wise virgins will have head coverings and the foolish ones won't I have not found those pictures yet but I've read that they exist one more reference back to Tertullian and this is important when he wrote this article on the Veiling of Virgins in A.D. 200 they were having a problem in the church and the problem was, guess what? you had women

that were coming to church and were uncovering their heads and he specifically says that they were not doing that in public but they were coming to church and uncovering their heads here we have an actual historical instance occurring in the church around 200 A.D. how do we put all this together and bring it back to 1 Corinthians 11 do you see how we can bring this all together and explain 1 Corinthians 11? you have the Greeks and the Romans who, whereas the practice perhaps was not totally monolithic nevertheless most of the Greeks and Roman women most of the Greek and Roman women covered their heads when they were in public and obviously that was the teaching given by the Christian teachers in that

day but it was either because of their heathen background and the fact that they were

used to worshipping God with their head uncovered or maybe it also could have been perhaps the fact that they read Paul's teaching that there's neither Jew nor Gentile male nor free, you know male or female, bond or free we're all one in Christ so they may have misinterpreted that passage to teach total equality so we don't have to wear a head covering or maybe it was a combination of both and so you had women who would not dare to uncover their heads in public but they were coming to church and uncovering their heads or maybe it wasn't just in church maybe it was just at other times too and it was being observed that you had people praying and prophesying these women praying and prophesying with their heads uncovered and so the question was asked, Paul Paul, what about praying and

prophesying? what should Christians do? what's the Christian practice? and that's the question he's answering in 1 Corinthians 11 at least that is very satisfying to me I hope it is to you because it explains what was going on at the time and it explains the background of this passage so that we can understand it so let me get my little sheet back up here again why do I believe that the head covering is a piece of clothing? wrong one I've got too many sheets here number one, it's difficult to understand Paul's argument if it's only referring to hair number two it solves an interpretative problem in 1 Corinthians chapter 11 verse 6 it's in full accordance with the historical information that we have concerning the time and the conditions at the time the Bible was written and one last thing

that we want to look at the view that the head covering is a little piece of cloth and not the hair is the consensus of the best biblical scholarship when I did this study initially several years ago actually I went to Vanderbilt University and Vanderbilt University has a very liberal divinity school I mean before I became a Christian I had a pastor that went to that divinity school and we had a discussion once and he told me well I believe Jesus rose from the dead but it wouldn't matter to my faith whether he did or not so that tells you what type of school that this divinity library was based in and I thought well if I go to a school like this and go to their library I'm going to get some of the most radical liberal stuff I could possibly hope to find and I wanted to see that material

well I went there and I went to the section in the library where they had all the Corinthian commentaries and I just I randomly pulled them off the shelf and I looked at them and I think I had about 26 commentaries and let me read I'll just read these names maybe you'll recognize some of them a lot of them I don't know who they are one of them is even a woman and interestingly enough she didn't even believe it was hair she thought it was a literal covering but I looked at John Calvin, Matthew Henry, Charles Hodge Arthur Stanley, Heinrich Mayer Joseph B.

E.T. Gould, Frederick Godet Charles Erdmann, R.C.H. Linsky John Schmidt F.W. Groshide, William Barclay Leon Morris, William Baird John Hurd, Margaret Thrall C.K. Barrett, Hans Kozelman F.F. Bruce, Carl Holliday Jerome Murphy, O'Connor John MacArthur, Gordon D.

Fee Roy Harrisville and the Expositor's Greek Testament I looked at all those that was what was there of all those 26 one only one commentary and that was in the 20th century said that it was hair just out and out no questions, it's hair and this was in a liberal university now that scholarship spans many centuries now don't get me wrong, I'm not saying that all those commentaries agreed with what I'm teaching because they didn't most of them probably, well a lot of them wouldn't have but when they looked at 1 Corinthians 11 they did not see it as being the valid way to do away with it by saying that we're dealing with hair those that were took that approach that it's not for today they used a cultural argument ok they

used a cultural argument said well that was the first century and it

was for them back then but times have changed and it doesn't apply to us today but only one of them just out and out said it's hair when you consider all these men that I just read and the testimony of the early church and I honestly believe if you were to go to any library in America and do the same type of study that I have done, you would come up with the same same things I've come up with really the issue I have to deal with is not whether or not 1 Corinthians is dealing with hair it's is it for today or was it just for the first century that's the issue I have to from a strictly scholarly point of view that's the issue I have to deal with ok now that doesn't mean what we're dealing with here tonight is not significant because there's a lot of people that really believe that 1

Corinthians 11 is dealing only with hair and not a little head covering and it's something that needs to be needs to be dealt with but if you really want to look at what the great bible scholars have dealt with through the years it is the cultural argument that they've been most concerned with now we've already dealt to some extent with culture but before this study is over we will look at a number of very important considerations relating specifically to 1 Corinthians 11 and that issue we're not done with the cultural argument we'll get to that maybe next week or hopefully no more than two weeks from tonight because I'd like to finish this up but anyway now we come to our conclusion and it's very basic and very simple that won't work straight forward if you can read it that's a very poor

overhead but anyway my conclusion is this that what we are dealing with here in 1 Corinthians 11 is about a continuation of the Old Testament teaching on the subject of the head covering and that head covering is to be understood today as it actually was throughout all of history as an item of clothing not just a woman's hair so that's really what I'd like you all to leave here tonight with for you to think about and consider next week we'll go ahead and start going verse by verse through Corinthians and look at a number of other issues related to this passage I don't know exactly how that's going to develop yet I haven't decided what order to approach it in but anyway hopefully over the next couple of weeks we will complete our study and be done with this matter any questions? am I just

muddying the waters here? are we more confused than we were when we began?

I hope things are getting clear let's close with prayer Father again we thank you for your word we thank you for all that it contains and again we would just ask for help to properly understand it and to apply it in our lives Lord we don't want to do things that are radical we just want to obey you make it clear to us how to do that please bless our study tonight through our hearts under your praise and honor and glory we would ask it in Jesus name and for his sake

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