

(The Head Covering) 08 - 1 Corinthians

11:11-15

by Tom Chaplin

The head covering is a full covering of the body, and a woman's hair is given to her as a peribalion, a full covering of the body, which corresponds to a covering.

Duration: 1:01:55

Scripture: Mark 10:42, 1 Corinthians 11:3-7, 1 Corinthians 11:15

Topics: "Head Covering"

Description

In this sermon, the preacher focuses on Romans chapter 1, specifically verse 19, where Paul states that God's existence and power can be clearly seen through nature. The preacher emphasizes that nature serves as an educational institution designed by God to teach us about Him. He also mentions the importance of conscience, which God has given us as a moral compass. The sermon concludes with a discussion on the concept of covering, referencing verses from 1 Corinthians and highlighting the importance of serving and ministering to others as Jesus did.

Transcript

Well, this evening will be, I think this is lesson 8, on the Head Covering a Whole Bible approach. And we've now worked our way down to 1 Corinthians 11, and today we'll be dealing with verses 11 through 15. Before we begin, though, let me just read the passage, and then we'll have a word of prayer.

So I'll start in verse 1 of chapter 11. Do ye follow 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 deliver them to you. That I would have you 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 yourselves, 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. Let's pray once again.

Father, as we open up your word once again, we are very much aware of our need of your assistance. Lord, we just ask that you would grant that the truth of your word would be expounded accurately, that it would not be with error, but that it might truly reflect the mind of the Holy Spirit of God. Lord, just give us grace and open hearts to receive what you have for us today.

Again, Lord, keep us from error, but help us to see your truth, whatever it may be. Just open up our minds and our hearts today, and again, Lord, may you just enlarge us by the Holy Spirit, and lead us into a perfect understanding of your will and purposes, and your truth. We ask it in Jesus' name and for his sake.

Amen. Okay. So today we're looking at 1 Corinthians chapter 11, verses 11 through 15.

Now, last week we did consider verses 4 through 10, and as you might recall, we addressed several issues. We considered who is to wear the head covering, who is dishonored if this teaching is not obeyed and why, and we also considered what angels had to do with this whole subject. Well, we want to move on today and consider several other things.

And I think there are two basic issues in 1 Corinthians in verses 11 through 15, and the first is this whole subject of the interdependency of men and women. Up to this point, we've had a lot of discussion about how men are to be in submission. Well, there's somewhat of a counterbalancing thought that we really have to consider, and Paul brings that up in these next few verses.

So we're going to consider that, and also then we want to consider nature. Paul says, does not nature even teach you some things about this subject? And we want to consider that and just what it is that nature has to tell us about this whole issue of the head covering. So that'll be what we'll be looking at in the order that we'll be considering it here this evening.

The first thing we want to look at is the subject of the interdependency of men and women. Let me read here in verse 11. Now, he's engulfing this whole thought that men should be uncovered, women should be covered.

It's because of this whole concept of the chain of command, that God is the head of Christ, man, and man is the head of woman. Well, then he comes, though, and he kind of brings in a balancing thought. He says this, He's kind of saying this in an indirect way, but what he's saying is that if you had a mother, and that mother prevailed and brought you into this world, I mean, that's just basic facts of reality.

It can't happen. Now, why does Paul mean that? Well, there's a famous expression you've probably all heard, power corrupts, and that corrupts absolutely. The whole idea behind that is that we degenerate

into, man, he's got the wrong type of attitude towards that.

He'll become a head, and he thinks he's something. When he's not with the power, he uses it that are under him. I think Paul is very much concerned so that it's clearly taught that man is, well, now, men, if we hear that, don't know the scriptures well enough, maybe we might have to use it or not to say.

I snap my fingers, and you don't really have to. That's not it at all. At that, biblically speaking, history of service.

He doesn't give any man authority so he can consume that authority on his own lusts. Use it to his advantage. Given us an opportunity to consider that, you might not want any authority.

As we look at some of these passages, that may be more your idea, because it is a tremendous responsibility in scripture if God has made you the head of something. Let's consider that in light of, say, a passage like Mark 10. Look there with me for a second.

Mark 10, beginning in verse 42. James and John had just come to Jesus, and I believe it is the case that they asked if they could sit on the right hand and on the left of Jesus in glory. And in verse 41, it says, The chief, chiefest, shall be the servant unto but to minister and to give his life a ransom for many.

The perfect example of what we're to be that God has given us. What did he do? He would go day after day doing them, teaching them. They'd try and go away and rest, and he just poured himself out.

He was the king of kings. His whole life was poured out in ministry to others. And he says, If you want to be great, that's the way you have to be, including our authority, and use that not for ourselves, but any authority that passes there.

Now this is some of your wives. Well, first, let's start in verse, Even as the head of the wife, even as Christ is the head of the church, and he is the Savior, that our wives would have a lot of trouble submitting to us? That their husbands loved them so much that they'd be willing to endure the pain and suffering of something like a death on the cross? And they saw that in the way we lived day by day before them and the way we cared for them? You think they'd have a lot of trouble submitting to us? It says that we're to love them even as Christ also loved the church and gave himself for it, that he might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word, that he might present it to himself, a glorious church, not having spot or wrinkle or any such thing, that it should be holy and without blemish. Now it says in verse 28, So ought men to love their own wives as their own bodies.

He that loveth his wife loveth himself. Again, this is to the men. But were to hurt your big toe, would you not perhaps jump up and down and better? I would.

Hand. Go get that glass of water. Yeah, we want it to serve us, but we treat it with great tenderness.

Treat our wives the same way. We're to treat them with tenderness Should we be... There's this mutual dependence among us. Read 1 Peter 3 verse 7. Likewise, he hath a wife, and as being heirs together, God has placed us in.

We're not to have this idea, I'm the boss. And here's a real big one. And a lot of marriages are on the rocks because this concept is neglected.

Communication. Over the years, I know I'm getting out of line when my wife says something to me like this, Honey, I feel like we're drifting apart. Now she's said that to me at times.

And I don't know what's going on in your life. We're not communicating. And there's one thing I have learned about women.

If you protest, Honey, I love you. But if you're not communicating as you want, she will not believe you. Because it's in a man... Am I wrong, ladies? If I'm wrong, no, everybody doesn't realize that.

We don't realize that important relationship where there's no talking. I mean, if you tell me you love God and you're in prayer to God frequently, hypocrisy. If there's no prayer life in your life, God.

If it's not near the love you think it is. There must be communication. And we want to practice these principles of mutual interdependence.

There's something about men that we very easily can get wrapped up in our... And I hope this isn't the case here. I hope that it doesn't apply to any of the destroyers. Because just because you and I are near or near, that doesn't mean there's any interaction going on.

They all gather together. Mother... No, that's not the case. Things like that.

Doing nice things like opening car doors and you share with one another. Or she can share her concerns with him. When he says, you keep in mind that there's a mutual to treat her like a doormat and treat her like she's your slave.

And you just have time for her when you're ready for her. And think that you're properly reflecting what Paul is teaching us in 1 Corinthians 11. He doesn't mean for you to understand authority that way.

If we have been given authority, men, we're to use it in a loving, servant-type way. Where we lay down our lives and give ourselves to our families and to our wives. May that be true in all our marriages.

Well, let's go ahead and move on. So much and enough said about that subject. But may we take it to heart.

Me first of all. Well, after Paul kind of gets us straightened out and makes sure that we don't get the wrong idea about this authority structure issue, he then goes back to the argument to give another reason why they ought to understand that it is necessary for a woman to be covered. And he says in verse 14.

Excuse me, verse 13. 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.

Let's consider that. Nature's teaching on the head covering. First off, we need to consider about three terms in these two verses.

And just define them and talk about them a little bit. First. Paul speaks of nature.

He says, doth not nature itself teach you? Well, kind of let's broaden that out and understand what he means there. Look with me in Psalm 19. Verse 1. Here the psalmist says, The heavens declare the glory of God, and the firmament showeth his handiwork.

Day unto day uttereth speech, and night unto night showeth knowledge. So, the psalmist is telling us here that we ought to be able to look out at the creation and we actually see things in the creation that teach us about the person of God, his character, his glory. It's all declared in what God has made.

Look in Romans chapter 1. Beginning in verse 19. Here Paul says, Because that which may be known of God is manifest in them, for God hath showed it unto them. For the invisible things of him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even his eternal power and Godhead, so that they are without excuse.

So here again, this goes along with the Old Testament psalm that we just read from, showing that every man should be able to look at nature and see God. Nature reveals the eternal power and Godhead of Almighty God. It teaches us those things.

God designed nature to do that. He put that type of stamp on nature when he made it. He made it to be an educational institution, which if we just opened our eyes to see, we'd learn all sorts of very important things about our maker.

Okay, so he's showing himself, but there's other things in nature too that he teaches us. Look in Romans 1, verse 26. For this cause God gave them up unto vile affections, for even their women did change the natural use into that which is against nature.

And likewise also the men, leaving the natural use of the woman, burned in their lust one toward another, men with men working that which is unseemly, and receiving in themselves that recompense of their error, which was meat. So God not only stamped on creation his character, but he also stamped on creation his moral law. And we can learn even from nature things about God's moral law.

I mean, the way God designed man and woman, we know, as one creation scientist once said, God didn't, he created Adam and Eve, he didn't create Adam and Bruce. I mean, we know that from the way God made man at the beginning. And so we know certain moral aspects by considering the way God made man and woman, that certain relationships were not right, and certain relationships are.

So not only his character as God is in nature, but also aspects of his moral law are taught to us as well as we look at it in nature. And the primary way that God does that is expressed in Romans 2, verse 14, where he says, For when the Gentiles, which have not the law, do by nature the things contained in the law, these having not the law, are a law unto themselves, which show the work of the law written in their hearts, their conscience also bearing witness, and their thoughts, the meanwhile, accusing or else excusing one another. So, here Paul is speaking about our conscience.

Part of our natural constitution is that he's given us, by virtue of being created in his image, a conscience. We have God's law, even though it's been defaced and marred, there's still traces of it in our being, that say this is right and this is wrong. In our hearts we know, and our hearts will condemn us or excuse us based on that conscience that God has given us and stamped into our being as a creature created in the image of God.

So as we look at nature, and we consider its construction, and even the conscience that God has given us, we learn things about God and about morality. So when Paul says, does not even nature teach you these things, this is what he's referring to. This whole, I don't know a good word for that, this whole corpus of instruction that's out there in nature that God has put there for us.

Okay, that's the first term we need to consider. The second term in these two verses that we need to consider is the word covering. In verse 15, Paul says, But if a woman have long hair, it is a glory to her, for her hair is given her for a covering.

Now we need to, we really need to note that the word used here is not the same word that's used in all the other instances above it. In all the other instances the word is *akadakalupto*, which is for uncovered or *kadakalupto* meaning covered. This word here is different.

It's the only time it appears and whereas the other word is just a general word, it doesn't really tell you a lot about what the covering is. The word used here is not. It's the word in Greek *peribelion*.

What is a *peribelion*? Look in Exodus 22, beginning in verse 26. Now, the word *peribelion* is in verse 27. And what I did is I went to the Greek Septuagint.

And the Greek Septuagint is kind of like our Bible here. It's the translation of the Hebrew that the Greeks used in the time of Christ. And the word *peribelion* is found in the Greek Septuagint as a translation of the Hebrew.

And the translators used the word *peribelion* in verse 27. Let me start at verse 26. If thou at all take thy neighbor's raiment to pledge, thou shalt deliver it unto him, by that the sun goeth down.

For that is his covering only. Now, that terminology covering there is the Greek word *peribelion*. That is his covering only.

It is his raiment for his skin, wherein shall he sleep. And it shall come to pass, when he crieth unto me, that I will hear, for I am gracious. Now, let me read you Wycliffe's Bible Commentary, Wycliffe's Bible Encyclopedia's comment on that verse.

That reference works as, The ordinary outer garment was a large loose cloak, which served the purpose of an overcoat. It was made of wool, goat's hair, cotton, or linen. It generally consisted of a large quadrangular piece of material, the size and texture varying with the demands of the wearer.

It was worn over the shoulders in pleasant weather and wrapped like a heavy shawl around the body when necessary. When sleeping, the person would lie down on a rug or mattress and use his outer garment for a blanket. Thus the creditor was forbidden to keep the mantle of a borrower as a pledge overnight.

And that's from Exodus 22, 26 where we just read. It was closely woven, worn, and in some cases waterproof. In regards to women, the dress of a woman was distinguished not so much by kind, however, as by detail and quality of materials.

They wore longer tunics and larger mantles, *peribalions*, than men. The outer garment differed in elaboration, making it a distinctive robe. So when you think of *peribalion* in 1 Corinthians 11, you're not thinking of what we usually think of, which is just a little head covering or a doily or a cap or even a small veil that hangs down off the head.

It was actually a garment that, for a woman in particular, might extend clear to her feet, was worn up over her shoulders and was thrown up over her head. Now Paul says that's what a woman's hair is. It was given to her as a *peribalion*.

Okay? It wasn't just a head covering. Now there's a word in Greek, it's the word kaluma, which would have referred only to something that was worn on the head. But the peribalion was not just something that involved the head.

It was a full covering of the body. Okay? So that's a very important point, and I'll return to it here in just a little bit. But that's what a peribalion is.

Well, there's a third word we want to look at, and it's the word in this verse 15, but if a woman had long hair, it is a glory to her, for her hair is given her for a covering or peribalion, that word for. A lot of debate has raged around that word. It's the Greek word anti, like anti-tank.

I mean, that's where we get that prefix. And it's translated a number of ways in the New Testament. It actually appears, let's see, 22 times.

In one case, it's translated in the room of, in the case that he ruled in the room of his father, 16 times it's translated for, 4 times it's translated because, and one time it's translated therefore. If you look in Strong's Concordance for that word, it will tell you this. It says that the word, now the word for can mean many different things, okay? But this word is often used in composition to denote contrast, requital, substitution, and correspondence.

Let's see here. The two most, as I've looked at it, the two usages of the word that would most be of interest to us are these concepts of substitution or correspondence. Now, substitution, we could substitute in place of in this verse.

If a woman have long hair, it is a glory to her, for her hair is given in place of a covering. Now, many people would want to take that interpretation if they viewed this passage as referring to hair. They would use that understanding of the word and use that to develop their position.

Another usage of this word, though, in Scripture involves the concept of correspondence. Now, let's talk about that for a second. What do we mean when we talk about correspondence? Well, Roger, you've got a psalter down there.

This corresponds to your psalter, all right? It's not replacing your psalter, but it corresponds because there's a similarity and a connection in that both these books contain the songs that we sing. This corresponds to yours. That's what we're talking about when we say correspondence.

And so the verse could also be understood this way. But if a woman have long hair, it is a glory to her, for her hair is given her corresponding to a paragliding. Not necessarily taking its place, but its nature's... Let's see if I wrote this down.

I want to make sure I say it the best way. No, I can't find it. Nature's covering, hair, corresponds to society's covering, namely a cloth head covering.

So it could be that that's what Paul is meaning to say. If a woman have long hair, it's a glory to her, because that hair in nature corresponds... It's nature's way of teaching us that you need to have your head covered with a cloth covering. And I'll come back to that in just a second.

So anyway, those are the three words that we need to understand as we look at this passage. And I'm going to come back to this auntie business in just a minute. But first, let's get back and understand the

passage.

We first ask this question, how is it that nature teaches that long hair is a shame for a man, but a glory for a woman? How does it teach that? Well, there's several, a couple of different things we might consider. Number one, hair grows differently on men than it does on women. I'm going to quote from John MacArthur.

He's a pretty well-known commentator in this day and time, in America anyway. But he says this. He says, men and women have distinctive physiologies in many ways.

One of them is in the process of hair growth on the head. Hair develops in three stages, formation and growth, number one, resting, number two, and fallout, number three. The male hormone testosterone speeds up the cycle so that men reach the third stage earlier than women.

The female hormone estrogen causes the cycle to remain in stage one for a longer time, causing women's hair to grow longer than men. Women are rarely bald because few ever reach stage three. This physiology is reflected in most cultures of the world.

So it's just a fact that, yeah, you can see men with long hair, but if you take, say, a thousand men and you take a thousand women and don't cut their hair for 20 years and then look at the length, you'll see that there'll be bald men in that group and there'll be some that may have some long hair, but generally speaking, the women will have much longer hair than the men because over time, women are just biologically able to produce longer hair growth. So that's one of the ways that I think nature teaches us. But there's some others, too.

The testimony of our moral nature, which was given us by God, is part of our natural being. We talked about our conscience. God has stamped certain things on our being.

He causes us to like the things that are righteous. And things that aren't righteous, we somehow know that's the case. Now, granted, that's been marred since the fall, but there are still traces of that in human nature.

Charles Hodge, another famous commentator, he says, The constitution of our nature, being derived from God, the laws which he has impressed upon it are as much a revelation from his as any other possible communication of his will. And the fact is that there's just a natural human appeal regarding long hair on a woman. I mean, it's considered beautiful.

I mean, I can't explain it to you. I don't know that I have to. It's just the way I'm constituted as a man.

My mother will tell you that when she cut her hair off, I was very upset. This was years ago. And I think that generally speaking, even today, long hair is considered very beautiful on a woman.

Well, then, of course, you could raise an objection to that and say, Well, then how do we explain individuals and cultures that have short hair or men that wear long hair? Doesn't that kind of do away with your argument or Paul's argument? Well, I've just raised this comment to that, if that happens to cross your mind. Well, we know that nature teaches that homosexuality is wrong. We've already looked at that specifically in Scripture.

But if that's the case, why did God end up destroying Sodom and Gomorrah? I mean, nature clearly teaches that homosexuality is wrong, and yet that didn't stop rampant homosexuality from existing in Sodom and Gomorrah, leading to God's destruction. Just because nature teaches a fact does not mean that man with a rebellious nature will observe that fact. And generally speaking, though I'm not going to apply this to every individual, if you look at a culture where the women wear short hair, you're looking at a culture which I can almost guarantee you is in rebellion against God.

You look at who wears the long hair. It's the rock stars and rebellious teenagers, people like that, that wear, boys that wear long hair. Long hair on men goes, who was Absalom? Absalom was a rebel against his dad.

He had this luscious long hair. Generally speaking, in a society where you see a lot of long hair on men and short hair on women, you've got a society that has a heart problem. It's losing or has lost its relationship with God, as Sodom and Gomorrah did over the issue of homosexuality.

But I would still maintain that, naturally speaking, there is in man an appreciation for long hair on women. Likewise, there's an appreciation for short hair on men. And Paul says nature teaches us this, that a woman should be covered.

And this is how it does it. And a very good quote by another commentator on this whole subject, Godet, he said, by giving to the woman a covering of hair, which envelops her in a manner from head to foot, because remember we're dealing with a peribellion, and a peribellion literally could literally go, I mean your hair even could go almost to your ankles or your feet if it's not cut for your entire life. But Godet says, nature itself has shown that it is suitable for her to withdraw as much as possible from view and to remain concealed.

This long and rich hair is given to her ante peribelli. This substantive does not merely denote as kaluma, remember we talked about kaluma being a head covering only, but it does not denote as kaluma would do an ornament for the head. It is a vestment or clothing that envelops the whole body.

It is a natural symbol of reserve and modesty, a woman's most beautiful ornament. And Paul says, does not nature itself even teach you? Okay? And this is how he does it. By putting in our being a natural appreciation for long hair on a woman, by being so constructed that men can't grow hair as long as a woman can, in these ways nature is teaching us that women need to be covered.

Okay, well now let's go back to ante peribelli. Because there's one question we have to ask regarding this passage. And it is this, do verses 13 through 15 teach that a woman's hair is her veil? And we noted that the Greek word ante could mean substitution, like in the place of, or it could mean correspondence.

But when various people have looked at that possibility of the word meaning in the place of, they've come to the conclusion that the hair was meant to take the place of a cloth head covering. Well, is that correct? Okay. Well, let me begin by just doing some review.

Because we somewhat addressed this issue several weeks ago. I'm not going to do an in-depth repetition of everything we talked about, but just briefly just try and call some things to mind that we did, points that we did make last time. But do verses 13 through 15 teach that a woman's hair is her veil? Remember we discussed the fact that if that is the case, that it is very difficult to understand Paul's argument.

For after all, if Paul was referring to hair, what had to be happening at Corinth? Well, there's only one possibility. All these women were cutting their hair off. Right? That was the problem.

And as we observed, hair is not something you can put back on once you cut it off. Once it's gone, you're going to have short hair for a while. I don't know how long it will take for a woman's hair to grow back out, but for weeks you're going to appear to have short hair.

And yet this whole argument in 1 Corinthians 11 is referring to praying and prophesying, which is kind of an instantaneous event. Right? It happens and then it doesn't happen for a while. And Paul just talks about this hair business in terms of praying and prophesying.

But if I've got short hair, I wear it all the time. Not just when I pray or prophesy. And if Paul had hair in mind and all these women were cutting off their hair, that would have been a far broader problem than just something that would have affected them when they prayed and prophesied.

So how do we fit Paul's argument? Why did he even address the subject in these terms? Because you wouldn't have just had a problem in praying and prophesying, you'd have had a general problem in the church every day, every moment of the day. So it's hard to understand his whole approach to this subject and his argument, if that's all that he has in mind, if in fact short hair is the problem. And you've got to ask another question too.

Why were these women cutting off their hair? Because even though I am, as you well know, I have a very low view of the cultural argument. As you might recall, I said we've got to look at the cultural setting so that we can understand the teaching. We have to look at culture.

We don't use culture to overthrow the teaching. We use culture to understand it. And so when we look at this instruction, we've got to ask the question, well if it was long hair or short hair, what was going on? And it's very difficult to construct an explanation to that question.

Because, for instance, let me refresh your memory. We read this quote, but I'll read it to you again. There was a historian living around that time named Plutarch.

And he said this. The ancients in general laid down a difference between the bearing of men and that of women in their appearances in public. This is Godet quoting Plutarch.

Plutarch 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. Now 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, namely the men, is to cut it and of the former to let it grow.

In other words, in Greek society, women did not cut their hair. We can't relate to that today because women do cut their hair and it's more likely that you'll see a woman with short hair than long hair, but the Greek women did not do that. If you see Greek art, you'll see women, they wore fancy hairdos and Paul talks about that where he says, don't wear braided hair and golden pearls and costly array.

I mean, they had fancy hairdos, the Greeks did, but they did not shear their hair. They let it grow very long. And so it would have been totally against their culture for these women to be cutting their hair short.

And so we have to envision that what was happening in Corinth is these Christian women, for some reason, and we don't know what the reason was, they were cutting their hair off short and they were wearing short hair in a culture that would have thought that was very strange, to say the least. And so when they walked out in public, all these unbelieving Greeks would look at these women and think they were spectacles. Now, I know enough about the 20th century and how hard it is to get women to wear head coverings to know that it's very unlikely that women were going to cut their hair off and look like spectacles to the whole world in the first century because everybody back then was wearing long hair.

But that's what you've got to come to the conclusion, that these women were willing to look like spectacles and cut off all their hair, even though it was totally contrary to their society. And not only that, Plutarch tells us it was common for the women to cover their heads too, wear the head covering. So, how do you make this fit with the setting of this time in history? Frankly, it's very difficult to do, but it's not hard to do at all if you understand that the passage is referring to a cloth covering.

Let me explain. It was the Greek practice to wear long hair for women. It was also the Greek practice for women in public to cover their heads.

Plutarch tells us that too and others as well. But it was not the Greek practice for women when they worshipped in pagan temples to wear a head covering. They worshipped different than they did in public, generally speaking.

So now here you see a perfect scenario to explain this whole passage in 1 Corinthians. These Greek women who had been used to worshipping their pagan idols with an uncovered head, even though at other times they covered their heads, were coming into Christianity and trying to bring their pagan practice with them. And so, yeah, they were coming to church with their covered heads, but they were coming into the assemblies and doing like they did all the other times before they became Christians.

They were taking their head coverings off. And then these Christians are saying, no, no, no, you've got to keep your heads covered. And so they're saying, what? Why do I have to do that? And so Paul is giving them instruction to help them understand that the proper practice is for women, not only to wear the head covering in public, but also when they worship.

That's not a time to be uncovered. It fits with all the teaching of the early church. You can't find any exposition of this passage, and there's quite a few expositions that have any inkling that all it refers to is hair.

In fact, Tertullian gives us... Let's see here. Tertullian even has a historical commentary on the Corinthian church, telling us what their practice was around 200 A.D. And he says of them, so too did the Corinthians understand him, the apostle Paul, that unmarried girls as well as married women should be veiled. In fact, now this is Tertullian's quote in 200 A.D. In fact, at this day, the Corinthians do veil their virgins.

What the apostles taught, their disciples approved. And the interesting thing about Tertullian is the debate with Tertullian was not whether or not it was hair or a cloth covering. The debate was, should virgins wear the covering as well? And he says in Corinth, that's what they do.

Now what happened between the time of the apostles and 200 A.D.? Now my experience, and all my experience in dealing with churches is, the tendency is to become more liberal. I don't know that I could have ever pointed or seen a time when a church became more conservative. So if we understand that this is referring to hair, then somewhere between the time of the apostles and 200 A.D., these churches just abandoned what the apostles taught and everybody forgot what they taught.

Now, I don't guess we can totally rule that out, but that to me is a stretch. In 200 A.D., the Corinthians were still veiling their married women and their virgins. It's hard to understand how in that short period of time they lost the whole meaning of 1 Corinthians 11, and a lot of the fact you don't find a single author in the early church even thinking it's hair.

Now that causes another problem, because Paul says later on here, he says we have no such custom nor have the churches of God. Now there's three different ways we can look at that, and we'll look at that one next week, but just kind of jumping ahead. What Paul is saying there is that what I'm teaching you in 1 Corinthians 11 is what I am teaching you here is exactly what all the churches in the world are doing.

And you need to realize that if you're going to disagree with me. This is the general practice of all the Christian churches. Why is it then when we look at history and see all the churches they all taught to veil your women? What happened? I mean it is unbelievably unanimous.

And if you'd like to do, for those of you that are really seeking and interested in this and don't want to take somebody's word for it, go to Dallas Theological Seminary and go to the, they've got volumes of the church fathers. It's a big long set. And they've got indexes, and just look up head covering and hair, look up 1 Corinthians 11 in the topic index, and look and see for yourself and verify that what I'm telling you is true.

But in all the writings of the early church they all teach that it's referring to a cloth head covering. And no indication at all that it's hair. So anyway, enough on that.

It's very difficult to understand his argument in light of history if it's referring to hair. And as we pointed out, we also have a problem with 1 Corinthians 11.6. I'll just put that up there for just a second. For if a 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. And as we pointed out, if what we're dealing with here with an uncovered head is a head that's had the hair cut short, you can make some substitutions in this verse. And you could actually read the verse this way as I've got down here at the bottom.

For if a woman have short hair, let her also be given short hair. But if it be a shame for a woman to be shorn or shaven, let her be covered. And so you've got somewhat of a tautology there where you've got two things that are the same.

How can you give somebody short hair that's already been given it? Do you follow that? And I know there have been some comments that I'm going to address not in this lesson but in the last lesson that some thoughts on this verse that are very good that we need to consider. But if shorn, if short hair, and to be uncovered is to have short hair, which to me is the most reasonable and you don't have to do any twisting or trying to kind of force some things into the words, then you've got Paul just making a nonsensical statement. It makes perfect sense that he's referring to a cloth covering.

If a woman will not cover her head with a cloth covering, then cut her hair off or shave it off. He's saying it's the same thing. He's trying to shock them there.

He's saying, Corinthians, you need to realize this, that if you will not cover that head with that cloth covering, that it's just exactly like you don't have any hair at all. And I think because you see, the Corinthians understood. They were Greeks.

They knew that long hair was beautiful. That's the way they wore their hair. And if Paul had said that to a Greek, they would have said, Paul, you've got to be kidding.

You mean when I take my head covering off, it's the same as if I don't have any hair? I didn't know that, Paul. And he literally is trying to shock them into realizing the seriousness of the issue. And it makes sense.

But if you take it to be hair, you have some degree of problems with that. I'll return to that in our last lesson when I deal with some questions that I know some people have raised about this verse and several other things. But anyway, it makes that verse very hard to understand.

And as we observed, it fits the historical data to understand it as being head covering rather than just hair. It's hard to fit it into historical data if you just make it hair. Very hard to understand what was going on in Corinth.

It's so easy to understand it with what I just shared with you. It fits perfect. These Greek women, they were bringing their heathen practices into the church.

And Paul had to help them to understand that what you're doing in public also applies in worship. Just because you come to a worship service doesn't mean you can take off your head covering now, which is what they were accustomed to doing. So you see, there's no problem with that understanding.

And it does fit with the historical data. I don't want to read all this. Let's see.

We've done enough on that. Hopefully you've seen it. It was the Hebrew practice to cover the head.

The trial by bitter waters, Josephus records an event, and he wrote in 90 A.D., and he says that the woman came to the priest and the priest took off her hymation, which is the same as the parable I on, and then went through the procedures that's given in Numbers. The Hebrews were wearing head coverings, it seems. And from what evidence we have, we have in 705 to 681, there's a statue showing Hebrew women that are being led into captivity by Sennacherib, and it shows them with the Greek hymaton over their heads and extending clear to their feet.

I mean, we know from history that that was the practice of God's people. That's the way their women dressed. It's not history.

Okay, well I'll leave history there. And of course we did also make the fourth point. And again, this might be an interesting exercise for somebody that's interested.

Go to a seminary like Dallas Theological Seminary or go to a liberal seminary. Go to their library. Go to the section where it's got the commentaries on 1 Corinthians and see how many you can find that maintain that hair is the covering.

I think you would be, you would find that a very interesting exercise. What I found, and I think one other preacher, and I think you all listened to that sermon, I didn't know it at the time, he did the exact same thing I did and came up with the exact same results but different authors. He went to a different seminary than I did, found different books, but the results were the same.

It wasn't hair. I mean, none of the scholars down through the centuries, even most in the 20th century, have seen that as being a viable understanding of the passage. Okay.

So that's review. That's things that we talked about several weeks ago. But I also want to bring out one other point from the verse itself.

And let me read it to you. If a woman have long hair, it is a glory to her. Now let's say it's hair.

And what Paul is teaching us here is that you don't need anything else but hair. In that case he's saying, if a woman have long hair, it's a glory to her, for her hair is given her to take the place of a perimillion. And many women will say, I don't need a head covering, my hair serves that purpose.

But the point I would make is no matter how you look at this verse, you interpret it. Because you need to remember the word there is not head covering. It's not something like a kaluma.

It's not a cap. It's a peribellion. And a peribellion is a piece of clothing extended all the way from the feet for a woman usually clear up over her head.

Now, what would a Greek woman have said to you if you had said to her, you don't need to wear a peribellion, your hair is your peribellion. What do you think? Do you think she would have gone for that? Because the peribellion is her out of garment. If a Greek woman had gone out in her society without a peribellion, it would have been not quite as bad perhaps as going out in a slip for a woman, but it would have been a shocking thing.

It would have been scandalous, I believe. Women just didn't do that. Women wore their peribellions in public.

And hair would not have been sufficient. Because we need to understand that the peribellion was not just a head covering, it was a whole body covering. And Paul says that her hair is given as a peribellion.

So, we can't take it literally, can we? Because if we really take it literally, we're saying, even in modern day 20th century America, that to a lady, you don't need a coat anymore because you have hair. Are you following me? It gets cold, you don't need that coat because your hair is given by God to you to be that coat. No.

I don't think God gave us a woman hair to be in place of. I think it's a much more satisfying understanding to realize that what he's saying is hair was given you to correspond to. Not to take the place of, but hair is teaching you that you need this peribellion, this covering on.

But it doesn't take the place of it. Is that making sense? If it's not, it wouldn't be too big a problem if it was just a kuluma. If he said your hair is given to you for a kuluma, yeah, then we could, you know, that'd be one thing.

I've got my hair, I don't need a veil on my head. But when he says it's a peribellion, you're in a whole different ballpark because then you're taking away a woman's outer garment and you're saying hair is

enough for that. And I don't think any Greek woman would have accepted that.

And if we dressed like the Greeks, we wouldn't accept that either. So I think it's better to understand that word anti, not as in the place of, but rather corresponding to. If a woman have long hair, it's a glory to her for her hair is giving her corresponding to a peribellion.

Paul wants us to understand that long hair in the natural realm corresponds to a cloth head covering in the realm of human society. And that is nature's way of teaching us that a woman's head needs to be covered. Now, ask yourself the question just to maybe make this a little bit clearer.

If God wanted to teach us from nature that a woman should have her head covered with a cloth head covering, how would he do it? How would he do it? If he wanted to somehow give us instruction in that area, well I think there's two good ways he would have done it. He would have made women's hair grow longer than men and he would have made a natural attraction in our beings for a woman's long hair and a natural repulsion in our beings towards a man with long hair. I think that's how he would have constituted nature if that's what he wanted to teach us.

What else could he have done? I mean if nature teaches us that a woman needs to have her head covered that's the only way nature could do it that I see. And that's what I think Paul is saying here. Okay.

I'm not finished with hair. I will make some more comments in our last lesson which will be two weeks from today. But this is probably enough to cause you to meditate for a long time so I've probably given you more than you ever hoped or asked or wanted.

So we'll leave it there. Next week we'll go ahead and finish up the remaining verses here and we'll also look at the cultural argument. We talked about the cultural argument a long time ago but we talked about it in general terms.

And for many people that may not have been totally satisfying because we look at some of the Old Testament scriptures and we don't know exactly what to do with them. But what I want to show you next week is 1 Corinthians 11 is so clearly not cannot be done away with the cultural argument that it's just blatantly obvious. And we'll see that by looking at the passage itself.

So I want to show you that whatever questions you may have about the cultural argument on other issues, it shouldn't be a question on 1 Corinthians 11 because to me anyway, unless you all can instruct me otherwise, it's so obvious that we cannot explain this passage away in terms of culture that I don't know why it ever happened. And yet that really is, if you go to these seminaries like I'm suggesting you do, you'll find that is usually the way that 1 Corinthians 11 is done away with as far as having anything to say to us today. They don't deny it's a head covering, they just say that's cultural.

So we'll look at that in more depth next week. And I think we'll be done with the passage, but then I want to go back and have one more week and deal with some issues that some of you have raised and some others have raised that are more questions. And some of them are very good questions.

So we hope we'll be wrapping this up in two more weeks. But any questions on what I've shared with you today? Well, you all think about it, meditate on it, and I appreciate the fact that I know you all are seriously considering these issues and you have Berean spirits about it, and that blesses my heart. Let's close in prayer.

Father, we thank you once again for your word. We thank you for it's teaching. We know it's for us and it's the best for us.

You never asked us to do anything or demanded us anything that's not in our best interest. Even though perhaps it seems initially to be somewhat hard. But Lord, again, give us light and understanding on these matters.

We don't want to be needlessly different. We don't want to take hard stands that are unnecessary. But we want to obey you.

And we just ask for that wisdom to know what it is you have us to do on matters such as what we've been discussing, this issue of the head covering. Just give us wisdom and your guidance and direction. And now, Lord, as we finish up our services here, just pray you bless our time of fellowship, and bless the food that's been prepared, and bless it to the nourishment of our bodies.

For we ask it in Jesus' name and for his sake. Amen.

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