

Head Coverings: History, Context, and Exegesis

by Carlton C. McLeod

The speaker explores the history and meaning of head coverings in 1st Corinthians 11, and cautions against interpreting scripture through the grid of the world.

Duration: 1:08:21

Scripture: 1 Corinthians 11:2

Topics: "Worship Practices", "Biblical Modesty"

Description

This sermon delves into the controversial topic of head coverings for women in worship, rooted in biblical principles of God's order, creation order, angelic observance, nature, and church practice. The speaker emphasizes the importance of symbols, modesty, and honoring God's design. While affirming the historical practice of head coverings, the sermon encourages personal reflection and study of the scripture's teachings on this matter, aiming for unity and respect within the church.

Transcript

Text today is 1st Corinthians chapter 11 and we're going to start at verse 2. We're going to run all the way through verse all the way down through verse 16 for those who are visiting with us. Thank you for being here today. We appreciate you.

Didn't we have a good time at our anniversary last week? I mean we had a wonderful time and somehow we got the whole church in here. I don't know how we did that but we did that and so God is merciful and we had a good time and we ate hot dogs and everything went well. So thank you all for serving.

I'm still trying to get over submission but we will keep praying about that. If you missed it last week then you have to ask somebody. Today we want to talk about head coverings.

Somebody say head coverings. That is our scripture. That is our text and yeah I was kind of messing with y'all because I wanted you to see how crazy it looked for me to step up here with a hat on my head.

And so as you'll probably notice as we go through the passage of scripture there is a section of this text that we agree with and a section that we apparently don't. And so as a matter of fact I recall being at Hampton University. I was joking around with the pastors this week.

They cared about two things. If you were a man at Hampton University cared about two things. Number one pay your tuition on time and two take that hat off your head.

I remember that very very clearly. So anyway we're going to first Corinthians now chapter 11 verse number two. The apostle Paul to the saints at Corinth and as he notes in chapter one and to the saints of God everywhere.

Now I commend you because you remember me in everything and maintain the traditions even as I delivered them to you. But I want you to understand I want you to understand that the head of every man is Christ. The head of a wife is her husband and the head of Christ is God.

Every man who prays or prophesies with his head covered dishonors his head. But every wife some translations say woman there who prays or prophesies with her head uncovered dishonors her head since it is the same as if her head were shaven. For if a wife will not cover her head then she should cut her hair short.

But since it is disgraceful for a wife to cut off her hair or shave her head let her cover her head. Normally by now y'all have started to say amen to the scripture. Yeah yeah okay here we go verse seven.

For a man ought not to cover his head since he is the image and glory of God but woman is the glory of man. For man was not made from woman but woman from man. Neither was man created for woman but woman for man.

That is why a wife ought to have a symbol of authority on her head because of the angels. Nevertheless in the Lord woman is not independent of man nor man of woman for as woman was made from man so man is now born of woman and all things are from God. Judge for yourselves is it proper for a wife to pray to God with her head uncovered does not nature itself teach you that if a man wears long hair it is a disgrace for him but if a woman has long hair it is her glory for her hair is given to her for a covering.

If anyone is inclined to be contentious we have no such practice nor do the churches of God. Wow yeah that's a good time look at your neighbor say my my my that's a good time for a my my my father thank you for the reading of holy scripture this morning Lord help in Jesus name amen. As you sit down just give somebody a high five say help Lord help help Lord just really really need help just help all around my mind.

Have you ever wondered though have you ever wondered why we tell men to take their hats off inside okay we grew up like this right most of you grew up and how many by show of hands how many men have ever had either a man or a woman or your grandmama or somebody say boy take your hat off man will you please remove your hat okay so this is pretty calm so we so we got this part if you ever wondered where that came from it came from here it came from the word of God that that tradition if you will that that thing of men removing your hat's why I wanted to come up because it looks ridiculous in a church sanctuary looks ridiculous for a man to have his hat have a hat on his head.

We were joking around this week this was a collaborative effort we were working so hard as an elder team to try to figure this out and so as we were joking around this week pastor Rodney Wilson said he wanted to start a malenism movement as opposed to feminism so he was walking around talking about power to the people men put your hats on that didn't work out too good so pray for pastor Wilson but I will say as we start and I got to move somewhat quickly because there's a lot in here that I but I want to try to cover it in

one message if I can to get it on record in one message but as I want to just say that initially going into this I was very biased to this you know how anybody any of you admit to reading a passage of scripture knowing that you have some of your own presuppositions

going in so I knew going in that I didn't like this I didn't want to hear this I really didn't want to deal with this I was looking away looking for a way to skip over this and about the last thing I wanted to do is to apply our normal exegetical hermeneutical patterns to this passage of but over the last several months I've literally been studying this for months to try to get prepared for this this morning and over the last several months I you know by the grace of God I forced myself to just look at the text honestly so what I want to do for you today is is look at the text honestly somebody say honestly I need you for a moment to kind of drop all the you know 21st century biases to see exactly what the original hearers heard and from there we can figure out what it means for us and so

let's just start out by a few things that's very clear from the passage that we don't really have to spend a whole lot of time with first of all it's very clear from the passage and we can get it right out of the way that it is not a sin somebody say not a sin not a sin for a woman to wear a head covering either in worship or in public not a sin whatsoever it's very clear from the passage that Paul was talking about an actual head covering we'll cover that when we get to the exegesis but that is not a sin at all the question is not whether it's a sin to wear one the question on everybody's mind here today is it is it is it is it a sin to not wear one and we'll try to work our way to some conclusions as we close second let me tell you how I'm attempting to approach these very controversial

passages like I always do or like we always do that was the challenge the challenge was to just do what we always do that was so hard here for cultural reasons I think who wrote it Paul right who did he write it to the church at Corinth and by extension everyone who would read the epistle you know in other words what does it mean what did it mean to its original hearers therefore what does it mean for us now what is the context what does the passage mean for us what is God saying to his to his church and so the same questions that we ask every time we approach a passage of scripture that deals with marriage or money or discipling our children or whatever is the same way we were trying to deal with this are you with me so far okay third let's also lay this out this is not debatable and if

you want to debate it you know okay cool but it just from what I've learned this is real easy from the time of the apostles until approximately the mid-20th century that is your grandmother's heyday okay for most of you Christian women covered their heads in worship and many times in public as well look at these quotes we'll look at them in other words this was not considered a cultural thing all the way up into the 1950s and 60s are you with me okay this did not at all matter of fact I I went to the batter's box on this one I went to the pinch hit on this one I call my mama sometimes you got to call your mama my mother's we 70 this year I called my mama I said mom tell me about grandma great-grandma my mom said oh this is oh yeah you didn't go to church without something on your head

if you didn't want grandma we would get a whipping for trying to go in terms of something on our head but we put something on our head grandma taught us that and mama taught us that and I said mom when did you start to see that fade he said somewhere as I was coming up in about 2025 maybe 30 years ago I started to see it fade and we would wear hats and shifted the hats and we would wear hats and then then the hats really became not about a covering but about a fashion show and I can't get no help now it was about how we look as opposed to the meaning behind the thing and I said and now what do you see mom I said now we don't really see anything and so I just want you this is really not into from a time a time

perspective the entire history of the church saw this scripture as not

controversial at all but very clear and very simple it's us who don't see it like that okay so for example here's a here's a quote the oral and this you can find this online you can find this in a book I put the author here and these quotes are are easily cooperating as a matter of fact I even have some pictures to show you today the oral and written history handed down to us from the early church is an example of these matters we could look to the practical way they obeyed this command in the second century Hippolytus of Rome wrote the apostolic tradition I quoted that recently when we ordained deacons if you recall a collection of customs from the early church it includes the statement let all the women have their heads covered furthermore the catacombs the system of burial caverns

under Rome where early Christians hid during times of persecution are full of pictures of women praying with coverings and men without not only was it an apostolic teaching but various early church fathers such as Augustine of Hippo Saint John Chrysostom Tertullian and others taught and encouraged it John Calvin and Matthew Henry both taught in practice tradition of head coverings and the reformer Martin Luther's wife wore one John Wesley taught it as well and then another quote during the 19th century many Christians in the United States and Western Europe began arguing that long hair constituted the only covering a woman needed others said that women only needed to wear a covering when in church the middle class and wealthy women switched from veils and caps to ornate bonnets if they

wore a covering at all bonnets became more a matter of fashion and modesty or obedience first Corinthians 11 by the turn of the 20th century the ornate bonnets of the 19th century had given away to hats or ladies hats until the mid century women in Europe and America typically wore a hat or scarf in public but were simply following tradition and fashion without realizing that there was originally a spiritual reason behind the practice similarly until about 1960 western women wore hats when in church but the meaning behind the hat was lost I mean y'all grew up when women wore hats in church I mean y'all remember your grandmama's wearing hats or something a little door how many y'all remember doilies okay okay let's show some pictures I just want you to see that this was something that the

church although controversial now was not controversial then uh this is the catacombs literally uh 200s a.d when Christians were under persecution these these pictures were actually on the walls of some of the catacombs in the room when Christians were being martyred and for their faith you can just roll this roll through it but these are all ladies with their head covers 300 300 switching now to the middle ages 1200 and 1300 not that fast good gracious um back up a little back up a couple back up a couple okay all right all right they're 80 800s england and 1100s in europe uh some some sketchings and drawings next next 1400s 1400s germany 1400s europe also in italy it's hard to see that one wow okay hard to see that one over there who's doing the slides is that thelma that's got to be

thelma okay next please now into the reformation era era where many of us have a lot of vested interest obviously 1500s in europe women prayed with their heads covered also in germany uh you you saw it across denominations lutheran church services there with ladies with their heads covered you can see there were different types different styles england uh you can see uh i was obviously a more wealthy lady there the anabaptist war coverings next whether it was belgium or france coverings next again the netherlands as well next moving into again the reformation era a little further along the lines keep going 1600s europe netherlands again women wore head coverings next france she's looking kind of scared i don't know what's going on with her uh somebody's coming okay bless god lady uh 1620

new england next oh my goodness okay again france and the anabaptist england next moving a little further again if it was culture it went on for a long time 1800s they was getting a little snooty then getting a little snooty then but heads were covered next depending on your stature of course in your economic condition into the united states next i mean this is this was without doubt i mean i'm just running through it because you all you took a history class you know this next uh whether it was france or england united states england into the 20th century 1900 1920 across races or ethnicities across it all 29 into the 40s whether it was lutheran or episcopalian whether it was catholic or presbyterian i don't even know who they are the hutterites i don't know nothing about them but they

the little girls got they cute though bless god okay uh whether you know an episcopal church i think that's that's last one okay uh you know some of us that came out of the black baptist tradition or even again catholic traditions whether you're a congregationalist so whether you're extremely extremely conservative in your in your polity all the way over to catholicism where of course you know and then put the covering on her head i think that's the yeah there we go okay so this was this was this was without question for the whole history of the church all right only now is it controversial within the last generation or so so from paul's time to the earliest church meetings until very very recently the passage that i've called controversial because it is in our day wasn't so at all other

than maybe the bit about angels which we'll talk about it was obvious and easy to understand for the for every christian in every denomination for every culture and every ethnicity women and wives covered their heads at least in worship because god said so are you with me it is no longer that easy and that enhanced my nerves this morning to try to take a passage honestly that most people literally can't stand so or a lot of ladies can't stand i should say my wife asked me this morning how you feel i said nervous he said you scared of them women i said yeah it is no longer so easy literally churches have split and much damage has been done right here in first corinthians 11 hence my trepidation um over and and what is it over over a little bit of fabric on the head or more importantly and

more to the point what it symbolizes here's our hermeneutical questions and i think i'm gonna join you now in the notes now so if you can look to your notes there's a section in here i believe we put it in there head coverings to be sure is a second tier doctrine it is not it does not rise to the level of something that heaven or hell hinges upon uh it doesn't rise to the importance of the triune nature of god or the deity of christ or the gospel for that matter but friends it is part of the canon of scripture and is no less inspired by god than any other part of scripture the question for us and i think this is your first feeling one of the first the question for us really is one of what to do with the culture that's the question today what to do with the culture are we simply dealing

with a symbol i.e head coverings that has lost its significance today so another symbol like a wedding ring or even a wife's godly attitude toward her husband would fulfill the commands that we see many people in fact say that a wife's submission to her husband is what's important and that's the symbol people that we love and respect like wayne gruden and john macarthur would hold to those types of positions the subject for us today has made all the more difficult to teach and to work through because almost no christian women in the west wear a head covering for these reasons anymore some wear hats but not normally for these reasons okay not coincidentally in my opinion the widespread jettisoning of the practice of head covering can be traced to the mid-20th century right around the time

of the rise of modern feminism many influenced by feminist ideology ideology would not only see marriage as quote a comfortable concentration camp unquote a quote from betty friedan who wrote the feminine

mystique and kind of launched the feminist movement a known communist by the way they would not only see it as some would not only see it as a comfortable concentration camp but they would hate the word of horror means hate they would literally hate any symbols of a woman being under authority to the people who say it no longer has any significance we don't know what it means i say not true at all we know exactly what it means which is why it's hated if the symbol hasn't shifted or changed at all we know exactly what that would mean which is why the feminists quickly shook it off their

head and say here i am hear me roar and it's quiet in the building and this leads me to my concern today in my caution current church tendency i don't care what church you're part of some do better better at this than others but current church tendency is to not see scripture as sufficient and when we are faced with a counter-cultural passage we are typically quick to say it no longer applies for the sake of cultural norms you might as well say amen right there for example the bible takes a very dim view of debt we say who cares debt is good everybody borrows the bible says husbands are supposed to lovingly their wives and their families the culture says this is not 1950 the bible says women shouldn't lead and preach the culture says paul was a chauvinist and oh by the way there were

uneducated amazons in ephesus the bible declares homosexuality an abominable sin the culture says they were just talking about sexual assault and they didn't understand orientation therefore the bible is irrelevant in this matter in fact there's a whole book just been written by a gay christian saying literally that what you read there doesn't doesn't mean what it said the scriptures are being reinterpreted as we speak to fit a cultural paradigm talk to me somebody how many times have you heard us say in this church that we're losing our children precisely because we've gotten away from scripture we've said it a zillion times but the tendency is because we're immersed in the world and immersed in culture the tendency is to interpret what we see in scripture not by what it meant to its

original hearers and then extrapolate from there but rather through the grid of the world so so often we say a plain obvious scriptures i know it says that but it don't mean that that's my that's my caution here that was my struggle here and i don't i can't get before you and do that that's wrong to do and so the danger is once everything becomes that was then this is now and it no longer applies all standards get thrown out marriage family what the gospel is the concept of sin what is lawful or not even the concept of grace is under assault in our current church culture i have and i hope you do too a healthy fear of the lord and tampering with his word you shall not add to the word that i command you nor take from it that you may keep the commands of the lord your god that i command you

i want everyone who hears the words of the prophecy of this book if anyone adds to them god will add to him the plagues described in this book and if anyone takes away from the words of this prophecy god will take away his share in the tree of life and in the holy city which are described in this book he who testifies to these things says surely i am coming soon amen come lord jesus the bible itself ends with the warning don't mess with the book okay let all of us recall the great passage in second timothy three all scripture is breathed out by god right and it's profitable for for reproof for correction for training and righteousness so i had to kind of calibrate myself to even figure out what this meant and not broad brush it that can't possibly mean that simply because in the last 50

years it's been thrown overboard and it's quiet in the building okay some thoughts on context real fast and then we'll walk through this passage okay almost everyone sees this passage as dealing with church meetings primarily because prayer and prophecy is mentioned in the text and prayer of course can be a private thing but prophecy is certainly meant for the body according to first corinthians 14 and 3 this view

is seems to be confirmed somewhat later in the chapter and we'll get there down in verses 17 and 18 where paul says when the following instructions i do not commend you because when you come together it is not for the better for the worse but in the first place when you come together as a church and so uh there's there seems to be some confirmation within the text that he's now

beginning to deal with issues within the local church there is some debate that the context of first corinthians 11 2 through 16 is broader than that but at a minimum i think is reasonably and biblically safe to say that whatever we learn about head coverings would certainly apply in lord's day worship okay whatever we learn about it and there's another contextual consideration i figure while i'm out here in shark infested waters i might as well take a lap or two so while i'm in here and y'all looking at me like this already let me just go and enjoy it i mean you may not be back next week i don't know so let's go ahead and deal many people look at first corinthians chapter 11 verse 5 where it talks about a woman not praying and prophesying with her head uncovered and say see a woman can

pray and prophesy in church therefore women should be able to be pastors i told you i'm out here let's go ahead and run they say that since she can pray and prophesy and worship she can preach and pastor but if we look at the passage carefully and look at all of first corinthians it's about head coverings as john calvin wrote in his own commentaries for when he reproves them for prophesying with their head uncovered he at the same time does not give them permission to prophesy in some other way but delays that condemnation of that until another passage namely first corinthians 14 for and i'll and i'll read the passage and y'all will love this i'm looking forward to seeing your smiles for god is not a god of confusion but of peace as in all the churches of the saints the women should keep

silent in the churches for they are not permitted to speak but should be in submission as the law also said if there is anything they desire to learn let them ask their husbands at home for it is shameful for a woman to speak in church or was it from you that the word of god came or are you the only ones that agree if anyone thinks that he's a prophet or spiritual he should acknowledge that the things that i am writing to you are a command of the lord if anyone does not recognize this he is not recognized now the passes i just read from first corinthians 14 would seem to totally contradict first corinthians 11 if women could publicly with authority pray and prophesy or teach in church services as opposed to elsewhere in a context fitting to her design and fitting to her god ordained role

talk about that one of the reasons why head coverings are because it it reinforces god's design the bible friends does not contradict itself we will cover women in ministry issues in detail later we'll get there first corinthians 14 we'll have no choice right but for now at least in the first century there are three things that we can gather and they will walk through the passage number one women and wives covered their heads when they prayed and prophesied number two women and wives were covered in church services as well as uh as well as history shows so we've seen the pictures and you do the research for yourself number three despite being covered in church services any prayer or prophecy by women was done in such a way as to not be shameful in the churches and ladies i can't hear some

men saying amen i don't hear y'all saying nothing bless your hearts god bless you now i recognize the inflammatory nature of this topic i do and that's why you know we work so hard here but let me just say that i'm not trying to be divisive i'm not trying to hurt churches hurt friendships i have people in my sphere of influence that i love greatly would disagree with this they would hold opposite positions as as i've i'm laying out but here's my heart okay uh i believe it was luther who said my conscience is held captive to the word of god i'm simply trying to be honest with the text i can't stand before you and say yeah it says a but it

really means z i gotta answer to god for that and so if god has defined men's roles and women's roles both at home and in church then who am i to get up

before you and and tell you otherwise we will be judged by our obedience and uh not for salvation for us christians but we're still there's still something that god's going to say to us about what we did with his word and so because the entire world decides that uh you know the this is true and the whole world has decided homosexuality is okay but is it no okay so i just want you to know i'm not intentionally trying to be divisive and please don't use this message as a hammer over somebody else's head that is not my goal my goal is to teach you what the bible says okay now let's walk through this passage verse two i commend you because you remember me and everything and maintain the traditions even as i delivered them to you understand that there are two uses for the word translated

traditions in the new testament the word in greek is paradoxes translated as traditions one use uh it's used at at times when referring to a man-made attempt to invalidate what is handed down by god jesus rebuked the religious leaders of his day for doing something similar you see that over in matthew chapter 15 verse 3 and so it can be a man-made tradition the other use of the word that we see in the new testament is literally a precept something that is in fact handed down by god and there are some examples of that as well paul's letter to the church at tesla nica as an example second thessalonians 2 so then brothers stand firm and hold to the paradoxes the traditions that you were taught by us either by our spoken word or by our letter in other words traditions can be scripture can be

referred to as traditions all right also second thessalonians 3 now we command you brethren in the name of our lord jesus christ that you withdraw yourself from every brother that walketh disorderly and not after the tradition he received from us and so again these these were precepts if you have to separate from somebody okay and so the word is used two ways we have to determine how it's used in our text based on the context here's your filling the word implies a precept p-r-e-c-e-p-t a precept a precept or as the king the king james version translates it literally an ordinance an ordinance or a law paul's language throughout this section makes clear that this was no take it or leave it thing for the early church remember i'm answering a hermeneutical question what did it mean to its

original hearers that's what i'm working on right now that's called exegesis okay what did it mean to its original hearers nobody was sitting in corinth getting that letter read to them saying oh he's talking about put on a wedding ring oh he's talking about wear a dress because he wears a suit that is not what it meant to its original hearers okay and so the tradition then here is literally an ordinance or a precept based on the language throughout this section uh he actually said in verse 16 as we'll read that every church did this there was no other custom if you want to argue about it fine but you're arguing about something that the entire church was doing and it's very quiet in here it's been a long time since i've heard it this quiet in here just want you to understand i was against

this going in just want you to understand that so look at your neighbor say let the scripture change you but i want to i want you to understand that the head of every man is christ the head of a wife is her husband and the head of christ is god after the apostle says okay y'all done okay in some things but now we need to straighten some stuff out he begins to build a case for this quote-unquote tradition or this this ordinance that they hadn't exactly followed like he wanted them to this verse here verse three is an unequivocal statement of god's governing order this is just the way it is okay it is important to see that this is a truth that a husband is the head of his wife that christ is the head of man that god the father is the head of god the son in terms of subordination it's

important to see that that is it has absolutely nothing to do but whether you live in 1300 or you live in 2014 or you lived in 200 a.d that's just true somebody just say that's just true but here's what you have to see it exegetically or using your interpretive skills he's basing his argument in that which is eternal there's no other way to look at that why is he going here when he's about to tell a right because he's rooting this argument in god's governing order that's what he's doing okay this that truth is binding for all time contrary to egalitarian opinion egalitarians would be people who don't see role distinctions between men and women okay generally speaking the word head does not mean source but one who is in authority over that's what that means you know i mean if a wife goes

to her husband said you're not my head you're just my source i'm gonna do what i want to because you're the source of how i can do what i want to do in other words it's a perversion of what the text honestly says can you imagine christ going to the father saying you're not my head you're just my source i do what i want to do and y'all y'all okay bless god it is also important to note that this does not imply inferiority but role just as christ is not inferior to the father but subordinate to him likewise a woman is not inferior to a man or a wife is not inferior to her husband simply she plays a different role okay um the greek here for the word woman can be translated wife or woman depending on the context and she most certainly would in whatever context is not inferior but she plays

a different role can you see now and as we walk through this begin to see why the culture hates this look beyond the thing on the head and look at what god said it means can you see why from hollywood to bloggers to even many in the church would detest this very clear to see very easy to see okay number three every man who prays and prophesies with his head covered dishonors his head well who is not talking about dishonoring his physical head stay in the context with me who's the head of man christ when a man prays or prophesies with his head covered he dishonors his head we've been telling men for as long as i can remember take your hat off when you go into a house take your hat off gentlemen remove that hat teach the young men take off the hats i have people get mad in this church one

of our pastors man can you just go ahead and just take your hat why so everybody's good with that part okay as we'll see below because man is the glory of god and what does god mean by that simply this that god made adam first out of the dust of the ground in genesis 2 7 adam was the glory of god he was the glory of god's creation everything was he created everything then he created man and then saw that it wasn't good for man to be alone so when man or rather man is not to be covered when he prays and prophesies again please note that this instruction is rooted in god's order and now we're getting in his governing order now we're beginning to take a look at god's creation according to scripture when a man covers his head in worship he dishonors christ that's what it says i can't make it

not say that that's what it says that's why no man wears a hat in in service that's why you wear them outside you take them off when you come in okay that's why in other words man you are not a woman therefore don't dress like one to do so dishonors christ okay don't dress like one and then you can get a sense then of how perverse all the androgyny is in the culture you can begin to get a sense that when when you lift up women being men and talking like men and stomping around a pulpit like a man just kind of go really and you in the flip side is just as horrible when when you have a a man that that purposely walks with an effeminate posture everything in you ought to scream this doesn't look right doesn't sound right can't be right lord help this brother he's a man stay in the pocket sir

okay so you aren't a woman don't dress like one his physical uncovered head are y'all still with me you know i oh i meant to tell you too i prayed that the lord would pack this place with angels today i mean just

help us hear god so please if you if you're fighting to hear is you know it's more going on here just just use your normal bible reading skills nothing different nothing abusing i'm the ordinary nothing unusual okay now a man's physical uncovered head is a symbolic way god has chosen to reveal his own glory in the church since man is made in his image and i underline god has chosen because that's what the bible says okay of note let's establish that also a woman is made in god's image but she walks in a different role and we'll get to that but let's also establish that symbols in

the bible can be very very important all right uh what is baptism if not a symbol that we've been commanded to keep what is the lord's supper right in front of us we are not catholic we don't believe in transubstantiation and so we don't believe that the juice here is literally the blood in the in the in the wafer here is literally the body we see this as symbolic designed to cause us to remember okay we so that's that's the way that works so physical symbols in scripture do in fact represent deeper realities and let's not forget one of my favorite symbols this one here i always kind of baffled me but it's still in the bible you remember what happened to the passover when the final plague came upon egypt god's people were in goshen god said hey i need you to kill this animal i need you to

take the blood and you put some blood on the lintel of the doorposts because the death angel is going to sweep through this place and kill everybody that's not covered by the blood now are you telling me that the angel didn't know who's which people was god's and which weren't but yet the symbol was still required are you going to try to tell me that god didn't know who was his he most certainly did but the symbol was still required so much so that if you didn't put it on there you would die okay so let's not front as if symbols don't aren't important at times in scripture because it most certainly is okay number four from verse five but every wife that prays and prophesies with her head uncovered dishonors her head since it is the same as if her head was shaven so the head of her wife

according to scripture is her husband if you're reading nasb or new king james they don't root it as much those translators didn't root as much in this context and so they just open it up and say the head of a woman is man okay and so in general terms that would be true from the garden of eden all right so those those translations are just fine since a man needed to be uncovered a wife or a woman needed to be distinct and covered no androgyny in scripture okay really understand what paul was saying here apparently some corinthian men wanted to be covered because and oh by the way that was a jewish tradition as well i'll talk about that here momentarily and some corinthian women wanted to not be covered and paul's having to correct it there was rebellion you're blank on both sides here's

what i want you to know about that okay i can hear some of you saying but this was this this culture and yeah it may have been all up till my grandmother but it ain't us now please understand this when paul was preaching this it was counter-cultural across the churches here's what i mean by that in jewish culture everybody covered your head the men came in to the synagogue covered the women came in to the synagogue covered and there were jews in the churches right and in in greece i guess greco culture nobody covered so he wasn't preaching it the jewish way and he wasn't preaching it the pagan way it was something totally new for the church men don't cover can you imagine the scandal of of a jewish man who accepted christ who believed in christ who had to take off his covering that he

grew up all his life likewise can you imagine the rebellion of a greek of a greco woman a greco roman woman who all of a sudden was told to have a physical sign on her head that she accepts god's order and it's quiet in this building my goodness crcc are y'all all right paul is saying that a man is in rebellion against christ by covering and a woman is in rebellion against her husband by uncovering when doing times of

prayer and prophecy or worship the word for cover in these verses is a greek word that literally means to be veiled or unveiled okay based on the grammar based on the context based on the history there is no question that what paul was referring to and what the church heard in this scripture for 1900 plus years is a head covering as much as i wanted to fight that it just is

true that's what's being said in the scripture first corinthians 11 and six for if a wife will not cover her head then she should cut her hair short but since it is disgraceful for a wife to cut off her hair or shave her head let her cover her head paul literally says to wives and ladies stop trying to be men and this is this is not to bring any condemnation on anybody in here based on their hair length just hear the scripture that's all we're doing okay because it's really ultimately not even about hair length so just hear the okay stop trying to be men ladies in the corinth church but since y'all want to walk in the place of men i.e to not be covered in church you might as well shave your head and look like one oh that's too much for you good that's why you need to cover your head that

is what's being said here okay and i mean i was checking this in commentary of the commentary of the comments i mean i was i was going to the batter's box and as i was just calling people i mean hey you know and but that's what he's saying here he's saying if you what you y'all are trying to do is be who you're not and men what you're trying to do is be who you're not and both of it results in rebellion and dishonor okay and so everybody take a deep breath and breathe it in blow it out okay the temptation right now is to get again to get all cultural there's your feeling in our thinking to get all cultural well then let's take that detour let's just kind of embrace that for a moment and let's kind of come at it from this angle is our culture confused today about the sexes yes or no i mean

do you are we confused as a culture i would say we are as confused as we have ever been okay is the church supposed to model god's order obviously yes and so when a church then is just like at home i mean some of you have been in home with a husband sitting in the chair with remote control no i'm saying get up do i need you to such and such and be don't and be on time and come on get over there man do that and she sits down with her feet up and most of us will walk in there and go oh my goodness that is out of order or if you've ever been in a house where the kids are running things and the and the parents seem i just don't know but they got to express themselves and they fell for all this cultural foolishness and you walk in there and go i have an extra switch if you want one you can use

my belt this is craziness i mean you know and so i mean this is well likewise can you imagine a church well obviously we all can't imagine a church that's totally out of order debating whether to tell this story i'm not going to tell it okay so but see y'all are getting me in trouble jesus is sitting front row right there this is an audience of one here today baby okay i'll tell part of it i'll compromise there's a situation that i heard about another state where there was a female minister in a church and her husband was the deacon and she decides to leave this church to go start her own church the husband who was the deacon of the senior pastor there who was male just loved the church but the wife decided she was leaving to start her own church because she wasn't getting the recognition

that she wanted to get so the deacon also leaves to go with the wife and i remember talking to people involved in the situation and i was going well why didn't he just stay and and look at his wife with love and say baby we're not going anywhere this is our home this is our church and i remember the reply came back well what else could he do out of order what he could do is get him a i guess a larger pair of britches what kind of foolishness is that so is so is she now his pastor not trying to cause a bunch of waves but i mean again what we're looking at is an out of order situation and so the whole culture so when you

interpret the bible based upon culture you could actually be bringing an out of order thing to bear on the scriptures so other cultures because you can say well other

cultures view it this way that's a losing game it's not based upon the culture it's based upon the scripture the divine heart hierarchy apparently needed to be re-established in corinthe that hierarchy was to be reinforced visually just because we no longer do something doesn't mean it wasn't done paul's language here uses the word disgraceful in esv pretty much leaves a little room for argument that this was a serious thing verse 7 for a man ought not to cover his head since he is the image and glory of god but a is the glory of man but this passage takes us back what time is it i don't want to go too long what time is it what 9 22 okay somebody holler at me when it's nine i don't have a watch if you holler at me when it's like 9 45 because then we need to shut it down and do the glorious

table okay so a man ought not to cover his head since he's the image and glory of god but a woman's glory man this passage takes us back to genesis genesis okay paul uses creation order as part of his defense of ed cover okay he actually uses so he used governmental order first now he's using creation order which they both are very similar but he's using creation order to bolster his argument as we've already said since male and female are both made in the image of god a woman however was given another part of the story to play just as man is god's glory according to scripture woman is or wife a wife is man's glory remember according to scripture even before the fall woman was created for the man this is without debate here this is the bible woman was created for the man she was created

from the man she was brought to the man and she was named by the man stole that from bony baka but it's still the truth all right um it sounds horrible to modern ears but it just happens to be true okay and of course woman in her role is beautiful she is good man's glory god's design is perfect she isn't inferior she's created with purpose in mind to be a helper for man that was god's original purpose for creating ease okay yes i know we've been indoctrinated away from that i feel it in the room but it's still true in worship that glory however must be veiled according to apostle paul symbolically that only the glory of god shows because man is the glory of god for a woman to be uncovered or to otherwise flaunt herself was to cast off the authority over her uh place herself in man's place

be immodest and promote man's glory not god's so this was also a modesty thing because it would be hard to wear a head covering with everything hanging out i gotta amen from a baby in the corner thank god for a family integrated church verse eight for man was not made from woman but woman for man we talked about that again paul uses creation order for his defense of head coverings and both man and woman's roles within the church paul used a similar reasoning in a i think a passage of scripture that's probably hated even more than head covering which is first timothy 2 i do not permit a woman to teach or exercise authority over a man rather she is to remain quiet for adam was formed first then eve and adam was not deceived but the woman was deceived and became a transgressor people say it

was a problem in ephesus that's why the women weren't allowed to preach paul says i'm it's because of the garden it was and that hasn't changed and so you know again i i have been walking gently here for a long time and i'm still trying to walk gently but if you notice there's a reason why there's an all-male eldership here it's because of the scripture not trying to be divisive not trying to hurt anybody gonna always respect those and love those not gonna divide with you gonna go to war with you when it's time to march on the black gate and go preach the gospel i'm just telling you i can't just ignore the scripture the interpretive method is the clear always interprets the unclear and so you don't take a greeting that looks like a greeting and undermine a precept greet the church

priscilla and akilla that's in your house oh she i mean she was a co-pastor what they didn't say he paul already said what that was whatever she was doing she wasn't violating this that doesn't make any that's a backwards way if you start interpreting the bible that way you end up with gay is okay so with love with respect with gentleness i'm just trying to be honest here okay um verse nine the reasoning is similar neither was man created for woman but woman for man the same reason so he's still laying this out i mean he spent a lot of time trying to convince this church that they needed to listen verse 10 that is why a wife ought to have a symbol of authority on her head because of the angels bless god so then god's governing order and creation order service foundations for why a woman

ought to have a symbol of authority on her head the phrase is literally power on her head again for most of christian history the symbol of a wife's omission and a woman's understanding and embracing of her role was a head covering something that was literally on her head a ring of course wouldn't work because number one it wasn't on her head and number two men wear them too should all men take off their rings and worship you know that's just all us doing that okay paul now brings in a very hard to understand additional reason for coverings because of the angels somebody say because of the angels now i need i need you to kind of get get what's going on here for those of you who will disagree with my take on this and that's okay i love you you don't have to fight over this and i pray we

don't but um for those of you who say this is cultural you got to deal with this angel's piece you got to deal with it and you got to deal with it deal with it honestly because if you're going to presuppose then that it was only for cultural reasons then you have to deal with you know the angels you know in other words the symbol wasn't just for men and women the symbol was for the angels as well we can debate what that means and and and rightly we should because he doesn't clarify it to the tee but whatever it is it ain't had nothing to do with the culture okay i like the interpretation by john calvin that angels as ministering spirits who perfectly obey god god's commands and order are present as we worship and be offended at any disregard of god's design and will also satan and every

demon are also fallen angels who fell because of rebellion and pride would be publicly rebuked at such a symbol so that so i like that you know i can't state that dogmatically but it sounds plausible also let us recall that even angels as mighty as they are at times cover themselves in the presence of god who can forget isaiah 6 i mean we got a whole song on this one two wings right anybody heard that song before in the year king uziah died i saw the lord sitting upon a throne high and lifted up and the train of his robe filled the temple above him stood the seraphim each had six wings with two he covered his face with two he covered his feet with two he flew why and one called to another and said holy holy holy is the lord of hosts and the earth is filled a fool of his glory and so even

angels knew better than to flaunt their beauty in the presence of god that's one way to look at it not the only way to look at it but one way to look at it the critical lesson for the angels thing is what again whatever it meant it had nothing to do with whether it was corinth or alexandria or jerusalem or philadelphia or chesapeake nevertheless in the lord woman is not independent of man nor man of woman lest any man think he can take sinful advantage of his position by mistreating his wife paul speaks the truth we are in interdependent and so when it's all said and done for any man who would take this god's order and try to misuse it and be a bully um he says no no hold on we're still interdependent we still are both joint heirs just with different roles for as men as woman was made for

man so man is now born of woman and all things are from god same thought as above men and women are both joint heirs in christ just with different roles okay i don't know about you but i'm glad i'm not having

the babies but we must not confuse role order differences with with intrinsic value okay and so we have a different role but we are equal in terms of value in terms of ontological value but that's just how that works they're both made in god's image with different roles judge for yourselves is it proper for a wife to pray with her head uncovered paul is obviously trying to lead them to the answer of no in the text right but he wants them to think it through objectively and then he begins to use yet another example he's still making his case another example does not nature itself

teach you that if a man wears long hair it is a disgrace for him another part of his defensive head coverings is nature he appeals to men looking like men and women looking like women a natural normal thing that shows differences in divine design so he's still building his case he's just okay governmental order creation order the angels nature and he's not done he has one more in his in his quiver here okay but if a woman has long hair it is her glory for her hair is given to her for covering many people say to see she if she has any hair on her head she's good my question to that is so why bring this up why bring this up why even have why is he going through all these links if hair is the issue you got hair you're good no that's not he's using an example okay the greek word first of all

for covering for hair here is different than the verses that we saw earlier in verses three through six but besides that is reasonably obvious that if a woman's hair is her symbolic covering none of this argument would have been necessary in the first place i mean why even bring it up if your hair is it since most women have some hair somewhere paul has obviously lost his mind apparently because he's fussing over nothing right no that's so so he's using as a parallel example he's saying by bringing up a woman's hair paul is showing an example from nature since women are naturally covered because they had normally have longer hair than men normatively and men are not naturally covered because men either have short hair or will talk to me somebody it it might go some of us it starts here

some of us is in here some of us it just kind of goes like that okay but you know and it starts at different but a lot of times i've noticed these days even the younger guys we must be living almost stressed because i'm losing some and somebody or something but everybody's got a little thing happening a little field goal right here a little field over a little landing strip over there i'm like wow man so everybody just to shave it off we just shave it off okay but since women then are normally nor more normatively covered men are not then it just speaks to what he was saying it demonstrates that women should also be symbolically covered in other words every time you see hair that points to not don't do this but do this that's what he's saying for this to make any logical sense at all okay

it was also a way of affirming here's a blank modesty and worship modesty and worship you know ladies and men when you take your clothing styles from the culture and all you grew up with is tight and everything's showing i mean people get offended but what you've done is you've assimilated the culture as opposed to checking your heart looking in the mirror honestly and um you know and some of you some of you men have a role to play here as well you know with you know it's always about the heart of course but we're talking here this text here is about a symbol but we have to deal with what the text is actually talking about uh and so some of you some of you men will have a really loving and tender role to play and how your daughters come up and see themselves right and so nothing irritates

me more at a husband when a father looks at his daughter dressed like a hoochie and doesn't see it and she just struts on out the house i'm like dude what are you doing tighten that down help her help her honor god be a father but this is a whole nother area of of controversy i've noticed that even some ladies who swear they're not feminists get mad here when it comes to modesty and and i can't give you a style or a

form and that starts to get into legalism but this scripture here is also affirming modesty in in worship okay if anyone is inclined to be contentious and there are many practices that have been made throughout the history of the church we have no such practice nor do the churches of god now all we've done so far is just look exegetically always what did it mean to the church

at Corinth all we've done okay and so Paul ends his defense of head coverings by appealing to what i call normative church practice he gives you governing order creation order angelic observance uh nature and now he says you know and if y'all still want to fight about this because Apparently they were fighting about this too.

If they still wanna fight about this, we have no other custom than this.

This is what we do. This is all the churches of God understand and practice this principle. So Corinth would have been under some rebuke and under many fronts and would have had to get this straight.

And I think it bears out, history bears out reasonably convincingly that this is how the church saw this text for again, 1900 plus years. So what does that mean for us? Now we can talk about what it means for us as we conclude. What does that mean for us? Are y'all all right? Okay, what does this mean for us? Well, first of all, the biblical tradition ordinance of head coverings is rooted in the things that I just mentioned.

Okay, number two. Symbols are important. Talked about that.

Outward signs of eternal realities. Number three. Although many hold to a culture hermeneutic and we love them and there's no argument.

We're not gonna fuss, not gonna fight. It's not something to fuss and fight over. But although many hold to a culture hermeneutic, here's my point here.

It's hard to make that case from scripture alone. It just is. It's hard to do that.

Number four. As a result of this text, which is actually reasonably straightforward if you just read it, right? Christian women, not just wives, covered their heads during worship for the entire history of the church of God until very recently. And oh, by the way, many in the world still do.

Many in the West don't. When I mean West, I mean the United States, Canada, Britain, and some of the more, I guess, progressive and advanced European countries. But if you go to parts of Asia, parts of India, other parts of Russia, other parts of the world, when women go to church services, you'll see them covered.

When I went to India, I saw them covered. Okay, so that's normally kind of the Western thing. As a result, here's my position so that we're clear.

As a result, we affirm the practice as honorable and biblical. No CRCC woman should feel ashamed to wear a head covering and none should malign or criticize that sister if her family chooses head covering. We affirm men, this is a change for me.

I've studied this out and had to change by the scripture. Okay, we affirm also the practice of men not being covered in worship, which as we've seen, is much less controversial and frankly, just looks out of place and wrong. Okay, however, given the newness of the doctrine to many of you, we do not feel we should attempt to mandate the practice for the greater good of the unity of this local body and therefore we leave

it to each household to wrestle with the scriptures and come to their own conclusion.

Okay, that's where I fell down on it. We pray that our attempts to simply be honest with the scripture is a blessing and even if our conclusions run contrary to what is normally taught within the culture. We also pray to our God and to our Christ that Satan, who is the father of rebellion, would not be allowed to use a passage of scripture that teaches against rebellion to cause rebellion.

I hope you would join me in that prayer as well. No rebellion whatsoever, either in word, deed, or attitude. Amen, hallelujah.

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