

Head-Coverings in Worship Part 4

by Milton Vincent

This sermon explores the biblical teachings on head coverings in worship and encourages an open and obedient attitude towards Scripture.

Duration: 56:51

Scripture: 1 Samuel 3:1, Matthew 6:33, 1 Corinthians 11:2-16

Topics: "Head Coverings"

Description

In this sermon, the preacher focuses on the topic of head coverings in worship, specifically in 1 Corinthians 11:2-16. The sermon is part 4 of a series on this subject. The preacher begins by reviewing the text and then delves into the arguments given by Paul in support of head coverings. The first argument is based on the structure of relationships in God's economy, emphasizing the hierarchy of Christ, man, woman, and God. The preacher also highlights the importance of having the courage to obey God's instructions, as demonstrated by Samuel's willingness to listen and obey.

Transcript

Good morning, if you have not received a four page handout, raise your hand. Got some helpers who will get those to you. And let me go and invite you guys to turn in your Bibles to First Corinthians chapter 11.

First Corinthians chapter 11 for time of study in the word this morning. And for those of you that are visiting with us, you must understand that we are doing a verse by verse study through the book of First Corinthians. A decision that we made about a year and a half ago to just work our way through the book, a verse at a time.

And as we continue in our study of this book, we find ourselves once again in First Corinthians chapter 11, verses 2 through 16. And you want to get used to this passage because we're going to be here at least through the 10th of February and perhaps even even beyond that, you should have in your possession a four page handout. That's the first four pages of what is now 28 pages of material that ultimately we're going to be walking through as we try to turn over every stone and understand what God has for us in First Corinthians chapter 11, verses 2 through 16.

And the title of the message this morning is Head Coverings in Worship, Part 4. Head Coverings in Worship, Part 4. Folks, just to kind of give you an idea of what we're going to be doing today and then into next Sunday and beyond. Today, what we're going to do is we're going to review the text once again.

We're going to go quickly over things that we've already covered and then spend a little more time on things that we've not looked at in depth that are in the text.

And then hopefully by the time we are done this morning, we will have been able to spend a little bit of time on page four dealing with the question of our head coverings for today. In other words, is Paul's specific teaching on head coverings specifically applicable to us today in the church here in the United States? And we're going to begin to answer that question. I'm going to give you what my thinking is, at least at this point, and the reasons for it.

And we're going to try to work through that. And we're going to begin to do that this morning. We're going to carry that into next Sunday morning and evening, just dealing with the question of our head coverings for today.

At some point, probably next Sunday, I'm thinking that we're going to wrap that up and then deal with another question. And that is, if head coverings are for today, then why do so many people say they're not? And I want to walk you through all the reasons that I've heard and read as to why people say that head coverings are not for today. And we'll try to give them an honest treatment, understanding what those concerns are.

And then I will walk you through what my response is to those concerns. And then when we finish that, walking through all of that, what we will then do after that is deal with some applicational, practical questions that I know many of you are asking. And that is, if you do assume that Paul's specific teaching on men not wearing head coverings and women should wear head coverings when involved in ministry or in worship, especially in a public capacity, if you do believe that and interpret the text that way, how do you then answer numerous practical questions about when to wear a head covering? What should the head covering look like? Is there anything in the text that gives us any indication of that? Who should wear the head coverings, just married women or single women also included? Should I wear one while merely attending a worship service? Or is it only when I'm ministering up front or only when I'm praying or prophesying? And we'll try to deal with all of those questions and sort through them.

So that's what we're going to be doing from now all the way through whenever in February. So anyway, what we're going to do this morning is spend a little more time in the text and then perhaps near the latter part of the message this morning we'll look beyond that and start looking at the situation today and asking, is Paul's specific teaching on head coverings applicable to us today? Folks, before we actually do get into the text this morning, I want to take a little bit of time to caution every one of you and myself against five wrong attitudes. You won't find this in your notes, but you might want to write these down.

There are five attitudes that I'm very concerned about that we as a church body be careful to avoid. All five of these are wrong, wrong, wrong. And we want to be examining ourselves and our relationships with one another and before the Lord and making sure that we're not guilty of any of these attitudes.

The first attitude that I think the Lord does not want to see in any of us is a closed and defiant attitude. A closed and defiant attitude. And when I say that, I mean the kind of attitude that says, I know head coverings aren't for today and I don't even need to listen to it.

I don't even want to hear anything. They're not for today and I know that. And you know what? Even if they are, I'm not going to wear one.

There are actually people who have that kind of attitude and some who have this attitude have the attitude of, you know what? I don't even want to hear about this text. This text is a very spooky one for them. They don't even want to hear what it has to say because they're afraid of what it may require of them.

This week I was talking to a lady long distance who occasionally we've sent sermon tapes to and she was asking how things were going at the church and I told her we were going through 1 Corinthians 11 and she kind of laughed and she said, don't ever send me sermon tapes on that passage because I don't want to hear it. And she was laughing when she said that, but you know what? There's an element of truth there and that is people are afraid of this passage. They don't want to know what it says because they are afraid of what it may end up requiring of them.

And folks, I'm not telling you dogmatically that every one of you needs to end up agreeing with me on how I'm going to handle the passage, but I do know this dogmatically that every one of us in this room ought to have an attitude that says, whatever this passage does say, I will do. You may not know what it's saying yet. You may not be convinced.

You may end up even disagreeing with me, but your attitude needs to be whatever this passage says, I'm going to bring my life and my practice into harmony with it. You know, people who have that kind of attitude, they never lack for the voice of God in their life. God sees people with a heart like that and he dumps his truth upon such individuals.

And I submit to you the example of the little boy Samuel in 1 Samuel 3. You don't need to turn there. But you know, the chapter begins by saying the word of the Lord was rare in those days. There were infrequent visions.

It's obvious at the beginning of that chapter that God wasn't talking to the people of Israel. And you begin to look at the history of the situation and you find out why. And that is because it's the latter period of the Judges, the latter part of the period of the Judges where every man's going around doing what? Doing what was right in whose eyes? In his own eyes.

And so if you talk to the Israelites then and say, yeah, I'm doing the right thing. But they're doing what seemed right to them and what seemed right in their culture and what everyone else was doing. And so they were doing what seemed right in their own eyes rather than in the eyes of God as that was revealed in the Scripture he had already given to them in the form of the law.

And so they're ignoring God's revelation he's already given to them. They're doing their own thing, doing what seemed right to them and to their culture. Consequently, why would God want to speak to a people like that? You see what I'm saying? They're blowing off what he has said and so he's not speaking to them.

However, at the end of 1 Samuel 3, it says, And the word of the Lord came again to Samuel. And the word of the Lord came to all of Israel through Samuel as it moves into chapter 4. So suddenly God's speaking again. What made the difference? Well, as you read that chapter, you find right in the middle of that chapter, the little boy Samuel came before the Lord as God called him during the night.

And he said, Speak, Lord, your servant is listening. He says, speak to me, Lord, I want you to speak to me. You are my Lord and I am your servant.

Literally, I'm your bond slave. My will is swallowed up in yours. And he says, and I am listening.

And that verb that is translated listening in 1 Samuel chapter 3 over 90 times in the Old Testament is translated as obey. So it doesn't just mean, you know, I'll give you a hearing, Lord. I'll listen to what you have to say and then I'll decide what I want to do.

No, what he's saying is, Lord, I will listen to and do and obey whatever you tell me. Little Samuel saying, I don't even know what you're going to say yet. But whatever it is, I'm telling you right now, I am your bond slave and I'm going to listen and obey whatever you tell me to do.

Now, that takes courage. And do you have that kind of courage? When Samuel said those words with a genuine heart, God was thinking, I found my man. I found someone who wants to hear my voice and he doesn't even know what I'm going to say yet.

But he's telling me he will obey. Consequently, God began speaking again because he found a channel through which he could speak to whom he could speak and through whom he could speak to all of Israel. Folks, it takes a lot of courage for you to come to the text of Scripture and say, I don't even know fully what this is saying yet.

But Lord, whatever it is, I'm telling you right now, I'm going to do it. Not I'll study it and I'll see what it says and then I'll determine yes or no, whether I want to obey. No, Lord, I don't even know what it says yet.

But whatever it does say, I'm telling you right now, I will obey and bring my life into harmony with this passage. And folks, I really want to challenge you to have that attitude rather than a closed and defiant attitude. When I came to this church a little over 10 years ago, I told the elders this up front.

And that is my commitment as a preacher of the word is going to be to preach the word, to preach the text of Scripture. And whatever the text says, that's what I want to do. That's what I want to follow.

And my commitment over the last 10 years of my ministry has been to study the Scripture, a text at a time. And I understand that I can never fully lay aside my presuppositions when I approach a text. But I can and I must lay aside my allegiances to those presuppositions.

And my allegiance needs to be to the text of Scripture. My attitude needs to be that if I find something in this text that disagrees with something I believed all along, guess who needs to change? I need to change and my beliefs need to change. If I find something in this text that is different from what I have practiced up until this point, then I need to allow myself to change and follow the text of Scripture as God is speaking to me through it.

And folks, that's been my attitude over the last decade of my ministry. But I want to be candid with you. This passage has really put that to the test more than anything else I've ever preached.

And I will admit to all of you that when I came to this passage in earnest a couple of months ago, my bias was in the direction of I don't want this to be for today. And when I would read a commentator that says this is a cultural thing, it's not for today, my heart would leap and I'd go, good, okay, what are his reasons? And I was disappointed time after time because the reasons were not derived from the text of Scripture. And we're going to get into that in later days.

But folks, I even caught myself this week, my heart closing back up again. And it takes work on my part to keep my heart open to whatever it is that God is saying. And I share that with you to say this, that if I have to work at that, then I know that many of you have to struggle with that as well.

And I want to really exhort you all to have an open heart to whatever God says in this passage. Just have a sense of abandonment to the Lord. Lord, whatever this says, I'll do.

I don't care what anyone else will think. I want to follow your word as I clearly understand it. So the Lord does not want amongst any of us a closed and defiant attitude.

Also, another attitude I want to caution you guys against, and we'll go more quickly through the remaining four, is a lazy and an overly submissive attitude. Some of you may be thinking, you know what, I don't know why we've got to spend so much time. Milton, just tell us what to do.

I have an elders meeting and you guys decide and just tell us what to do and I'll just do whatever it is. I don't want to go through all the thinking process and do all the work and overturning every stone in the passage and all the logistics and the controversy. Just tell me what to do and I'll do it.

We're not going to do that. And that's actually a wrong attitude. Listen, I don't want to be the only one doing the work here.

And the elders don't either. Every one of you has a lot of work to do. And even as you listen to what I'm saying, I'm trying to make a contribution as a shepherd in your life.

But you know what, everything I say, you need to examine the scriptures to see if what I'm saying is really so. Just like the Bereans did in the book of Acts and put everything that is being said to the test, the test of scripture. So you've got to gird up the loins of your mind.

Don't be lazy. Put your thinking caps on and really work through this passage in earnest. And you come to the decision that you feel that the Lord is leading you to from this passage of scripture.

There have been times where people have come to me and they've said, you know, what should I do about this or what should I do about that? And I'm not telling anyone to do anything and I'm very careful not to do that. I'll give them things in the text that they need to be thinking about. But that's really the only role that I see myself playing or the elders playing at this particular point.

So we want to be careful that we don't have a lazy and an overly submissive attitude. You guys remember two weeks ago we were talking about the hair issue and the question came up of how long is too long of hair on men and how short is too short of hair on women. And I told you then we're not going to legislate that.

You're not going to come in on Sunday mornings and see a diagram up here that you can measure yourself up against. Or we have it in the door just inside the lobby as you come in and we'll have some people checking your hair. That's not going to happen.

We're not going to legislate that. But two weeks ago, I gave you specific counsel with regard to that. And that is that if you have any question about whether your life and your hairstyle is in harmony with what Paul teaches in this passage, you need to do three things, and that is you need to study the scripture.

Number two, you need to pray about it. And number three, you need to consult your own conscience in the matter. And then you need to do the right thing.

And that's basically what my counsel is going to be, even with regard to the head covering issue that is taught and affirmed throughout this passage. But you're going to have to do the work of arriving at that.

There's a third attitude that I want us to be careful to avoid, and that is an impatient attitude.

Some of you may be thinking, Milton, I don't even think you should be wasting time talking about attitudes right now. Let's get to the text and let's move on. I got a lot of questions that I'm asking.

I need some answers, and I'm bothered that it's going to take so long. If you're having that attitude, listen, I understand that and I respect that, but that's a wrong attitude to have. We need to do this right, amen, and really work together as a congregation and methodically go through everything so that we don't look back a year from now and go, man, we were careless.

I don't want that to happen. So just be patient. Another attitude I want all of us to avoid is a conformist attitude.

Maybe some of you ladies who aren't wearing a hat or a head covering, you're looking around at those who are, and you're thinking, man, what's wrong with me? And maybe they're now looking at me saying that something's wrong with me. Why am I not arriving at these conclusions as quickly as they have? And you may begin to feel rushed and pressured just by sheer peer pressure to go ahead and just conform. And you may be thinking right now, I'm not convinced that it's for today, and I'm having some real problems, and I've got a lot more to think through, but maybe I ought to just go ahead and do it because it seems like that's what a growing number of ladies are doing.

Listen, don't have that attitude. If it's going to take you all the way through the time that we're done to really think this through, take that time. If it takes you longer than that, the important thing is that every one of us realize we stand before God and we answer to Him.

We don't answer to anyone else in this church. We stand before God and answer to Him. And God, I want to do the work I need to do, and working through this passage and all the issues that are involved, and have that attitude rather than going ahead and capitulating and wearing a head covering just because that seems like what many others are beginning to do.

So don't have a conformist attitude. I don't want anyone wearing a head covering just because that's what other ladies are doing. And one final attitude I want us all to avoid is a judgmental attitude.

You know what, guys? And we're going to have to get used to this because starting in 1 Corinthians 11, we're now inside of church split material. The role of women in the church, touched on in chapter 14, the head covering issue, the issues related to spiritual gifts and the gift of tongues and so forth, is that for today or not? Those are issues that have literally split many churches right down the middle. We are in church split territory, and if we are not mature in our attitude as we work through these issues, then it can cause damage to this church body, and we need to be careful to avoid a judgmental attitude.

Those of you that are wearing head coverings looking at those who aren't saying, What's wrong with them? And, you know, they're just being defiant. And, you know, to judge them in that way and to judge their motives, there should be none of that. And those of you that aren't wearing a head covering, you should never look at someone who is and say, Oh, they're just doing that to conform.

And because that's what everyone else is doing. Or they're trying to show me up. Listen, let's have none of that.

But you know what? That kind of wickedness is in all of us and in me as well. And so we need to be examining our hearts and keeping our hearts and lives pure purged of those types of wicked and judgmental attitudes on either side of the issue. But I wanted to begin this morning by just going over those.

Let's make sure we avoid these five wrong attitudes that the devil could end up using to cause damage in this church body. But that having been said, as you look at page number one of the handout, some of this, a lot of this is what we covered last week. But there's some new material and we'll skim real quickly over what we did cover already.

And then we'll camp on those things that that we have not spent much time on thus far. But folks, Paul's primary point in 1 Corinthians 11, verses 2-16, as you see at the top of the page here, is that men should not cover their heads when they minister publicly through prayer or prophecy. Women should cover their heads when they minister publicly through prayer or prophecy.

I have read some writers who say, you know, that's not really what Paul's after. He's just after the principle. He's trying to teach principles here.

So let's just not obsess on the externals of the situation and let's focus on the principles, because that's all Paul is really teaching here. Paul would say to that, excuse me, are you not reading what I've said in this passage? Look at verse 4. Every man who has something on his head. Look at verse 5. Every woman who has her head uncovered.

Verse 6. For if a woman does not cover her head. Verse 7. For a man ought not to have his head covered. Verse 10.

Therefore, the woman ought to have a symbol of authority on her head. Folks, listen to me. Paul says many things in this passage, but everything that he's saying is designed to make these points.

And that is that men should not have an external kind of covering on their head when they pray and prophesy. Women, Paul teaches, should cover their heads when they minister publicly through prayer or prophecy. That's his point.

Paul begins in verse 2 by praising the majority for holding to the teaching with regard to this that he had taught them when he was with them five years earlier. But then, beginning in verse 3, Paul essentially begins to speak to the minority of men and women in the Corinthian church who were disregarding this custom regarding head coverings. There were some men in the church that were wearing head coverings, as was the Roman custom in Paul's day.

And there were also women who were throwing off their head coverings in violation of the teaching of Paul. And so Paul begins to argue with them, as it were. He gives them five arguments to show them why they need to heed his instruction on head coverings.

And the first argument that he gives them is this. Because of the structure of relationships in God's economy. He's saying, you guys need to heed my teaching on head coverings because of the structure of relationships in God's economy.

He says in verse 3, I want you to understand that Christ is the head of every man. And the man is the head of a woman. And God is the head of Christ.

Therefore, verse 4, every man who has something on his head, and so forth. So Paul clearly is making this connection. And he's saying, because of the structure of relationships in God's economy, you guys need to bring that fully to bear on your decisions about wearing a head covering or not.

Paul says that Christ is the head of every man. The man is the head of a woman. And at the very least, it speaks of the man.

The husband is the head of a wife. And God the Father is the head of Christ. Now folks, I want to take a little bit of time to talk about the word head in this passage.

It's the Greek word kephale. And basically what Paul is teaching, here's our understanding of it. That God the Father is the head of Jesus Christ.

Jesus Christ subjects himself in submission to his Father who is his head and authority in that sense. Even though they are equal in their essential being. Christ is the head of every man.

And so the man submits himself to Jesus Christ. Jesus Christ is the authority over his life, over the man's life. And then the man is the head of the woman.

He is the authority over the woman. And then the woman arranges her life in subjection and submission to her husband who is her head in the home. Well, that's clearly what Paul is teaching as he uses the word head in verse 3. However, I need to alert you to this.

If you're going to do any study of this passage on your own, you're going to come across some commentators who work very hard to change the meaning of the word kephale or the word head. Look at what I say in the box here. The Greek word for head is kephale.

Some try to argue that the word kephale means source or origin rather than ruler over or authority over. Often the motivation in interpreting the word in this way is to avoid offending feminist sensibilities. You need to know that's a very big motivation and people trying to change the meaning.

You probably already know this, but to talk about the man being the head of the wife and taking that to mean authority is something that is totally against the grain of our feminist influenced culture today. That is a very offensive teaching from the Apostle Paul that many people just outright reject and scoff at. However, there are some Bible believers who they don't want it to be offensive.

So they say, well, it doesn't mean authority. The word just speaks of source or origin. And however, look at what I say in the box here.

Wayne Grudem, who is a substantive scholar in his own right, has done an exhaustive survey of two thousand three hundred and thirty eight uses of this word from the eighth century B.C. to the fourth century A.D. In other words, he studied all the uses of this term in the Greek translation of the Old Testament throughout the New Testament and also extra biblical literature, a literature that is not scriptural, just to find out how this word was used. And he has located two thousand three hundred and thirty eight of them. He has studied every last one of them and he has found no clear uses of Kefalé as source or origin in any of these references.

So please understand that there's been a lot of work done on this, even to counter the feminist direction that some are trying to go with this word. And it does not hold up under closer scrutiny. Look at the last

paragraph in this box.

Paul's use of *Kefalé* and the following references clearly indicate that the intended meaning of the term is authority over or ruler over. And I want you very quickly to go with me to Ephesians chapter one. Ephesians chapter one.

And in the context, undeniably, Paul's talking about how God has elevated Christ and ascended Christ. And in ascending Christ, Paul says in verse twenty one of Ephesians one, He's ascended him far above all rule and authority and power and dominion and every name that is named, not only in this age, but also in the one to come. And he put all things in subjection under his feet and gave him as head over all things to the church.

Do you see the connection between subjection and head? Clearly, the connection is that one is a head and there are other things that are subjected to that one who is made the head in that situation. And one of the things you'll notice in some of the references that I'm going to point out is you'll notice the connection between subjection and headship in some of these references. And clearly, Paul is talking about the fact that Christ is the authority over, the ruler over all of these things that God has elevated him above and beyond.

And he's also the ruler and authority over the church. Go to Ephesians chapter five in verse twenty three. But let's begin in verse twenty one.

To get the flow of thought, he says in Ephesians five, twenty one, and be subject to one another in the fear of Christ. Verse twenty two wives be subject to your own husbands as to the Lord. There's the notion of subjection.

And then he says, why do I tell you to be subject to your husbands? Verse twenty three for the husband is the head of the wife. And now look, he uses the word head again with regard to Christ as Christ also is the head of the church. He himself being the savior of the body.

But as the church is subject, there's the subjection idea is subject to Christ. So also the wives ought to be to their husbands and everything. And that's clearly what the scripture is teaching.

You have the idea of headship. The husband is the head of the wife. Therefore, the wife subjects herself to her husband.

And also Christ is the head of the church. Therefore, the church subjects herself to Jesus Christ as well. Some of these other references in Colossians, you're welcome to look up.

But just for the sake of time, we will move on. But at least understand, folks, that the meaning of this term is that of ruler over or authority over. So the husband is the authority over his wife.

Now, in saying that, I'm not saying that that's all the husband is. No, the husband wife relationship, I mean, your best friends, your equals before God and the blessings of salvation and in your essential being. And so there's equality on so many levels.

But in addition to that equality and essential being and enjoyment of the blessings of salvation, there is a functional placement of the woman underneath the headship of her husband in the home. Paul then basically is saying in these verses, you need to heed my teaching on head coverings because of the

structure of relationships in God's economy. And then a second argument that he gives is you need to heed my teaching on head coverings because of the order, manner and purpose of God's creation of man and woman.

And we spent some time looking at this last week, and I don't want to rehash this other than to read in verse seven where Paul says a man ought not to have his head covered since he is the image and glory of God. The woman is the glory of man. What do I mean by saying that? Paul says, I will tell you exactly what I mean.

In verse eight, for the man does not originate from woman, but woman from man. For indeed, man was not created for the woman's sake, but woman for the man's sake. Paul basically gives some specific teaching here.

And folks, clearly in verses eight and nine, there are three things that Paul is teaching. One of them is implied, undeniably. The other two are explicitly stated, and that is this.

The three truths he's giving us regarding the creation of Adam and Eve is number one, Adam was created first. Number two, Eve was created from Adam. And number three, Eve was created for Adam.

All three of those truths are undeniably affirmed in these verses. I want to take just a few moments with this as well, folks, because you need to realize, if you don't know already, that feminists despise this teaching. This is very offensive to them.

Secular feminists would just scoff at this and say, Paul is a male chauvinist, and this is absolutely ridiculous. I mean, we weren't even created anyway. We evolved, and so we all evolved simultaneously.

So this is ridiculous here, what Paul is teaching. You also need to be aware, folks, that there's a group of people who consider themselves as evangelical feminists. They call themselves biblical feminists, and they claim to be holding to the authority of the word of God.

And yet they also hold to non-biblical feminist teachings. And so what they end up having to do is, with passages like this, there are actual writers who say, Paul is mistaken here. He is wrong here.

And go ahead and turn to Genesis chapter one while I continue to talk. I'm just going to talk, talk, talk, and you can turn. But in Genesis chapter one, this is one of the passages that they point to.

And I think you'll see the dishonesty on the part of some who claim to be biblical or evangelical feminists. One of the doctrines that evangelical feminists hold to is the doctrine of the simultaneous creation of Adam and Eve. And they will state this.

They believe that Adam and Eve were created at the same time. And the verse that they point to to back that belief up is Genesis chapter one in verse 27. Where we have a general statement made where the writer says, God created man in his own image.

In the image of God, he created him. Male and female, he created them. And they say, aha, look at that.

See? Male and female, he created them. And so he must have created them simultaneously. You know what? Don't take my word for the fact that they say this.

Let me quote from some feminist writers who claim to be biblical feminists. A couple of writers named Letha Scanzoni and Nancy Hardesty wrote a book back in 74 entitled *All Were Meant to Be. A Biblical Approach to Women's Liberation*.

And regarding this verse in Genesis 127, they say this. In Genesis 1, male and female are said to be created simultaneously by God. And they get that from this verse.

Another writer, a feminist writer named Virginia Mollenkott, who claims to be a believer in scripture, wrote a book back in 88 entitled *Women, Men, and the Bible*. And regarding this verse, she says, we find here the statement in Genesis 1 that male and female were created simultaneously. And she gets that from this verse.

Another writer, Elizabeth Cady Stanton, developed what she called the *Woman's Bible*. You know how we got study Bibles today? The Ryrie Study Bible, MacArthur Study Bible. This was essentially a feminist study Bible.

And so there were their favorite passages that they would comment on. And in this edition of the *Woman's Bible*, this writer says this regarding Genesis 127. She says, this plainly shows the simultaneous creation of man and woman.

She then goes on to say, all those theories based on the assumption that man was prior in the creation have no foundation in scripture. All those theories and teachings that are based on the thought that man was created first have no foundation in scripture. Folks, anyone who would suggest this in pointing to Genesis 127 is just guilty of glaring deception and dishonesty.

All they need to do is just go to chapter 2 and see the more detailed account of the creation of man and woman. And it's inescapable. It says in Genesis 2, verse 7, then the Lord God formed man of the dust from the ground and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life and man became a living being.

And then look at verse 18. Then the Lord God said, it is not good for the man to be alone. I will make him a helper suitable for him.

Look at verse 21. So the Lord God caused a deep sleep to fall upon the man and he slept, as men love to do. Then, then he took one of his ribs and closed up the flesh at that place.

And the Lord God fashioned into a woman the rib which he had taken from the man and brought her to the man. Then the man said, this is now bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh. She shall be called woman.

Why? Because she was taken out of man. Clearly, when we have a more detailed account of how God created man and woman, we find that Adam was created first. Eve was created from Adam and Eve was created for Adam.

We find that truth that she was created for Adam affirmed in verse 18 of Genesis 2, where it says, then the Lord God said, it's not good for man to be alone. I will make him a helper suitable for him. Understanding that, folks, you now know where Paul gets that in 1 Corinthians chapter 11.

As you now turn back to that passage, Paul is affirming all three of those things that Adam was created first. Eve was taken from the man and she was created for the man. That's just not a figment of Paul's imagination that we can lightly say, well, he's just wrong.

No, he's drawing that from his study and the clear teaching of Genesis chapter two. But at least be aware of the fact, folks, that this is something that is very offensive to feminist teachers and even those who claim to be evangelical or biblical feminists. But nonetheless, who are we going to side with? Are we going to side with the fashion or the feminist sensibilities of our culture there? We're going to side with the text of Scripture.

We're going to side with God. We're going to side with God as he speaks to us through his word. But anyway, I bring that out because even if nothing was said about head coverings in this passage.

This would still be a hated passage by many because of just the truths that Paul affirms in verses eight and nine. Well, Paul then gives a third argument by way of explaining why we need to heed his teaching on head coverings. And that is because of the angels.

And as you see here on the handout, I've added some commentary to this. Let me just read this very quickly. The best guess as to Paul's meaning here is that he's referring to the presence of angelic beings who are participating with and observing the believing community as they worship the Lord.

When a woman wears a head covering, she honors her head and shows due regard to her God given place in God's economy. Such actions glorify God and show forth his wisdom in the presence of the angels, both good and evil. That's what we covered last week.

But let me just add these as you read along with me. When Paul says, because of the angels, some suggest that he may be saying something like, because of what happened to the angels. Or at least that there's something of his thought in that, referring to the attempt by Lucifer to elevate himself beyond the station that God had given to him.

Lucifer was given a very high place, yet he wanted a higher place and rebelled against the God of heaven in an attempt to get it. Consequently, he was cast from heaven along with all of the angels who had followed him in his rebellion. A head covering on a Christian woman is a symbol that she has embraced her God given place in the structure of relationships in God's economy.

The devil hates this symbol for through it, a woman clearly identifies herself as someone who is doing what he failed to do. Through her head covering, she says, I have accepted the place that God and his good providence has given to me. And the point I want to bring out by that, folks, is that you may think head coverings are no big deal, but the devil thinks they're a very big deal.

And he hates them because it symbolizes the very antithesis of what he is all about. Also leading to this suggestion, and that is, folks, that the feminist movement today that is working very hard to obliterate gender distinctions between male and female and to encourage in women an attitude of superiority over their husbands and exercising authority over their husbands and viewing themselves as being of equal authority to their husbands in the home. The whole movement that is designed to lift women from her rightful biblical place to elevate her either to the man or above the man in function of authority and seeking to obliterate gender distinctions that go along with that.

That movement is inspired by the same spirit that was at work in Lucifer, who was not content with the high place that God had given to him. But he rebelled against that and fought against that and tried to assume a higher place than the station that God had placed him in. And consequently, he suffered the judgment of Almighty God.

And ladies, I want to encourage you this morning. God has given you an incredibly high place. He gave man dominion over the created order of things.

And you participate in that dominion as you work alongside of your husband and you are his helper as he seeks to exercise his God-given capacities as the man that God created him to be. That is a very high place that you have along with your husband over all of the rest of this planet, essentially. It's a very high place and you are very precious to God.

God loves you so much that he could not imagine this planet without women here. And you are very precious to him even in your marriage. In 1 Peter 3, verse 7, God says to your husbands, You had better dwell with your wives in a considerate and understanding way and you had better grant your wife honor as a fellow heir of the grace of eternal life.

And God says you'd better do this so that your prayers will not be hindered. If I were a woman, I would love just reading that. Because what I would feel is that what happens in that passage is God comes alongside of women and he wraps his loving arms around the wife in the home.

And then he says to the husband, you had better treat her right. You had better grant her honor. And if you don't, we have no relationship.

If you don't treat her right, you can pray to me till you're blue in the face. I'm not going to listen to your prayers. You mess with this precious daughter of mine and you violate your relationship with me.

And I won't listen to any prayer. I won't answer a single prayer you ever pray to me if you mistreat this woman. The scripture gives woman a very high place and commands men to grant you honor in the home as a fellow heir, an equal beneficiary of all of the blessings and privileges of salvation.

And it is just insidious evil that a woman would look at that high place and say that's not high enough. And then to seek to control and to manipulate and exercise authority over her husband in the home. That attitude that propels a woman to assume that higher place over her husband is the same attitude that was at work in Lucifer and that brought him the judgment that he has received and will ultimately receive.

Let's not be guilty of that. Look at the last paragraph in this box. Whether or not the world understands the symbolism of the head covering is of no concern to Paul in this passage.

I don't know why people think that it is. Paul never says do it because it makes the right statement to the pagan world around you. Paul is totally oblivious to what the world does or how they're going to interpret or misinterpret the symbol.

That is of no concern to him in the passage. However, what is of concern to him is the angelic beings who will understand the significance of it. And as I say here, the head covering serves, among other things, as a cosmic symbol to the principalities and powers of the woman's recognition of her rightful place in God's economy.

So just meditate on those thoughts and understand that the larger cosmic significance of the head covering before the principalities and powers that Paul alludes to in verse 10. Well, there's a fourth argument that he gives as to why we need to heed his teaching on head coverings. And that is because nature also teaches this.

And we talked a length about this last week and will not rehash this. If you would like a more detailed look at this passage and at this argument, get the tape from last Sunday if you were not here. Well, let's move to the fifth argument that Paul makes.

If we want to call it an argument at all, and this is going to require a little bit of explanation that we've not given to this prior to this time. And that is, Paul says, you guys need to heed my teaching on head coverings because this is the practice in all the churches. And it's not like Paul says, here's an argument.

It's just Paul's way of ending the matter. He's like, if you want to fight about it, listen, here's the last thing I'm going to say. And that's it.

I'm moving on. I want to talk about the Lord's Supper. Look what he says in verse 16.

He says, but if one is inclined to be contentious, we have no other practice, nor have the churches of God. I want to encourage you to underline the word other. If you have the New International Version or the New American Standard, your translation says we have no other practice.

And that word other is the important word that we're going to be discussing here. However, if you have the New King James or the King James Translation, it says we have no such custom. And you want to make a note of that.

And those are actually opposite meanings on the surface. The New American Standard and NIV have Paul saying we have no other practice. But then the New King James and King James say we have no such practice.

Which is the right translation here? I'm going to suggest that both are right. And I'll explain that to you. But I'll tell you that the literal translation of this is found in the King James and the New King James.

They, to their credit, just even though it may be confusing, they give us the literal translation of this. And literally, Paul says, if one is inclined to be contentious, we have no such practice or we have no such custom. Well, there are some funny things that people do with that.

There is no substantive commentator or scholar who does this. But there are pastors and lay people who don't really want to be fair with this passage who will say, aha, see, we have no such custom. And so what Paul is saying is, you know, he's been teaching the custom of women wearing head coverings and of men not doing that.

But Paul then says, but if you want to be contentious about it and get all red in the face and hot and bothered about it, if you want to fight about it, then you know what? I give up. We have no such custom. In other words, we have no such custom as what I've been advocating in this passage.

It's not worth a fight. So I'm willing to just lay it aside. Just do what you want and you'll be totally fine with God.

We don't have this custom. I'm sorry I said anything. Almost as if Paul is just erasing everything he's just said.

Folks, I think you can see how that doesn't make sense. Why would Paul spend this much time arguing with something that's not worth fighting about or holding to? Why would he argue from the structure of relationships in God's economy, using arguments drawn from the glory of God and the honor of Jesus

Christ and angelic beings and going all the way back to creation to methodically make the case that women should have a head covering on? Why would he make those kinds of arguments and then say, but if you want to fight about it, we don't have such a custom. We'll just let it go.

And it's no big deal. Obviously, that's not what Paul is saying. But if that is not what he is saying, the question is, what is he saying? And, folks, read the bottom of the box here on page three here.

When Paul says we have no such custom, he is saying my response to anyone advocating customs contrary to what I've just taught is we have no such custom, nor do the churches of God. In other words, he's saying if you want to be contentious about this and in your contentiousness advocate different customs than what I've said. I'm just going to tell you, we don't have such a custom.

You can come to me and say, you know, Paul, I think men should have head coverings on. And the theological reason why is because it demonstrates humility. And that's a biblical concept.

So I think men ought to be allowed to wear head coverings. And Paul would say that's an interesting idea, but we don't have such a custom, nor do any of the churches of God. Or if you came to Paul and said, Paul, you know, I think women ought to be able to have their heads uncovered because in Christ there's neither male nor female.

And we're all equal in so many ways in our essential being and in the privileges of salvation. And so it would demonstrate that equality in a wonderful way if women didn't have to wear head coverings. Paul would say that's an interesting thought and that's an interesting custom that you're advocating here in your contention against what I've said.

But my response is just simply as interesting as that is. We don't have such a custom, nor do the churches of God. And that's literally what he's saying.

But the New American Standard and the NIV are accurate in capturing the spirit of what Paul is conveying. And that is by saying we have no such custom regarding any different customs than what Paul's advocated. Paul is essentially saying we have no other custom other than the custom that I have taught explicitly in this passage.

So anyway, I hope that's clear. Please don't don't buy into the misguided and shallow notion that Paul is just saying, you know, I taught all this and man, I sure thought I was right. But if you're going to fight about it, then let's just let it go.

And we'll just pretend we never had this custom. That cannot be what Paul is saying. Well, so that's there's still other things, folks, that as we review this passage in the weeks to come, there's a couple other loose ends that we'll get to.

But what I want to just do just over the next couple of minutes before we just wrap this up, and I'm just going to do this very briefly, is get into the question of our head coverings for today. And the more accurate way of wording that is, is Paul's specific teaching in this passage on head coverings specifically applicable today? And what I say here on page four is my present thinking on the matter. And you can write in as of January 20th, 2002.

It's not a conclusion, but it is where my thinking is right now is that there is nothing in the text of this scripture that gives me any indication that Paul's instruction on head coverings only applied to Christians

living in his own day or to Christians living in a similar culture to the first century Roman world. I'll have to tell you in my heart, I've wanted to arrive at that conclusion really bad at times. My life would be a lot simpler.

Your life would be a lot simpler. The last few weeks would have been a lot easier for all of us if I could have just found a way to arrive at that conclusion. But there's nothing in the text that even hints in that direction.

And so at least unless there's something I'm missing, I cannot embrace the teaching that this is not for today. Now, why do I hold this viewpoint at this point in time? Reason number one, none of Paul's arguments in 1 Corinthians 11, 2 through 16 are drawn from cultural practices in the pagan world of his day. If Paul wanted to give a cultural argument or if cultural considerations were the real motive behind his instructions on head coverings, Paul was perfectly capable of saying so to say that Paul is after all, only being guided by the cultural norms of his day is sheer conjecture.

The text of 1 Corinthians 11, 2 through 16 does not give the slightest hint that such considerations were governing Paul's thought at all. If you're going to hold that view, that's fine, but it's not one that is derived from this particular passage of Scripture. And no one I've read who does hold to that point of view ever points to a passage in 1 Corinthians 11, 2 through 16 and says, see, here's my proof that this is just a cultural thing.

It is a conjecture. And I mean, it may be right. I will grant that.

But it's not a conjecture that is drawn from the text of this passage. And I am a little grieved at times over how patronizing some commentators are of Paul. Paul gives very sophisticated argumentation here.

He's a very eloquent man. He's a man who says what he wants to say the way that he wants to say it under the inspiration of the Spirit of God. And yet there have been some writers and commentators who say, yeah, this is what Paul says.

But Paul's real point is to tell the ladies wear a head covering so as not to offend the cultural scruples in society. And people will misjudge you. And it's what other ladies do in the pagan world of our day.

And so do this in order to fit in and to not offend the cultural sensitivities of other people in your culture. Well, that sounds great, but that's not what he says here. And if Paul wanted to say that, he could have said that he was capable of saying this.

And so we don't need modern day commentators to look at Paul and say, well, what he really meant to say was no. Paul, I think, would be offended by that. He would say, listen, I said what I said and I said it exactly the way that I wanted to say it.

And if you're going to add to that, it's just sheer conjecture. And I think that's what Paul is trying to do here in my thinking. The second reason is this.

Paul's arguments, rather, are based on realities that transcend temporary cultural norms. And we've already looked at this. He's drawing from the structure of relationships in God's economy.

The glory of God is at stake here. Creation truths, the angels, nature, church practices. Paul is using argumentation here that has nothing to do with cultural norms.

They transcend temporary and local customs. And to me, those are very compelling considerations in dealing with the issue of head coverings being for today or not. I'll give you one third one and then we'll pick up here next week.

Technically speaking, and Paul may be meaning more, I'll grant that by way of application. But technically speaking, Paul is only requiring that women wear a head covering while praying or prophesying in a gathering of believers. This is a pretty narrow instruction to give if he was being guided by the cultural practices of the pagan world of his day.

I would expect Paul to say, women, wear a head covering wherever you go, because that's what the culture does. If he was being guided by cultural considerations, however, in its most narrow sense, all he's requiring is that a woman have a covering on her head when she prays or prophesying. And we know from 1 Corinthians 14, for that prophecy edifies the church, the one who prophesies edifies the church.

So the audience of that prophecy is believers in the believing community. And so all he's requiring is that they wear a head covering when they engage in ministry in those two capacities in the body of believers. And that's, to me, just way too narrow of an instruction to give.

If after all, he was being guided by cultural considerations. Well, we'll pick up here next week, folks, and we'll all try to cover more ground and more pages next week. I think we're going to be able to go a little faster from this point on beginning next Sunday.

Tonight, we're having our annual meeting and so we'll not be in this passage. I definitely would encourage all of you to be here tonight for that, though. But let's go ahead and bow our heads and just commit ourselves to the Lord.

Our Heavenly Father, as we come before you at this time, we thank you for passages like this that do humble us, that do make us realize that we are only seeing through a glass darkly and our brains are so finite and so small. Our hearts sometimes are resistant and that complicates matters even more. But Lord, just have mercy on us and just help us to understand everything that you're trying to teach us in this passage.

And give us the courage, give us the backbone to just be willing to step out and do whatever it is that you do clearly teach us to do in this passage. And help us not to be intimidated by the feminist sensibilities that are rampant in our culture today. Help us not to be intimidated even by the fashion sensibilities of our culture today.

But just to have an attitude that says, God, whatever you want, this is what we're going to do. And we don't care what the world will think. We don't care what other people were thinking or even other churches will think.

We only care what you think. And we want to obey. Lord, I don't even know fully where all you're going to lead us on this, but I do know you've led us thus far.

And you really need to come through for all of us, Lord. We really need your direction. And just give us an attitude of humility as we seek to follow you each step of the way and to trust you.

And we say to you right now, Lord, speaking on behalf of this church body, I say to you that you are a good God. And we trust in you. And know that you will be faithful to lead us.

We just give ourselves to you in the name of Jesus. And all God's people said, Amen.

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