

Head-Coverings in Worship Part 5

by Milton Vincent

This sermon explores the complexities of head coverings in worship as outlined in First Corinthians 11, emphasizing the need for thoughtful interpretation and discussion.

Duration: 59:17

Scripture: 1 Corinthians 11:2

Topics: "Head Coverings"

Description

In this sermon, the speaker addresses the need to cover certain topics thoroughly before moving on. He mentions that he has received requests to address specific issues and assures the audience that he will cover them in due time. The speaker then introduces the passage from 1 Corinthians chapter 11, verses 17 and following, and explains that he has studied 64 commentaries on this passage. He identifies three views on the topic of covering, with the first view suggesting that the covering Paul advocates for is hair arranged in an orderly fashion on top of the head.

Transcript

Wow, that was quick. It's the way everyone got quiet really quickly. That means you're ready for the word this morning.

If you have not received like a 10 page handout, go ahead and raise your hand if you didn't receive that during the greeting time. And we'll get some helpers that will be distributing that. And while those are being distributed, let me invite you guys to turn in your Bibles to First Corinthians, Chapter 11 to the passage that was read earlier in our service this morning, First Corinthians, Chapter 11.

And for those of you that are visiting with us, we are doing a verse by verse study through the book of First Corinthians. And as we continue in our study of this book, we find ourselves once again in First Corinthians, Chapter 11, verses two through 16. And especially I feel like I want to say this each Sunday that we're in this section.

For those of you that are visiting, please know that the kinds of things that we're talking about right now are not the things that we normally are dealing with. But we've committed ourselves a little about a year and a half ago to work our way through the entirety of First Corinthians. And and as we have been following through in our commitment on that, we are in Chapter 11, not because it's an easy section of scripture.

In fact, if I could do what I wanted, I would run from this passage as quickly as I could or just skip over it. But we need to deal with this passage and we need to deal with it as thoroughly as possible. A couple of things that come to mind as far as dealing with this passage.

First of all, you guys remember back a year and a half ago when we began our series on First Corinthians, I shared with you about a pastor on the East Coast. My brother was working as an associate pastor at this church and he had decided to do a series to the book of First Corinthians. And he worked his way through chapters one through ten.

And then when he finished chapter 10 the next Sunday, he started a series in another book. He just totally bailed out of First Corinthians, started a series in another book and never said a word of explanation for why he wasn't dealing with chapter 11. And I also shared with you in that same message a year and a half ago that one of the things that encouraged me to do a study through First Corinthians was that one of my favorite preachers of the word was doing a study through that book.

As well. And he was in chapter three. And I told you how I was home on that vacation a year and a half ago and I was really wrestling with doing a series on First Corinthians.

And there were a lot of things about the book that were intimidating to me. One of those things that was intimidating to me was this passage here in First Corinthians, chapter 11. But nonetheless, as I was wrestling with that, I attended a church pastored by one of my favorite preachers and he was in First Corinthians, chapter three.

And I thought, that's it. That's all I need to know. I'm going to do a study on First Corinthians and I'll get the guy's tapes and hear how he handles passages like First Corinthians, chapter 11.

So I went up to him afterwards and I gave him a hug. And it had been a while since we had seen each other. And I said, you know what? I've been wrestling with doing a series on First Corinthians.

But now I know that that's what I'm going to do. And I'm going to get your sermon tapes and I'll be three chapters behind you the whole way. And anyway, so over the last year, I've been getting sermon tapes from this guy and I got him all the way up through First Corinthians, chapter 10.

And then I started getting sermon tapes on the Sermon on the Mount and Matthew, chapter five through seven. And he called me up about something sometime around then. And I said, so how's your First Corinthians series going? And he said, well, we stopped at the end of chapter 10.

And I lost it. I yelled at him. I said, you're killing me, man.

You can't do this to me. And I said, why did you stop after chapter 10? And he gave me some reasons, but they weren't the real reasons. I know he just said the people's morale was kind of low and he just felt really burdened to preach on the Sermon on the Mount.

So he decided to do that anyway. And I respect that choice. But when that happened, I just felt like, man, I'm going to be more alone than I want to be because he's bailed out on this this passage as well, at least for the time being.

I share that, folks, to say that there is something spooky about this passage that that does scare people away from it. And and I'm also guilty of that. This is a very spooky passage for me as well.

And I almost feel a little defensive in the fact that we're dealing with it and that we're dealing with it as thoroughly as we have chosen to do so. So please understand if you're visiting with us that we're trying to be faithful to all of scripture. All scripture is given by inspiration of God and all scripture is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction and for training and righteousness.

And already there has been so much that we have drawn from this passage and hopefully that we will continue to draw from it. So this is head coverings in worship. Part five, this will be the fifth sermon on this particular passage and there will be more to come as well.

In fact, the first page on your handout kind of gives you an overview of where we're going to be going from this Sunday on. First of all, let me just remind you of the attitudes that we need to be careful to avoid. And I gave you five of those last week that as we approach this issue, we need to be careful to avoid five attitudes.

And that is a closed and defiant attitude. Secondly, a lazy and overly submissive attitude. Thirdly, an impatient attitude.

Fourthly, a conformist attitude. And fifthly, a judgmental attitude on whichever side you may end up landing on. Wearing a head covering or not, there's going to be temptations to judge those who disagree and who behave differently.

There's a sixth attitude that I want to warn some in our church against. And this is for the men. I tried to think of a simple name for it and I couldn't come up with one.

So let's call it. And I'm glad I'm not a woman. Good luck figuring this one out, honey.

Type of attitude. Men, and I want to say this very carefully. You need to be very careful that you do not allow your wife to be feeling 100 percent of the weight of this.

Amen. You want to be careful to avoid that. Now, I want it to be such that all of the women listen carefully as we try to handle this passage and that they think through the issues and they're asking questions and and really earnestly seeking to know the Lord's mind in this passage.

But I'm telling you, men, you husbands in the home, if anyone ought to be listening to these messages, it ought to be you. You are the head of your household. You are the head in the marriage relationship that God has placed you in by his divine design.

And you need to think through this issue and you need to sort it through as thoroughly as you can so that you as the head in your home can provide leadership for your wife. And in saying that, I'm not saying you do all the thinking and tell your wife, hey, when I'm done, I'll just tell you what to do. No, you need to be thinking it through and loving and earnest conversations with your wife as you're talking it through and spending much time doing that.

But you're the one who needs to feel the weight of responsibility on your shoulders to try to sort through this passage as fully as you can so that you can provide loving leadership for your wife in this way. And those of you ladies who are here, who are married, again, I encourage you to listen up and to think carefully and thoroughly through this issue. But even as you are doing that, you need to lay this at the feet of your husband and say, this is your baby.

You work this out. Let's try to talk it through. But ultimately, I want you to make the call as to what it is that you feel the Lord wants me to do in this area.

So please don't have that attitude, men. You're the one who actually needs to be feeling the greatest burden to really sort through this issue. Well, having said that, just as you look on this first page, an overview of what we're going to cover.

I got a little bit ahead of myself last Sunday and jumping to the issue of our head coverings for today. This has been so humbling for me. I mean, there's so many things already that I would do differently if we could start all of this over again.

I want to just jump back just a little bit. And what we're going to be dealing with today in the morning service and then also at least much through the evening service is this. Look at item number one.

What is the covering that Paul is advocating in first Corinthians, eleven, two through sixteen? We're going to try to sort through that. There's actually three views of what the covering is that Paul is instructing women to wear and men not to wear in this passage. And we'll try to figure that out this morning.

Then when we're done with that, we will begin asking the question once again, are head coverings for today? And I will share with you my viewpoint at the present time and the reasons why. And then after we've done that, we're going to ask the question, well, then why do so many people say that Paul's specific instructions are not for today? And I will share with you 12 reasons or concerns that people express. And then we will respond and interact to those concerns.

And then having done that, we will then look at some suggested thoughts for consideration of a few or several practical questions. And you see the questions that are listed there. I'm not going to walk you through there, through these questions, but you can read through them at your leisure and at least have some idea of where we're going to be going.

There's not a Sunday that has gone by over the last few weeks where someone hasn't come up to me and said, well, Milton, if you're going to deal with this thoroughly, then you really ought to deal with this. Or deal with that. And I find myself frequently saying, well, that's on page 20 of my notes or page 25.

We will get to that. And so I thought maybe it would be helpful if at least you had a simple overview of all that we're going to try to cover before we wash our hands of this material and move on to the later section of First Corinthians, chapter 11, verses 17 and following. But anyway, go and flip the page to what says page four.

And it's page four because I've already given you the first three pages of the packet, which right now is about 36 pages and it's probably going to grow longer. And we're not going to go through all of those notes word for word. But I do want to provide that for you guys so that you can have a written resource to use as your own guide or as one of your guides as you're sorting through the the issue of that is taught here in First Corinthians, chapter 11.

But anyway, what we're going to do today is what is the covering that Paul is advocating in this passage? All of us would agree, I am sure, that Paul is telling women in this passage, you need to have a head covering on at least when praying and prophesying. And men, you should not have a head covering on when you are praying and prophesying. We're all agreed on that, I am sure.

However, there may be disagreements at this point or questions at this point over exactly what is the covering that Paul is advocating in this section of First Corinthians, chapter 11. And this is a very important question, trying to narrow this down and to figure out exactly what the right covering is that Paul is advocating. As I was studying through this this week, I kept thinking of something that happened to me when I was 19 years old.

I worked the late afternoon and evening shift. I went to work at two in the afternoon. I would come home at 11 at night.

And so everyone would always be in bed when I came home. And I remember coming home one night when I was 19 and my mom apparently hadn't done the dishes. She just went to bed.

And so there were dishes all over the sink and on the dining room table. And and when I came home and I saw that, I just I didn't normally do this kind of thing. I don't think I did this all the time, but it just hit me.

You know what? I'm going to show my mom some love and I'm going to do this for her and wash the dishes and clean up the kitchen and dining room for her. And so I did that and I rinsed all the dishes off and I put them all in the dishwasher. And then I knew, OK, I'm going to run the dishwasher, but I got to put soap in the dishwasher.

So I looked inside the dishwasher and saw where the reservoir for the soap was. And I thought, OK, it's calling for soap. So I took normal dishwashing soap and I filled up the reservoirs as full as I could.

And then I sealed it up and closed the door of the dishwasher, turned it on. And then I went in the other room to watch a little bit of television before I went to bed. I was just about ready to go to bed and I thought, I'll just check and see if the dishes are done so I can put them away.

And I walk in the kitchen and there are soap suds everywhere. And I'm not exaggerating. It was covering the kitchen floor and it had moved out of the kitchen.

It was going into our dining room and getting under our dining room table, just soap suds and bubbles everywhere. The lesson I learned from that is, yes, it called for soap, but only a certain kind of soap. And it would have been important for me to ask that question.

Well, it does say put soap in here, but what kind of soap is being called for here? And I thought about that several times as I've been working through this issue that we're going to deal with today. And that is all of us agree that Paul is calling for a head covering. But what is the covering that he is calling for? And we're going to try to narrow that down this morning and sort through this question.

And let me say this before we dive right in. I'm very concerned that I maintain your attention this morning and I'm going to try to even reformat things a little differently than even what's in the notes, because I was getting bored listening to myself last night as I was talking through some of this material. I really want you guys to gird up the loins of your mind and really be prepared to pay attention.

I'll try to make everything as clear as I can as we go along. But it's going to take some work on your part to really listen up and get as much out of this as the Lord will want you to. But anyway, there are three views.

I've studied 64 commentaries on this passage. And when I say that, I'm not including about the 40 other articles and stuff that I've read from the Internet. I'm talking about hard copy commentators that I've read

on this subject.

And out of the 64 of them, I've been able to discern three views. And the first view, as you see here at the beginning of page four, is that the covering that Paul is advocating is hair that is bound up and arranged in an orderly fashion on top of the head. There are actually people who say that this is what Paul is teaching in this passage.

And there are probably more commentators than this. But out of the 64 that I have read, I located three who held to this particular point of view. Now, according to this view, Paul is correcting those women who were letting their hair hang down and especially letting their hair hang down in an unkempt manner.

They weren't taking care of themselves or taking care of their hair. And so they were just letting it hang down. And it wasn't in an orderly fashion.

And Paul's point in this passage is to tell them to cover up. And what he means by that is take the time to dress your hair and to bind it up in an orderly fashion on top of your head. Now, there are three advocates for this view that I found out of all of those that I read.

And one of the guys is Jerome Murphy O'Connor, who is actually a Roman Catholic scholar. And actually, I hesitated to even put him in here because he has a very low view of the apostle Paul and Paul's handling of this issue. He even calls some of Paul's arguments legalistic and says Paul seems embarrassed throughout.

It seems like he's shifting from one foot to the other in embarrassment. And it just doesn't seem like he's really saying what's really on his mind. And then he says later in his article that what's really on Paul's mind is a fear of homosexuality.

And so it's homophobia that is guiding Paul as he's writing this passage. And so with the way that he seemed to treat Paul's arguments with a little bit of contempt, I kind of didn't even want to give his viewpoint the respect that he fails to give to Paul. But nonetheless, I thought I would include him because he is one of the few that do advocate this viewpoint as far as the covering that Paul is advocating.

And listen to what he says. Letter A. The only covering he, Paul, had in mind was feminine hair, well-dressed in the conventional manner. A woman who failed to give such attention to her hair would be uncovered.

You see what he's saying there? Look at that letter B here. The evidence is not as clear as one might wish, but it seems that at this time, well-dressed feminine hair incorporated some form of head covering, however small. In this perspective, a covered head would be the equivalent of carefully tended, well-ordered hair.

And Paul's objection would be to loose, untidy hair. So what he's saying is we don't have a lot of evidence for this. And it's not as much as I would love to see.

But it seems like in Paul's day, when a woman dressed her hair properly, it involved the use of ribbons and bows and other forms of partial coverings. And so Paul goes ahead and uses the word covering. But the spirit of his point is to tell them that they need to tie their hair up in an orderly and a feminine fashion rather than letting their hair hang down in an unkempt manner.

There's another author that I found that advocates this view, and his name is F.W. Grosshide. And he believes that the problem in the Corinthian church was not that women were cutting their hair short, but rather that they were letting their hair down. He also believes that Paul is not requiring a veil in this passage, but rather an orderly hairdress, which distinguishes a woman from a man, a hairdress that may have involved either the use of a veil or of ribbons.

Which bound the hair. Now, that's essentially the viewpoint that he advocates. And then the third guy, Fritz Reinecker, I hesitated to even include him.

But nonetheless, he basically almost word for word quotes from Grosshide's viewpoint and says, what is required by these verses is an orderly hairdress, which distinguishes a woman from a man. And then he gives Grosshide the credit for that. So anyway, these are three advocates who say that what Paul is telling women to do is not to so much wear a cloth head covering.

That's not what we ought to draw from this. And he's not even telling women that they need to have long hair when he tells women to cover up and to wear a head covering. What he's telling them to do is to take the time to dress their hair, tie it up in an orderly fashion and in a feminine fashion.

We will end up responding a little bit to this viewpoint a little bit later, but just for the for the present, just three quick responses to this viewpoint. And the first one is the most compelling to me and to other commentators. And that is, if Paul was wanting to instruct women to draw their hair up and arrange it in an orderly manner, why didn't he just say so in verses three through 14? Paul could have easily just said so.

But instead, what he talks about is the covering basically to hold to this point of view. What you've got to say is Paul really is not fully saying what he's really thinking. He only uses the word covering, but he's really thinking more of just having an orderly fashion of hair on top of their head.

And while he doesn't say that and he just says covering, we understand that he's trying to say more than what he literally says here. This view kind of does not give Paul the credit that Paul deserves as an eloquent and as an inspired writer of scripture, I believe. In fact, just a little bit of history, a guy named Plutarch, who was a writer, a Greek writer during the first century.

I found a reference this week where he speaks of females whose heads were uncovered and whose hair was unbound. And he uses a completely different expression to convey the idea of unbound hair. And the Greek words that I have there literally means loose hair, loosened hair.

That's the Greek expression that he uses, an expression that you don't find Paul using. In 1 Corinthians chapter 11, all he says is covered and uncovered. And he never says anything about hair being loosened or bound up.

So that's a major problem that I have with this viewpoint. And then secondly, if you're going to take the view that what Paul is telling women to do is to have their hair bound up in an orderly and feminine fashion. It raises the question of what then is Paul criticizing the men for? What would be the converse or the opposite of that that Paul is trying to correct with the men? Look what I say here in number two on page five.

What then is the contrast between men and women in the passage? When Paul says any man praying or prophesying with something on his head dishonors his head. What is he talking about when he speaks of something on his head? When Paul says in verse seven that a man ought not to have his head covered,

what is the covering that he's talking about that a man should not wear? Is Paul really trying to tell men that they're not allowed to gather their hair up in an orderly fashion on top of their heads? That would be the expected contrast. Well, listen to what Murphy O'Connor says.

Murphy O'Connor understands Paul to be teaching that a covered head for a man is a feminine hairdo. All right. So he's saying what Paul is doing in his passage is he's telling a man, don't gather your hair up on top of your head and don't have a feminine hairdo.

My response to that is, do you really think that Paul is trying to tell men not to pray or prophesy with a feminine hairdo? If so, why would Paul limit his criticism of a feminine hairstyle on a man only to those occasions when a man prays or prophesies? Does that make sense? If I'm trying to tell if I'm talking to man and I've noticed that there are men who are up front on the worship team and they have their hair in a feminine fashion, I would not preach a sermon and say, the point of my message this morning is that a man should not pray and prophesy in front of the church in a feminine hairdo. I wouldn't limit my point to just praying and prophesying. I would tell the man, don't have a feminine hairstyle at any time.

And it would be more generic. Why would Paul only criticize men for having a feminine hairdo when they are ministering publicly through prayer or prophecy? Almost as if to say, by implication, that it's okay as long as you're not praying or prophesying. But nonetheless, the third response that I have to this is, why did no one in the early church understand Paul to be teaching this? Why did the Corinthians themselves, and we have evidence back in 210 A.D. from Tertullian, that even the Corinthians understood Paul to be speaking of a cloth head covering.

And my question is, why did the Corinthians themselves, along with everyone else in recorded early church history, understand Paul to be speaking of a cloth head covering? Is it possible that all of them misunderstood Paul? That's my question. And I understand that church history only has limited value in helping us to interpret scripture. I understand that.

But my question is, is it possible? I mean, to hold this first view is to say that everybody, everybody in the early church and recorded early church history and everybody in the church up until the 20th century got it wrong and they misunderstood Paul. We'll come back to that point later in this packet that I've given to you. But nonetheless, this is the first view that some have out of 64 commentators.

I found three that advocated this viewpoint. A second view is that the covering that Paul is advocating is long hair. Paul is telling women you need to have long hair.

And it kind of overlaps with the first view in the sense that it's not just long hair, but feminine. Women need to be more feminine in their hairstyle and they need to have longer hair. And according to this view, Paul is correcting those women who were cutting their hair too short and making their hair because of its shortness look like that of a man's.

And I found three who advocated this point of view. The first is Imar Dahan, a familiar name to some of you. And he says this.

And by the way, those who hold this view, they they spend a lot of time in verse 15 of First Corinthians, chapter 11. In fact, go ahead and look at verse 15. Paul says in verse 15, but if a woman has long hair, it is a glory to her for her hair is given to her for a covering.

And what they do is they see that. I mean, this is a clear statement. The hair is the covering.

And therefore, this is the covering that Paul is advocating throughout the entirety of this section. So Paul is telling women you need to wear a head covering. And I'm now telling you in verse 15 that the head covering you need to wear is long hair.

OK, listen to Imar Dahan. He says, now it seems that in light of verse 15, there should be no difficulty. Paul says plainly here.

But if a woman have long hair, it's a glory to her for her hair is given her for a covering. The covering which Paul speaks of in this verse is long hair in its primary implication. Another writer, Alan Padgett, says the point Paul wants to make in verse 15 is obvious.

Paul asserts that women already have the equivalent of a covering, namely hair. So surely women don't need another covering on top of the one nature has provided. Exclamation point.

This is just one more reason the Corinthians should not insist on women wearing a covering in worship. Now, it's interesting what Padgett does with this and taking the hair view. He then says Paul's point in this passage is to argue against some people in the Corinthian church who were telling women they needed to wear a head covering, a cloth covering.

Paul is correcting those people and saying, no, they don't. They have long hair. That's all the covering that they need.

At least that's how Alan Padgett handles this. And then a third commentator, Gordon Clark, in his commentary on verse 15 says, and I quote, it now becomes evident that hair, not hats, is the important matter. God has given women long hair instead of veils.

The subject, in other words, the subject of this whole passage then is hair. And then he says, surprisingly, and the Christian church doesn't care how anyone wears his or her hair. So he takes the long hair view, but then turns around and says, and so Paul's point is, we just don't care how you wear your hair.

Go figure. I this guy may be a fantastic commentator, but at least in his handling of this passage, as I read through it, it just seemed confusing, contradictory. And a little bit careless, in fact.

But nonetheless, here are three commentators that take the long hair view that Paul is telling women you need to wear a head covering. And the head covering is longer hair that should be on women longer than the hair on men. Now, there is a fourth guy, Spyros Zodiades, who has written essentially a word study work that is just fantastic in a number of ways.

And in his explanation of one of the words that is in First Corinthians 11, he pretty much gives expression to an either or type of view. And he's the only one I found who takes this view. But let me read it to you.

He says the covering here involves either the hair. Go ahead and underline the word hair of a woman hanging down or in case that may not be possible, the veil. Now, by the way, notice that Zodiades says that the covering is hair hanging down, which is the opposite of what the first view says.

It's hair that's bound up and gathered up on top of the head. Zodiades says, no, it's long hair, hair that is hanging down or in case that may not be possible, the veil and underline the word veil. So he's saying it's either hair or the veil.

And that Paul's point in this passage is simply that women need to be covered when they come to worship or when they pray or prophesy. And it doesn't matter whether that covering is the hair or the veil as long as they're covered. All right.

He then goes on to say, folks, and I want to spend a little bit of time on this. He then says it must be remembered. Now, underlying the word must, whatever he's about to say, Zodiades feels that this is pretty important to his point of view.

And while he would say it's not maybe totally necessary to his point of view, he does obviously view this as important to the view that he's advocating here. He says it must be remembered in this connection that women of loose morals, especially the prostitute priestesses of the Temple of Aphrodite at Corinth. Now, he's giving very specific historical information here.

The prostitute priestesses of the Temple of Aphrodite at Corinth. He tells us they kept their hair very short in order to be distinguished for what they were. This was strictly forbidden for Christian women in order that no one would mistake them as women of loose morals.

And now with that historical information he's given you, he's now going to present what a problem must have been in the Corinthian church. He says, what happened, however, when one of these prostitute priestesses was saved in Corinth? Since she could not grow her hair immediately, she used a veil to cover her head to show that she no longer belonged to the prostitute class. All right.

So he's saying that what no doubt would have happened is a woman who was a prostitute at the Temple of Aphrodite. She becomes a Christian and now she's got a bald head or very short hair. She can't grow her hair overnight.

So when she comes to worship or ministers in any kind of public capacity, a woman who has short hair for that reason would go ahead and wear a cloth covering until her hair grew out. OK. And Zodiades tells you it must be remembered.

This information I've just given you must be remembered in connection with the viewpoint I've just shared. Well, let's do a little bit of an accuracy check here. Look at number two on page six.

The truth is there is no historical evidence that supports Zodiades claim that the prostitutes of Aphrodite wore their hair short. Numerous commentators teach this as a historical fact, yet no one gives any historical evidence to support this claim. If you ever see a commentator ever making this statement, look for footnotes, look for him to give some kind of proof of this.

And you're not going to find it. The earliest look at the next paragraph. The earliest commentator I have found who suggests the possibility that Corinthian prostitutes wore their hair short was F.W. Groseheide in 1953.

And his commentary, he says, now listen to what he says. Probably prostitutes used to or were compelled to cut their hair short to cut their hair and keep it very short. Now, look what I say.

He cites no evidence for this, but merely theorizes that this may have been the case. However, what has happened since then is that other commentators picked up the suggestion and included it in their commentaries as if it were a historical fact. And by the way, folks, commentators do this a lot.

And you need to be aware of that, that a lot of times they rely upon each other. And that's a good thing. But a lot of times you're reading a commentary and you can tell who they've been reading because sometimes they steal each other's words and expressions.

And here is a guy, Groseheide in 1953, who says probably this was the case. And he's theorizing here and he gives no evidence to back this up. He just says perhaps this is what was happening.

But other commentators who have a lot of respect for this guy, they grab hold of that and say, well, it must have been a historical fact. And Gordon Fee, who is a more recent commentator, I think his commentary was written back in 1987. 1987, look at what he says at the bottom of page six.

Speaking of what has happened since 1953, Gordon Fee says it was commonly suggested that short hair or a shaved head was the mark of the Corinthian prostitutes. But there is no contemporary evidence to support this view. It seems to be a case of one scholar's guess becoming a second scholar's footnote and a third scholar's assumption.

And then he says, because he's interacting at this point with another commentator, even Martin, for whose interpretation this possibility would be especially helpful, admits the lack of evidence. So even commentators, more recent commentators who want this to be true, they admit that all it is is a theory and there is no historical evidence that would verify the claim that Corinthian prostitutes shaved their head or wore very short hair. And so Zodiotes, to take his view, he says it must be remembered.

And then he gives you a gob of historical information and a problem that that would have posed in the Corinthian church. And all that he says there, it may have been true, but I just want you to know there is no historical evidence to verify the truth of that. So in my mind, this is kind of a fabricated problem that history doesn't verify and show really, indeed, to be the case.

And so you at least want to be aware of that, that there is no historical evidence for what Zodiotes says by way of explaining his viewpoint in the history, the historical situation that his viewpoint would address. But nonetheless, these are the two views that have to do with the hair. There's the hair bound up on top of the head and that's the covering.

And then there's the long hair view and that's the covering Paul is advocating. And then there's Zodiotes view, which is an either or. It's either long hair hanging down or a cloth covering that is over the head.

Well, there is a third view. And obviously, this is the view that that I am suggesting to you guys as being the most sensible view in the matter that really does justice to the passage. And that is that the covering Paul is advocating here equals a cloth covering on the head of some sort.

OK, he's not talking about the hair as the covering in verses three through 13. He's talking about some kind of cloth covering that should be on the woman's head and should not be on the man's head. Now, according to this view, Paul is correcting women who were not wearing a cloth head covering and correcting men who were wearing them.

And just to be fair, I've given you the names and even quotations from all the commentators that take the other views regarding the long hair. So to be fair, I at least need to tell you that of the 64 commentators that I read, 58 of them take this view. That doesn't mean that it's right because most of them take this view.

But nonetheless, I think it's worth knowing if I'm going to give you that kind of information about the other view. So Paul is advocating a cloth covering in this passage. That's the view that I want to share with you guys.

And as we do this, I'm going to show you guys some overheads. But first of all, just a graphic I downloaded from the Internet. This is basically what a woman in first century Corinth would look like with a head covering.

And notice she's smiling. She's happy about it. But anyway, in just a moment or two, I'll show you guys a couple overheads and dealing with some of the Greek terms that are used here.

But folks, in sorting through this, and I don't want this to come across wrong, there are some thorny interpretational problems in this section. I don't view this as being one of the more difficult ones. This was a decision that I felt that I was able to arrive at fairly easily to really be able to do justice to everything that is in the passage.

But I tried my best in my study to make myself biased in these other directions and these other views. And I tried to go through the text and make it work. I tried to make these other views work and to do the best job I could.

And I could not make them work as hard as I tried. And in some ways I could make them work in some verses. But then I would come to something like verse six and say, I can't make this work.

It just won't work. But nonetheless, this view that the covering Paul is advocating as a cloth covering on top of the head just does justice, I think, to everything that is in the passage. Now, I want you to know my goal is not to persuade you if you happen to disagree with me and say, no, I think the covering is long hair.

I respect that. But nonetheless, at least at least maybe listen as I try to walk you through what my thinking process has been and allow that to cause you to put your viewpoint under review and see if we can't learn together. And if you've got you know, if you disagree with something that I say, I want you to come to me.

Let's talk about it, because maybe there's something that I'm missing. But anyway, here's the things that I have considered. First of all, folks, as you look at verse four, look at what Paul says in verse four.

Every man who has something on his head while praying or prophesying disgraces his head. Now, Paul does not say every man who ever has something on his head disgraces his head. He's not saying that.

But he says any man who has something on his head while he's either praying or prophesying, then in that situation, that man is disgracing his head. And just that by itself, folks, just kind of mitigates against the long hair view that, you know, that Paul would say, you know, it's wrong to have long hair men when you pray or prophesy. If that's going to be the contrast to the women having long hair, or it's wrong to have a feminine do men gathered up on top of the head when you pray or prophesy.

Just the natural flow of Paul's thinking here and how he limits it to prayer and prophecy seems to make us want to go in our minds to the thought of a cloth covering that can easily be put on or off in situations like this. And Paul says every man who has something on his head while praying or prophesying disgraces his head. Now, folks, don't lose me here.

But I pointed out to you, I think, three or four weeks ago that the expression in the Greek that is translated has something on his head is the Greek expression. Kata kephales. Kata kephales, which literally is the word that means down and then the word kephales means head.

So it's something that's down on the head. Some say it could speak of something that is down from the head. But either way, at least the idea is something that's down on someone's head that may be hanging down.

But it is an object that is placed down on someone's head. Now, folks, when commentators find an expression like this, kata kephales, one of the questions that they ask themselves is, I wonder if this exact expression shows up anywhere else in ancient Greek literature. And if it does, let's find out where where it is used and what the context is.

And is there is it clear what the meaning is? And we'll study this and that'll give us an idea of how this expression would have been understood in Paul's day amongst the Christians that he is writing to. And commentators have done this. And in all of ancient Greek writings, both the Greek translation of the Old Testament, along with a bunch of other ancient Greek writings that aren't in scripture, they have located two times and only two times where the expression kata kephales is actually used.

And I give you both of those here on page seven. And a look at number one here, this expression kata kephales is used by the Greek writer Plutarch, who was a first century writer. He was writing during the first century in his description of a man who had a toga on his head.

Look at exactly what Plutarch says. He was walking, having his toga kata kephales. Obviously, we're speaking of some kind of external covering that was on the man's head.

And he uses this exact expression that Paul used to describe the location or the placement of that toga that was on the man's head. It was kata kephales. Do you guys understand that? All right.

Look at the second occasion where this is used. Item number two in the Greek translation and the Greek Septuagint. And don't let that throw you.

I meant to bring one this morning. I've got it down in my office. But the Greek Septuagint was a translation of the Hebrew Old Testament that was translated somewhere around 200 to 150 years before Christ was born.

OK, and they did that because a lot of Jews were not as familiar with Hebrew anymore, but they all spoke Greek. And so they felt the need. Let's develop a translation for Greek speaking Jews.

And by the time the New Testament rolls around, the Greek Septuagint was actually the translation of choice of many of the apostles. And we even find that when the apostles in the epistles quote from the Old Testament, frequently their quotations are from the Septuagint, from the Greek translation of the Hebrew Old Testament. So this was their Bible in many ways.

And in this translation of the Old Testament in the Greek Septuagint, this expression is used in Esther 6, 12. Kata Kephales is used in that passage to describe how Haman returned to his house. It says, but Haman returned unto his home, mourning Kata Kephales.

Now, what does that mean? Well, what I say here, clearly Haman had placed some kind of cloth covering on his head. He did not let his hair grow long while running home. There are some who look at verse four in 1 Corinthians 11 and say Kata Kepheles must speak of long hair on men.

But how can that mean that it doesn't mean that in Plutarch's use of the expression and clearly the writer or the translators of the Hebrew Old Testament in Esther 6, 12. They're not saying, and Haman was so angry as he was running home that his hair grew real fast and he had long hair by the time he got home. That's not the point.

It's not talking about the hair. It's clearly talking about the fact that he placed some type of covering on his head. In fact, folks, if you want to know what the Greek translators of Esther 6, 12 mean when they say Kata Kepheles, a good thing to do is to look at what the Hebrew text of Esther 6, 12 says and look at the Hebrew expression that they were trying to translate.

And look at what I say here in the Hebrew text of Esther 6, 12. The expression literally reads with covered head. The Hebrew word that means covered in this text is a word Kafa, and you'll find the same word used in connection with the word head in 2 Samuel 15.

And in Jeremiah 14, speaking of those who are in mourning or who are humiliated and they are placing a cloth covering on their head. David, when he was mourning, it says in 2 Samuel 15, he covered his head. And in these references, it's clearly speaking of some kind of covering that was placed on their head.

To me, folks, the evidence is pretty clear that at least in verse 4, Paul is not speaking of the man's hair that is hanging down or being long. It seems clear that he's speaking of a man who has something on top of his head, some kind of cloth covering on the top of his head. And Paul says a man who does this when praying or when prophesying is disgracing his head, who is Jesus Christ.

Now, by the way, and we're going to get into this more in coming weeks. It was a custom in Roman society for men to cover their heads when they worshipped certain Roman deities. And we even have images of the Emperor Augustus who's involved in a religious role, and he has something pulled over his head.

It was a very common custom from the emperor on down that when they engaged in a religious exercise in worshipping a deity, especially in some kind of leadership capacity, they would put something on their head. A cloth covering on their head as they engaged in that action. And so it makes sense that at Corinth, which was a Roman colony, that there would be men who would be trying to do this.

And Paul says, even though it is the cultural norm and society for men to do this, I'm telling you, it's not the norm in the church. And any man who, when praying or prophesying, puts something on top of his head, when praying or prophesying, he is disgracing the Lord Jesus Christ. So that's clearly what that expression means to me.

There's no evidence that would indicate that it means anything other than what I have said and the way that the translators take this. Well, folks, if you accept that, look at the second thing that I consider as I work my way through the passage. If in verse four, Paul is clearly referring to something external, which is on the head rather than the hair, then by way of contrast, what would be the natural way to understand the woman whose head is uncovered in the following verse? The natural flow of thought would seem to indicate that Paul is speaking of a woman who is not wearing a cloth covering on her head.

Imagine, folks, that verse four says, Paul says, if a man has some kind of cloth covering on his head, he's disgracing his head. But if a woman has long hair hanging down when she prays or prophesies, disgraces her head. Or if a woman has short hair, if you're going to have that view, what you're going to have to say is that it's not a perfect contrast to what Paul has said in verse four.

The natural flow of thought is that the man has something, a cloth covering on his head. Paul says, that's not good, not a good thing. Verse five, but every woman who has her head uncovered, in other words, a woman who does not have a cloth covering on her head while praying or prophesying.

That's what he's talking about. He's not talking about on other occasions or outside of a gathering of believers. He's talking about the specific instances of praying or prophesying.

And Paul says, any woman who, while doing these two things, who has her head uncovered, she is disgracing her head. Now, folks, let me show you guys what the Greek word is that's in verse five. And by the way, if you guys want a copy of this, I'll be happy to run this off.

But this is copyrighted material. So don't duplicate this without my written permission. But anyway, the word that's in black at the top, this is the Greek word Akata Kalupto.

Don't tune me out as soon as I say that you guys know I don't go flinging out Greek words to you all the time. But in this case, I think it's necessary. This is how it's pronounced.

This is the transliteration, basically, of the word. It's Akata Kalupto. And you know how our word, someone who is a theist is someone who believes in God.

They believe there's a God. Someone who is an atheist or an atheist is someone who does not believe in a God. And so that is often a negative particle, even in our language.

When I amuse, I am thinking. When I amuse myself, I am not thinking. OK, and it's the same idea here.

It's Akata Kalupto. So if we want to know what, which is a negative particle that negates this word. If we want to know what Akata Kalupto means, then it seems like it would be valuable to know what Akata Kalupto means.

Right. Because whatever Akata Kalupto means, the A says it's the opposite of that. Is everyone with me? OK, let me have you guys go to Isaiah chapter six, verse two, where we find in the Greek Old Testament where Akata Kalupto is used.

And you're going to see with the references that I point out to you that the clear meaning of the word is to cover. That's what Akata Kalupto means. It means to cover.

In Isaiah chapter six, in verse two, it says Seraphim stood above him, each having six wings. With two, he Akata Kalupto'd his face and with two, he Akata Kalupto'd his feet. OK, in that passage, Akata Kalupto, which is this part of the word, is used twice to speak of the the angel with the wings, using the wings to cover his face.

And using another set of wings to cover or to Akata Kalupto his feet. Let me have you guys go to Genesis 38, the first book of the Old Testament. Genesis 38, we're going to have to wrap this up and then pick up here tonight.

Genesis chapter 38 in verse 15. It says, And when Judah saw her, he thought she was a harlot, for she had Akata Kalupto'd her face. OK, clearly the meaning there is she had taken some kind of cloth covering and covered her face.

All right. That's how everyone would understand this. The basic idea of this term is to cover something.

Tamar covered her face. The angels covered their faces along with their feet. And Habakkuk 2.14, the expression is used as the waters cover the sea.

And clearly the idea there is that of covering. Now, folks, if Kata Kalupto means to cover or to conceal, then Akata Kalupto would be to unconceal or to uncover something. OK, so just in the natural flow of thought, it just seems so natural to me to just understand Paul to be saying every man who has something on his head while praying or prophesying disgraces his head.

And he's speaking of something that's placed on the head of the man. But every woman who uncovers her head, she takes whatever covering off of her head while doing just these two things while praying and while prophesying. She is disgracing her head.

I don't think what Paul is talking about is any woman who realizes she's going to pray or prophesy. So she gives herself a quick haircut and now she's disgracing her head. He's talking about something that women can take on or off.

And he says a woman who does either praying or prophesying with her head now uncovered in those moments, Paul says she is disgracing her head. Now, folks, we're going to need to stop here. But what I would encourage you guys to do is to take the time to read through the full packet that I've given you.

I will allow time at the end of the message tonight for Q&A. So bring me your best stuff. Let's all try to learn together.

And as you read through this and we'll try to go through a lot of this tonight. If you have questions or if you disagree with something or if you think something's not clear, I want you to feel free to speak up. This is something that we as a body of believers need to be conversing about.

And I'm trying to teach you what I'm learning. And I want you guys to teach me as well the things that you are seeing or even the problems that you may have with what I am trying to suggest to you this morning. But anyway, folks, this has been kind of academic and I I feel a little apologetic for that.

But please understand that this is an issue that is shrouded in so much controversy that we do need to take the time to just look at the nuts and bolts of the text itself and in order to arrive at the conclusion that the text is indicating. And you know what my my goal is, folks, and I'll say this and then close is as complicated as all of the gyrations are that we're going to go through today and perhaps in coming weeks. By the time we're done, my hope is that most of you will look back at your English translation and go, you know what? That's what I thought it said to start with, because ultimately the viewpoint that I'm advocating to you is a viewpoint that most of you, if you just objectively read your English translation, you would have said, well, that's what I thought it said just from reading that.

Nonetheless, because so many people disagree with it, we need to go beneath the English text to the Greek text and sort through all of these logistical, complicated issues. But the goal we're going to arrive at is going to be one that I think will encourage every one of you. And that is to just read your Bible and look

at what it says in the English and to be encouraged at how readily understandable what Paul really is saying truly is.

And so hopefully when we're done, that'll be an encouragement to you. Read your Bibles, folks, read your English Bibles, and then also with the skills that you have and the tools that you have, go beneath that and look at the Greek and the Hebrew. Go as deep as you can, but do understand that God wants his word to be clear and he wants it to be clearly understood.

And we do God a service and we do honor to him when we seek to know his will in all simplicity. And then we seek to do it. And when we come to God's word with an attitude that says, I don't even know fully yet what you're going to say to me.

But God, I'm telling you right now, before I even know that, whatever you tell me, that's what I'm going to do. And that's the attitude that I want us to go to prayer with this morning. Let me ask you to bow your heads.

So I said last Sunday or perhaps a Sunday before that this this passage is not just a simplistic passage on some silly external thing. This is one of the most important heart issue passages in all of the book of First Corinthians, bringing to the surface issues and attitudes of defiance and perhaps rebellion, attitudes of about our perspective of peer pressure, conformity to what others in the church are doing or even what people in our society are doing. It brings all of those things to the surface, what our attitudes will be towards those who disagree.

This is a valuable learning experience for all of us. We need to be careful to avoid the wrong attitudes that the devil can so easily introduce into our thinking. But let's pray together and ask the Lord to continue to give us open hearts as we seek to know his mind as he reveals it in this text.

Our Heavenly Father, we just come to you right now and we thank you for for your word. We thank you, Lord, for the clarity of your word. It seems like there are attempts to make this passage more complicated than what it truly is.

And perhaps the motive for that often is is a reluctance to actually do what it says. But Lord, just help us to to have open hearts to you. And if we are willing to do your will, we're going to know of the teaching.

We're going to know of the substance of what you want us to know. Give us open hearts, Lord, hearts that just recklessly almost are abandoned wholly unto you and to your word. It's just an attitude that says, God, whatever you say, that's what I'm going to do.

I don't care if no one else does this or what people are going to think. I just want to do what your word says. I want to be a biblical Christian living in obedience to the sum totality of your word.

Lord, help us to have this type of attitude, because we know if we do, we're not going to lack for your voice in this matter. We will be able to hear your voice if we have this attitude and know clearly your mind by the time we're done sorting through this issue. Keep our hearts open, Lord, towards you, towards your word, towards this text, and keep our hearts open towards one another as well as we engage in loving and earnest conversations with one another regarding this issue.

We give ourselves to you in the name of Jesus and all God's people said.

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