

# (The Head Covering) 04 - Old Testament Testimony

by Tom Chaplin

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*The sermon explores the theological significance of head coverings through Old Testament scriptures and their implications for modesty and authority in women's attire.*

**Duration:** 56:26

**Topics:** "Head Covering"

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## Description

In this sermon, the preacher begins by discussing a passage from Proverbs 7 about a young man who lacks understanding and is enticed by a woman. The sermon then transitions to a series on understanding the head covering, with a review of previous lessons on biblical teachings related to the head covering. The preacher emphasizes the importance of considering Old Testament scriptures and their relevance to the topic. The sermon then focuses on specific passages in the Old Testament, including Genesis 3, 2nd Samuel 13, Numbers 5, Song of Solomon 5, Proverbs 7, and Isaiah 47, to explore what they have to say about the head covering.

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## Transcript

Today we'll be considering or beginning lesson four of our series on understanding the head covering, the whole Bible approach. Just to do a little bit of review as we normally do. The last three weeks we've been considering, not specifically the head covering, but some various biblical teaching that definitely relates to the head covering.

Ideas that are in the back of our mind, if we might say it that way, that influence the way we look at scriptures regarding this subject. And we have taken three lessons to look at issues like how we look at the Old Testament scriptures, what do we think about culture as we look at scripture. And last week we considered the authority relationship between man and woman and issues of modesty as it related to clothing.

And just to kind of summarize what I think are the most important points, not necessarily all that we had to share, but the most important points of those three lessons. There they are, put them up there on the overhead for you. And as we begin today I'd like you to try and keep these thoughts in your mind.

Let's just kind of look at them for a second. The first point I'd like us to remember, and this was discussed in our first lesson, is this, that Old Testament precepts, examples, and even inferences are profitable for doctrine, reproof, correction, for instruction in righteousness, even for us today. Now that's a key point because obviously we're looking at Old Testament scriptures tonight.

What is our attitude going to be towards those scriptures? Are we going to be looking at them to actually help us understand this issue? Will we basically have a skeptical attitude towards them or think that they have nothing to say to us? Well in our first lesson we tried to lay out a biblical theology for how we should use Old Testament scriptures and I believe, at least for me, that is the conclusion I've come into my studies and that's what I tried to share with you the first lesson that we had several weeks ago, that we can use Old Testament scriptures and we can look at them and God's given them to us, to us today, to instruct us and to teach us things that are useful for us concerning righteousness. In the second lesson we looked at culture. This is another big issue.

It has a lot to do with issues other than just the head covering. Many scriptures, not just Old Testament but even New Testament scriptures, are by many, are by many not taken very seriously because they're said to be just culturally bound and therefore we really don't have to obey them today. But the point we tried to establish was this, we need more than just cultural arguments to justify setting aside biblical instruction.

In fact, in the light of passages such as Matthew 5, 17 and 2 Timothy 3, 14 through 17, we should assume what we read in scripture is for us today and place the burden of proof on anyone who would assert otherwise. That's another, I think, very important principle. And if Christians would take these top two principles, I don't know if I want to say more seriously, but they would embrace them.

They would find that the Bible has a lot of awful useful instruction that they might have a tendency to overlook. And last week we dealt with the issue of clothing as it related to modesty and authority. And these are the two points that seem to be most important.

As God himself was the maker of the first acceptable clothing, we see that clothing is an inherently moral and theological issue. Now I don't want to say that it's totally moral and theological because obviously there's many different styles of clothing, many different patterns, many different colors, that conceivably you could have and still be modestly attired. But when we consider that God himself prepared the first garments and gave them to Adam and Eve, we see that he himself is saying yes you need to have clothing.

So the very foundation of clothing is founded in God's attitude towards it. It's not just we wear clothing because we like to do it. There's a very theological reason, and we discussed all that last week.

Moral and theological reason why we wear clothing. And finally, and this is the one point that we really need to keep in mind as we go to build Testament scriptures, a very important point, the most important one up there. To be modestly and appropriately dressed, a woman must attire herself as fitting her place in God's authority structure.

And we hopefully established that from consideration of passages in Timothy and Peter and the way they approach clothing. And that this principle is primarily established on New Testament passages and not even old. But we saw that for Peter and for Timothy, or for Paul, that for a woman to dress appropriately meant her to dress according to her place in relation to man and the authority structure that God has established.

So if you will kind of keep these in the back of your mind as we read and go through the scriptures today and discuss them, hopefully it'll be helpful to us and give us the foundation for understanding what we're looking at today. Any questions on that? Comments? Okay. Well, let's go ahead now with today's lesson.

Today's lesson is entitled, The Head Covering, The Old Testament Testimony. What do the scriptures in the Old Testament have to say to us concerning this matter? Now the passages we're going to look at are those. We're going to look at Genesis 321 and in conjunction with that we're going to look at 2nd Samuel 1318.

We'll look at Numbers 5, 12-31. The Song of Solomon, 5-1, in conjunction with Proverbs 7, 6-13. And we'll look at Isaiah 47, verses 1-3.

These are not all the passages in the Old Testament, but in my mind or to my thinking they're the clearest passages and specifically clear passages regarding that fourth point that I made last week. So we want to consider these passages and see what they have to tell us. Now the first passages or passage we want to look at is Genesis 3 beginning in verse 21.

And as we look at these passages, and I apologize for this, my overheads have gotten grimy dirty. I hope you can still read that. As we read these passages and discuss them, I'd like for us to be considering in our minds these two questions.

Number one, was Eve the first woman to wear the head covering? And number two, if she was the first woman to wear the head covering, why is this not specifically mentioned in Scripture? So let's keep those two things in mind as we look at these passages. So let's look first at Genesis 3-21. And the reason I want to look at this is because obviously I believe the issue of the head covering is a moral issue.

If it is a moral issue and not a cultural issue, then it had to have originated with the first man and woman. That would make sense because God's moral standards don't change. And if this was something that he wanted for man, and it's not just something that a particular culture decided, oh I like the head covering so I'm going to start wearing it.

I want to give it a significance myself. If it really is something that God gave a significance to, and it's always been of that significance, then it had to have started being implied or used, or put in practice with the first man and woman that were created. So that's why I feel like we have to look at this.

And in times past this issue has been raised with me. So I'd like to, you know, give you my thoughts on it. But look in Genesis 3-21.

Let me read what God says about the clothing that he gave to Adam and Eve. And to Adam also and to his wife did the Lord God made coats of skins and he clothed them. Now the word I want us to look at in the concept is this concept of coats.

Of course when you and I think of a coat, what do we think of? I mean I think of my little leather jacket that I wear in the house lots of times right now because the house is cold. When I think of a coat I think of a, you know, a piece of clothing that would cover my upper body. And that's right in the 20th century.

But what did it mean, you know, back in the days that the Hebrew was actually written? And actually this Hebrew word for coat can mean robe. It's obviously some type of outer garment. When Joseph was fleeing from Potiphar's wife and he left his outer garment, the word used there is this word for coat.

He fled naked. But another passage and an important passage I'd like us to consider to try and get a handle on what that word means is the passage 2 Samuel 13 18. And this is the account of Tamar being defiled by Amnon.

And after this terrible thing had happened, this verse is stated. It says, and she had a garment of divers colors upon her, for with such robes were the king's daughters that were virgins appareled. Then his servant brought her out, namely Amnon's servant, and bolted the door after her.

And Tamar put ashes on her head and rent her garment of divers colors that was on her and laid her hand on her head and went on crying. Now this word up here, garment, is the same word used in Genesis for coat. So this garment of divers colors is, again, I think obviously from the context it was some type of outer garment.

But what interested me about this verse is what Tamar did. She tore it. She tore it in two.

And then it says after she did that, that she was obviously kicked out of Amnon's house and she went outside with her hand on top of her head. I've been trying to find some commentaries that address just the significance of her putting her hand on her head. But what I, and I might share with some more of you in the next few weeks if I find out some more, but what I think is happening here is that this coat that she wore, and I wish I had a picture.

I wish you had found them for me, dear. Let me drop back a second. If you've ever looked at pictures of the types of garments worn in the ancient world by women, you'll see that they wear these tremendously long garments that run literally from the top of their head to their feet.

And the garment is of such a character that they use it not only to cover the head, but it's also just used to cover the entire body like an outer, like a coat. It's the outer garment. So you look at my wife and you see that, yes, she wears a head covering and that head covering is separate from her dress.

But we have to understand that in the ancient world that wasn't the case. That a standard mode of clothing was a garment that was full length that the woman would just throw up over her head at the same time. And so the same garment would be her coat covering all the outer part of her body, but it would also be used to cover her head.

And we lose track of that because now when we see head coverings, what we see is what the Mennonites wear, the Amish, and they tend to be normally a separate piece of clothing from the outer garment. But in the ancient world it wasn't normally that way. And the garment that women used to cover their head was also their outer garment as well that covered them many times through to their feet.

And so when Tamar took that garment and rent it in two, what she was doing was tearing her head covering. And now you think, that explains why she is running around outside with her hand on top of her head because she no longer has her head covering. Now to me that's reasonable because I've seen my wife do the same thing.

She'll need to pray and she won't have anything to put on her head and so she'll do it. I mean to me it's not sufficient, but I mean it's because she wants to be properly attired and she realizes that she's not. She does the best she can.

And so I think in the case of Tamar, you have a similar situation. She had torn in grief at what had happened. She had torn her outer garment.

She no longer had a head covering. She was still out in public and she covers her head as the best she can do. Now, you know, like I said, I'd like some authority to put behind that and I haven't been able to find any commentators that have actually even addressed what she's done.

Not that they're not there, I just haven't found them. But I think that that is a potentially legitimate understanding of his passage. But the point is that this outer garment that was worn in the ancient world, this coat that a woman wore, was actually a sufficient length and whatever to cover not only the head but the body as well.

And so when it says in Genesis that he made them coats, it is distinctly possible, and I think actually the case, that that was a covering that Eve also used to cover her head. This is a conclusion. I don't want to say too much or more than I have a right to.

But this is kind of the conclusion I've drawn. While the head covering is not specifically mentioned regarding Eve, nevertheless the term used to indicate the clothing God gave to her is compatible with that conclusion. Now let me stop there and comment on the second part of my statement before I actually read it.

Why doesn't the Bible specifically mention it if in fact she did wear a head covering? Well, theologians will talk about a concept called progressive revelation. And by that what they mean is you will find that many times in Scripture you'll have a doctrine and it's like having a rose bud. Initially there's not much there, but as you go through Scripture and through time and the Bible reveals more about it, that doctrine will just kind of open up like a rose.

And you'll fully understand what the doctrine is. In Genesis in particular you can see many doctrines of that character. You know it says in God's statement to Eve after she sinned, she said, I'll put enmity between you and the serpent and you shall bruise, he shall bruise your heel or the seed.

He shall, the serpent shall bruise the seed's heel, but he shall bruise the serpent's head. Now in that passage you have what? The doctrine of the Christ's coming and his redemption and his sacrificial death. Very, very, you know, obscure statement there, but that in kernel is the whole doctrine of redemption right there in Genesis, right in the first couple of chapters of the book.

But then as you go through the Scriptures, what do you see? You see that doctrine opened up and unfolded and explained. So that by the time we get to the New Testament and the letters of Paul, we fully understand the full intent of what was said in Genesis in that one little obscure kind of cryptic verse. You take the doctrine of the Sabbath for instance.

All you have in the first few chapters there is the statement that God set aside the seventh day and blessed it, sanctified it. But from that concept there, that one little statement, then we go into the law and we see Moses expands upon it, then we come to the New Testament, we see what the Lord said about it, we see what happens in Hebrews, and so this whole doctrine of the Sabbath is elaborated on and expanded throughout the history of redemption and in the Scriptures. But the whole truth of it is not given in one place.

And when you are dealing in Genesis, you're dealing with a little seed, a little seed doctrine. Not all the details are given. The doctrine of marriage begins in Genesis.

But where do we learn that marriage is a picture of Christ in the church? We've got to come to the New Testament. So the doctrine of marriage begins in Genesis, but we can go through the law and even into the New Testament. We see that doctrine is opened up like a road into a beautiful picture of what marriage is fully to be understood to be.

And so I think as we consider that and we understand that Genesis gave all the details on every single doctrine that it begins, Genesis would be 10,000 pages long, you know, and that wasn't the intent of Genesis. Genesis is a book of origins, and we have many doctrines that are originating Genesis. But those doctrines are elaborated upon and expanded upon through the whole of biblical revelation till we actually get to the end, to the book of Revelation.

So I finish out with my second statement. The lack of detail is consistent with principles of progressive revelation and the fact that Genesis is a book of beginnings, not a book of extensive explanations. So we can see, I think, from what is told us in Genesis that the idea that Eve was the first woman to wear the head covering is not ruled out.

It's clearly possible from just what little we've given there that that's included. And in fact, I would say as we look at the progressive revelation of Scripture and then look back at Genesis in light of that revelation, we've pretty much got to come to the conclusion that she did wear the head covering. But that remains for me to demonstrate.

Any questions on this part, this set of Scriptures? Let's go ahead and look at Numbers. And again, as we look at Numbers, chapter 5, verses 12 through 31, I'd like us to have a question in our minds. I want you to think, and the question I want you to be contemplating as I read this passage is this, just what is the significance of uncovering the woman's head? Think about that.

Contemplate it as we read this passage, beginning in verse 12. Speaking to the children of Israel, and saying to them, if any man's wife go aside and commit a trespass against him, and the man lie with her carnally, and it be hid from the eyes of her husband, and be kept close, and she be defiled, and there be no witness against her, neither she be taken with the manner. And the spirit of jealousy come upon him, and he be jealous of his wife, and she be defiled.

Or if the spirit of jealousy come upon him, and he be not jealous of his wife, and she be not defiled, then shall the man bring his wife unto the priest, and he shall bring her offering for her, the tenth part of an ephah of barley meal. He shall pour no oil upon it, nor put frankincense thereon, for it is an offering of jealousy, an offering of memorial, bringing iniquity to remembrance. And the priest shall bring her near, and set her before the Lord.

And the priest shall take holy water, and an earthen vessel, and of the dust that is in the floor of the tabernacle, the priest shall take and put it into the water. And the priest shall set the woman before the Lord, and uncover the woman's head, and put the offering of memorial in her hands, which is the jealousy offering. And the priest shall have in his hand the bitter water that causes the curse.

And the priest shall charge her by an oath, and say unto the woman, If no man have lain with thee, and if thou hast not gone aside to uncleanness with another instead of thy husband, be thou free from this bitter

water that causes the curse. But if thou hast gone aside to another instead of thy husband, and if thou be defiled, and some man have lain with thee beside thy husband, then the priest shall charge the woman with an oath of cursing. And the priest shall say unto the woman, The Lord make thee a curse, and an oath among the people, when the Lord doth make thy thigh to rot, and thy belly to swell.

And this water that causeth the curse shall go into thy bowels, to make thy belly to swell, and thy thigh to rot. And the woman shall say, Amen, Amen." I'll stop there. I think that's enough.

Now what do you think? Here you have this ceremony, and the ceremony is relating to an accusation, a serious accusation, that a man's wife has been unfaithful to him. And in the midst of this ceremony, and it's inscripturated, I mean it's part of the law, God says uncover her head. Now what do you think? Why, what in the world would uncovering a woman's head have to do with her being unfaithful or not? Interesting question, isn't it? What possible relationship could it have? Now consider the setting here.

We're dealing with a man who is obviously so convinced that his wife has been unfaithful, that he's willing to take her to the priest and put her through this ordeal. He must obviously be seriously convinced that there's some truth to this, to go through this, even himself, because he not only is putting her through the ordeal, but people are going to realize that he's involved, and it's really a shame for a man to have a wife that's unfaithful to him. So I mean obviously there was, he was pretty convinced that something was wrong, and the point is that she was supposedly unfaithful to him, that she had gone out from under his authority, that she had actually given herself to somebody else and had left her proper place under his headship.

Now that's the context in which this strange ceremony takes place, of which a central part of it is that she comes before the priest and he takes her head covering off. You got any thoughts as to why, why would the head covering have anything to do with that? Let me make a suggestion. I think it's pretty easy to understand if you consider it in light of what we talked about last week, right? You see the possible significance that if God expects a woman to dress according to her station, namely her position under the headship of her husband, under the headship of man, and that if the head covering is in some way related to that whole issue, then we can see how in this case, we can see maybe why it would be taken off, because the woman is accused of what? Of not being under the headship of her husband anymore, of acting, being a rebellion, going after another man.

Well how can that be? Why would the head covering have such a significance? Well again, I don't know if I went through this, but I'll go through it again. If I didn't, I don't remember, but consider what the head is. It is the central control center of the body.

My body doesn't do anything unless my head tells it to operate. It is the authority center. It's that which many times gets me into trouble, and I would say that the reason a woman wore the head covering was for that very reason, to show the fact that as a woman, she was to have her head out of view, that by wearing the head covering, she was giving testimony to the fact that my control center is not to be in authority, rather the man is in authority over me, and by putting that head covering on, she's taking her head out of the limelight, she's taking it out of the way, and that's the significance of the head covering, I think, as a piece of clothing, and again tied back to the fact that how is a woman to dress in a way that's respective of her station, and so in this passage, when they say strip off the head covering, what they're saying is, lady, you've been accused of not being under authority, and this item of clothing that you're wearing, which is a testimony to men, that you say you are under authority, you have no right to wear anymore, and we're

taking it off, because your husband is so convinced that you've been disobedient and disrespectful to him, and gone out of the way, he's so convinced he's willing to put you through this ordeal, and he's that convinced, you don't need to be wearing the head covering, and so they took it off as part of the ceremony, but this little kind of cryptic event here really makes a lot of sense, if you understand the principles that we talked about last week in the theology of clothing, and the fact that the head covering, more so than perhaps any other item of clothing, is the piece of clothing that reflects God's chain of command, and the proper relationships between men and women in that chain of command.

Let me give you my conclusion concerning this passage, and please know, and it's important to know, that this is a point of God's law, okay, it's actually codified in the scriptures, in the law of God, in the book of Numbers, so it's got, it's hard to believe it's not really God's mind, I don't believe he would inscripturate a principle or a practice that was just cultural and might change, he obviously expects that the head covering is going to have significance as long as the law is valid, because this is always to be a part of this ceremony, but it is a point of God's law, and we need to know too that this event takes place in worship, not in a worship service. Many groups today will say that the head covering, well you should wear a head covering, but the proper place to wear it is when you're in church, but you'll notice that from the Old Testament perspective that it was a public issue, not just an issue of worship. She came before the priest, she didn't go in a public setting, she was not in the setting of a worship service or a synagogue service, and it is assumed by the scriptures that she will appear with her head cover, okay, it's just a saying.

So this brings me to the conclusion. God's law assumed that a virtuous woman would manifest her submission to authority by wearing a head covering in public. A rebellious woman, having lost her virtuous standing, therefore lost her right to wear that element of clothing, and so it was to be taken away from her, and that's what you have in this account of the Bitter Water Ceremony.

Now, I want to show you from another set of passages this principle also. Look now in the Song of Solomon, chapter 5. Now in this account, the Shulamite bride of Solomon, apparently she's in bed asleep, and her beloved comes to the door, and she's away for the night, I guess, and she says this, I sleep, but my heart waketh. It is the voice of my beloved that knocketh, saying, Open to me, my sister, my love, my dove, my undefiled, for my head is filled with dew, and my locks with the drops of the night.

And then the Shulamite says, I have put off my coat, how shall I put it on? I have washed my feet, how shall I defile them? She's getting lazy, she doesn't want to get out of bed. My husband put in his hand by the hole of the door, and my vows were moved for him. I rose up to open to my beloved, and my hands gawked with myrrh, and my fingers with sweet smelling myrrh upon the handles of the lock.

Now she got stirred and decided she wanted to get up, but she delayed. And verse 6 says, I opened to my beloved, but my beloved had withdrawn himself, and was gone. My soul failed when he spake.

I sought him, but I could not find him. I called him, but he gave me no answer. The watchman, now she's gone out looking for him, the watchman that went about the city found me.

They smoked me, they wounded me, the keepers of the walls took away my veil from me. Here this lady is, and she's out at night, and the guards of the city, they do this strange thing, they take away her veil. Why? Why did they do that? Look for me, look with me for a second in Proverbs chapter 7, beginning in verse 6. For at the window of my house I looked through my casement, and beheld among the simple ones, I discerned among the youth a young man void of understanding.

Passing through the street near her corner, and he went the way to her house. In the twilight, in the evening, in the black and dark night, now notice the setting, it's at night, and behold there met him a woman with the attire of an harlot, and subtle of heart. She is loud and stubborn, her feet abide not in her house, now is she without, now in the streets, and lieth in wait at every corner.

So she caught him and kissed him, etc. Virtuous women just didn't go out at night, okay? And so I think what we have in the Song of Solomon is the case where, though obviously the Shulamite was a virtuous woman, she was not acting like a city, and you wouldn't expect to find a virtuous woman out at night alone in the city. What you would expect to find out after night was a rebellious, stubborn harlot.

And the watchman saw this lady, and yet she apparently was dressed properly, not as a harlot, but with a headcuff. Let me read what Burroughs says about this. This is one of the better commentaries on the Song of Solomon.

He makes some good observations. He says, the watchman treated her in an unworthy manner. Watchmen were customarily employed in Jerusalem, and their post was at the gates.

At night watchmen were accustomed to preambulate the city. These represent the ministers of the church with whom the believer is naturally brought in contact when suffering under spiritual desertion and seeking Jesus in times of darkness and trial. The watchman viewed the spouse as a bad woman, for females were not allowed to go about the streets in the night in common.

They smote her, wounded her, and took away her veil. The last is the greatest indignity that can be offered to an Oriental lady. The meaning is they did not recognize her claims to respectability, and treated her as one positively vicious.

Her conduct, though not morally wrong, was unusual, as it was not customary for them to see a respectable female under such circumstances. They supposed no one could be reputable while acting thus. And I think that explains, again, if we understand the significance of the head covering, that it was preeminently that piece of clothing that reflected God's chain of command.

And so when these watchmen see this woman who's acting like somebody that's not under authority, who's actually a rebellious harlot, and yet she dares to wear the symbol of authority, it offended them. And they weren't going to stand for it, and they ripped it off of her. And so the same motive in the Song of Solomon is the same motive in numbers in the passage regarding the woman accused of adultery.

In both cases, the women appeared to be out from under authority, not under authority, and in both cases, therefore, they lost the right to wear the symbol of authority, the head covering, and it was stripped from them. Any questions on that? Pretty much I have no conclusion for that, because it's the same one we already have up there. A virtuous woman would manifest her submission by wearing a head covering.

A rebellious woman had no right to that covering, and so it was taken away from her. Well, the final passage I want to look at this evening is Isaiah 47. And again, keep that question in front of your thoughts.

What is the significance of uncovering the woman's head? Comes up again in Isaiah. Let me read the passage. Come down and sit in the dust, O virgin daughter of Babylon.

Sit on the ground. There is no throne, O daughter of the Chaldeans, for thou shalt no more be called tender and delicate. Take the millstones and grind meal.

Uncover thy locks. Make bare the leg. Uncover the thigh.

Pass over the rivers. Thy nakedness shall be uncovered, and thy shame shall be seen. I will take vengeance, and I will not meet thee as a man.

Well, let's talk about this a little bit. First notice who is speaking. We've already seen the testimony of the law.

Here we're dealing with the testimony of the prophets. But even more directly, God is speaking here. Specifically, not Isaiah.

He's speaking about Babylon under the figure of a virgin. Babylon was a wicked city. It was an idolatrous city.

It was, again, a city in rebellion against God. Rebellion was a central characteristic of that city and that society. And God, in dealing with Babylon, figures her under the picture of a virgin.

Well, now some might say, well, how can you use this because it's a figure? But really, how can the figure have any significance unless the things that are said about the figure are legitimate and true in real life? I don't think that's the reason they have significance, is because they are true to life. But what does he say about Babylon? He says several things are going to happen to Babylon, and that these several things are going to be involved in displaying Babylon's shame and nakedness. What are they? Well, first off, he says, I'm going to take you off the throne.

Here you have this queen, maybe. Anyway, she's royalty. And God says, no, you're not going to be on the throne anymore.

I'm going to take you off the throne, and I'm going to make you a servant. She's going to be grinding mill. Now, that's shameful.

I mean, if I'm a king's daughter and an invader was to come into my land and take me off the throne and take me into the servant's quarters and make me somebody that served them whatever they wanted, that would be humiliating. That would be humbling. That would be shameful.

So that's part of her shame. She's going to be reduced to being a servant, doing hard labor. It also says that she'll pass over the rivers.

I believe in that regard, God is saying, I'm going to send you away out of your land. Again, imagine if that happened to us, if an invading army came in and marched us off into exile. It'd be a humbling experience.

It'd be shameful for us. So I think we can understand that. Furthermore, he says, I'm going to uncover your leg and uncover your thigh.

People are going to see your nakedness. Well, that surely is humbling. That surely is shameful.

I think we can understand that. But he says one other thing that's going to be involved in this shame and nakedness that we have trouble with. And yet it's also part of this passage.

He says, I'm going to uncover your locks. In fact, that's the first thing. He says, I'm going to uncover your locks.

I'm going to make bare the rest of your thigh. And in that, your nakedness is going to be uncovered and my shame shall be seen. But he specifically mentions uncovering the locks as part of this humiliation, part of the shame.

How can that be? Well, again, I think we can understand this if we go back to last week. The head covering, the covering of the head is a symbol or a demonstration through dress that a woman is in her proper place. Babylon was not in her proper place.

She was a rebellious nation, a rebellious city. She was not in subjection to God. And so God says, I'm going to humble you.

You don't love me. You don't submit to me. And figuratively speaking, I'm going to uncover your head.

I'm going to show people what you really are. I'm going to reduce you to nakedness because you don't deserve the finery that you have because you're a rebellious nation. And so under the figure of the Virgin, he says, I'm going to uncover your head as a way to shame you and reveal your nakedness.

Again, we're back to that concept of dressing according to station and being in subjection to God's authority. Well, several other points I want you to consider also. Again, we've already noted that it is God that's doing the speaking here.

So, Paul, and now we see from the prophets that this testimony throughout scripture is consistent. We see in the time of Moses, we come on down through Revelation, we see it's the same in the time of Isaiah. There's no change in perspective.

The head covering is still of the same significance. It hasn't changed. Note also that the individual here is a virgin.

She's unmarried. That is a significant issue because in the history of this doctrine or this teaching, there's been dispute as to when you would start wearing the head covering. And some have said, well, it's when you marry.

But as you can see here, the head covering was not just for a married woman, but also it applied to somebody, a mature woman that was not married. Also important to notice is that the individual involved is a heathen. Now, this goes back to what I believe to be the case that the head covering is an item of clothing in and of itself.

It's not, as some would say, a Christian symbol. It has no inherent significance other than God has said it has significance for the Christian. In fact, throughout history, it was expected that not only God's people, but even the heathen should wear a covering on the head.

Just like even though marriage is properly a Christian ordinance, and there should be no divorce among Christians, it's not right even for non-Christians to divorce. Okay? Well, even though they're lost, they just add to their sin by not being properly dressed. And part of the general standard of dress for all men, and for women in particular, is that their head be covered.

So it involved a virgin. It involved even unbelievers. They were expected to cover their head.

And of course, to note that it's, I've had people really struggle with this passage because it uses such strong language. And it's, it's so, it tends to blow you away because you just don't think about the

uncovered head. Shame and nakedness? I mean, that's just so foreign to, to us.

You know, it's just, it's just hard to, to relate to it. But what can we do? I mean, it's important for us to have not a cultural understanding of what's right to wear and wrong to wear. What's important for us as Christians is to find out what God thinks, isn't it? What does God think is right? What does he disapprove of? Because in the final analysis, how do we know what nakedness is? An African heathen would have a totally different understanding of that than a 20th century American.

But all we just left to cultural considerations to kind of wade and muddle through and come to some non-authoritative decision. Isn't it much better and more biblical to first go to scripture and say, maybe I've been culturally conditioned. What does God say is shameful? What does God say is nakedness? I might not understand why he says it that way, but I need to hold myself open to the possibility that maybe over the course of time and just the way things have developed, that I've been culturally conditioned in a way that's contrary to what God thinks.

And to the extent in any issue that we find ourselves in that point, the proper thing to do is come back to God and his ideas, right? If God says it's shameful and nakedness, I may not quite understand how that could be, but you know, what's that famous phrase, God said it, I believe it, and that settles it. You know, I've heard that many times, usually in regards to being saved, but I think it applies to anything. If God says it, we need to embrace it from the heart, even if it's hard, even if it's hard and difficult.

So my final conclusion, basically the top part is just a recapitulation of what I've already said, except the last line. God's law assumed that a virtuous woman would manifest her submission to authority by wearing a head covering in public. A rebellious woman having lost her virtuous standing therefore lost her right to wear that element of clothing.

And so it was taken away from her. The resulting bodily exposure was considered shameful and even nakedness. To understand this, we must refer to our lesson last week in which we established that for a woman, modesty involved dressing according to station.

As the head is the command center of the body, to cover it and take it out of view is consistent with woman's place in God's chain of command. In covering her head, she is stating that she is not seeking control or preeminence over man. She is acknowledging that man's head is to rule, not her own.

For her, the covered head is modest and appropriate dress. So those are the conclusions I've come to from considering the Old Testament. And I just leave you with one last question for you to consider, and it's this.

If the law and the prophets still instruct us, if we still have them to learn from and to be taught from, and if we really shouldn't start trying to get out of stuff like this using the cultural argument, my question to you is this. What do we do with this teaching? And I'm not going to answer that. I'll leave it to you to think about.

What do we do with this teaching? What would God have us to do? Any questions? All right. Well, that covers our survey of the Old Testament. We'll finish up the study by looking at 1 Corinthians chapter 11 and may look at some of those, the Timothy and Peter passage a little bit more, the New Testament passages.

We'll start on 1 Corinthians 11 next week. And one thing I want you all to be looking at as we move into the New Testament is this whole concept of progressive revelation. Because I think as we move into the New

Testament and consider 1 Corinthians chapter 11, we'll see that God's hasn't changed.

And that really you'll see what you would expect. If God has thought these things all along, that you wouldn't expect to see any changes in the New Testament. You would expect to see the same consistent thinking underlying the concept of the head covering.

You would expect to see that bud just unfolding into even more light in the New Testament. And in fact, you get it. The strongest doctrinal passage is 1 Corinthians 11.

And it makes explicit the theology that we saw implicit in these passages that we looked at tonight. But to me, it's so amazing the consistency in the doctrine. It doesn't change.

It's the same from the old to the new. It just develops even farther and becomes clearer as we move into the New Testament. And that to me is a strong indication that it's really not right for us to start pitting the old and new in this issue.

God's mind is one. It's the same. It has been on this issue since he created man.

And we'll see that more clearly, I think, starting next week. But anyway, that's where we'll be heading. And we'll see where it takes us.

Are there no questions? Well, let's close with prayer. Father, once again, we thank you for this day. Thank you for the opportunity to open up your word.

And we just pray, Lord, that you would truly instruct us from it. Lord, keep us from error. Show us your truth, whatever it may be.

Lord, we acknowledge the weaknesses of the flesh. And many times you present us with things that are kind of hard to swallow. Lord, give us grace to receive whatever it is you have for us.

Give us grace to love you so much that whatever it is you want us to do, we're willing to do. Lord, I pray you'd keep me from misleading anybody. If I'm not accurately expounding these texts, correct me.

But Lord, if what I'm sharing is truly the teaching of your word, give us all grace to receive it and respond in the way that you would have us to. Please just bless our study for your praise and honor and glory. For in Jesus' name we pray and ask you.

Amen.

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