

# The Glory of a Woman

## Table of Contents

- Chapter 1 -- [A Narrative Explanation of 1 Corinthians 11:2-16](#)
- Chapter 2 -- [A Layman's Verse-by-Verse Commentary on 1 Corinthians 11:2-16](#)  
-- [A Paraphrase and Synopsis of 1 Corinthians 11:2-16](#)
- Chapter 3 -- [A Foot? A Cubit? A Yard? by Dr. Nadine Brown](#)
- Chapter 4 -- [A Technical Paper Discussing how 1 Cor. 11:7 Provides the Key to Interpreting this Passage as Referring to Hair and Not a Material Covering](#)
- Chapter 5 -- [A Survey of the History of the Interpretation of 1 Corinthians 11:2-16](#)
- Chapter 6 -- [Veil vs. Hair, Uncut vs. Long?: Assessing Recent Claims in the Light of Available Data](#)
- Partial Bibliography

# 1

## *The Glory of a Woman*

The pastor glanced out the window at the sound of a chirp and watched as a cardinal pecked away at seeds in the birdfeeder. It's amazing how many birds have found that feeder since Crystal put it out there yesterday, he thought.

There was a soft knock on the office door, and Crystal came in holding some papers. She was petite, with blonde hair and blue eyes. She hadn't been his secretary very long, but she was the most efficient one he had ever had.

"More autographs?" he asked wearily. Crystal laughed as she put the papers on his desk.

"Seems the building commission can't get enough of them," she replied.

The church was adding several rooms to the back of the main sanctuary, and he had been signing papers and wading through red tape since they began. Crystal sat down in a chair near the window as he reached for his pen.

"I see the feeder has a visitor," she said, looking outside.

"That's the third one I've seen this morning," replied the pastor. "I can't believe how many birds have found it already."

"That's what Nancy said when she told me about hers. She put one outside her kitchen window, and the next morning there were about ten or eleven birds on it."

"Are she and Steve coming for their appointment this morning?"

"Yes, they should be here any minute," Crystal said. "Isn't it wonderful how much they've grown since they got saved? They're so eager to learn." The pastor signed the last of the papers and handed them to her.

"It is refreshing," he agreed. "Many of the people I try to disciple aren't willing to really study the Word. Steve and Nancy have a love of the truth that's hard to find."

"There they are," Crystal said in answer to a chime from the outer office. She left the room with the papers, and a moment later Steve and Nancy walked in.

Steve was tall and slender, with a smile that made him friends everywhere he went. Nancy had red hair and green eyes. She had been reserved when they started coming for discipling, but the pastor soon discovered that she was as friendly and personable as Steve. They both sat down in the chairs in front of the desk.

"How's the week been?" asked the pastor, leaning back in his chair.

"Not bad," replied Steve. "And you?"

“Oh, I’m still signing papers for the building commission. I didn’t realize how much red tape I’d have to cut through when we started. It’ll be worth it once we finish all the rooms, though. We really need the space.”

The pastor opened his notebook and flipped through the pages.

“Well, any questions before we start today’s lesson?” he asked.

“I have one,” said Nancy, “But it’s not about what we’ve been studying.”

“No problem. What’s on your mind?”

“Last Wednesday night after service, I was discussing the preparations for Helen’s bridal shower with several of the ladies. While I was looking at some decorations, I heard Ann talking to Becky about her daughter. I didn’t hear the whole conversation, but the gist of it was that Ann’s daughter wanted to cut her hair. Ann said that she tried to explain that it was wrong, but her daughter wouldn’t listen. Ann seemed very upset, and it puzzled me. Why would it be wrong for her daughter to cut her hair?”

“I’m glad you asked, Nancy,” said the pastor. “This is a good opportunity to teach you and Steve about the authority structure of the church.”

Nancy stared at him in surprise. “What does her hair have to do with the authority structure of the church?” she asked. The pastor smiled.

“Turn over to First Corinthians and I’ll show you.” Intrigued, Steve and Nancy opened their Bibles and got out their notepads. The pastor took a Bible from the shelf behind him and laid it on his desk.

“In the first letter to the Corinthians,” he said, turning the pages, “Paul had two goals in mind. First, to deal with the issues he heard were creating division, and second, to respond to several questions that the church had sent him. The first six chapters discuss the problem areas in the Corinthian church, and the rest of the letter presents Paul’s answers to their questions. You can usually locate Paul’s shift to a new question by looking for the phrase ‘now concerning’ or ‘as touching.’ The section we’ll be studying, chapter eleven, is found after Paul’s reply to a question about meat offered to idols. Let’s start with verse two.”

*“Now I praise you, brethren, that ye remember me in all things, and keep the ordinances, as I delivered them to you” (1 Cor. 11:2).*

“Paul begins by praising the Corinthians. The phrase ‘ye remember me in all things’ means that whenever a problem came up, they remembered what Paul had taught them and responded accordingly.”

Steve eased back in his chair and looked at the verse thoughtfully. “I’ve got a marginal note in my Bible that translates ‘ordinances’ as ‘traditions.’ Does that mean that Paul was teaching them cultural customs and traditions?”

“Good question, Steve. That word is very important to our understanding of all Paul’s teachings. The word translated ‘traditions’ is *paradoseis*, and it means ‘that which is taught or given by word of mouth or in writing.’ When Paul uses this term in reference to his own teaching, it never means cultural customs or practices.<sup>1</sup> Turn over to Galatians and you can read what Paul said about what he taught.”

---

<sup>1</sup> Gal. 1:14; Col. 2:8; II Thess. 2:15; 3:6

*“But I certify you, brethren, that the gospel which was preached of me is not after man. For I neither received it of man, neither was I taught it, but by the revelation of Jesus Christ”* (Gal. 1:11-12).

“Paul did not preach the traditions of man. He only preached what was revealed to him by God.”

“So what Paul meant when he said *paradoseis* is not the same as what we think of when we see the word ‘traditions,’” commented Steve.

“Exactly,” replied the pastor. “Now, after Paul praises the Corinthians for their obedience, he introduces the main theme of this section: the authority structure of the church.”

*“But I would have you know, that the head of every man is Christ; and the head of the woman is the man; and the head of Christ is God”* (1 Cor. 11:3).

“What does the word ‘head’ mean?” asked Nancy.

“In this verse, it means ‘authority over.’ When you are the ‘head,’ you exercise authority over those under you. They are to submit to you and accept your leadership.”

Steve made a note of this on his pad and then looked up. “What’s the significance of God being the head of Christ? Does that affect their equality?”

“No. Keep in mind that the roles of Father, Son, and Spirit merely represent the different offices and functions that exist within the Trinity. God, in his role of Father, has authority over God the Son. But this in no way detracts from the essential divinity of each person.”

“So when Jesus was here on earth,” added Nancy thoughtfully, “even though He was God, He was under the authority of the Father, right?”

“Yes. Take a quick look at John 5:30.”

*“I can of mine own self do nothing: as I hear, I judge: and my judgment is just; because I seek not mine own will, but the will of the Father which hath sent me.”*

“Throughout his entire ministry, Jesus submitted himself to the Father’s headship. If you have some time this week, you might want to look up John 4:34 and John 6:38.” Steve and Nancy quickly jotted down the references.

“I want you to note the authority structure that is described in verse three,” continued the pastor. “At the top we have the Father’s authority over the Son. Under the Son is man, and under the man is woman.”

Steve winked at the pastor and nudged Nancy. “Did you hear that?” he asked. “The wife is to submit to her husband.” Nancy gave him a withering look.

“Sorry Steve,” said the pastor with a chuckle. “This verse isn’t talking about a husband and wife relationship.”

“It’s not?” Steve said in surprise. “Why?”

“The word ‘man’ is *aner* and it refers specifically to males. Although *aner* can mean both ‘man’ and ‘husband,’ the normal use of the term is ‘man.’ Look at the first part of verse three again and notice the word ‘every.’”

“Hmm, I see what you mean,” nodded Steve. “This is talking about all men, not just husbands.”

“Right. If we take out the word ‘man’ and put in ‘husband,’ anyone who is single would be left out. That doesn’t make sense contextually. Verse four is the same way.”

“You can apply the same logic to verse five,” added Nancy. “Instead of ‘every man,’ it’s ‘every woman.’ If we put in ‘wife,’ the same thing happens.”

“Yes, and look at verses seven through eleven where Paul talks about the creation of man and woman. This stresses men and women in general, not just husbands and wives.”

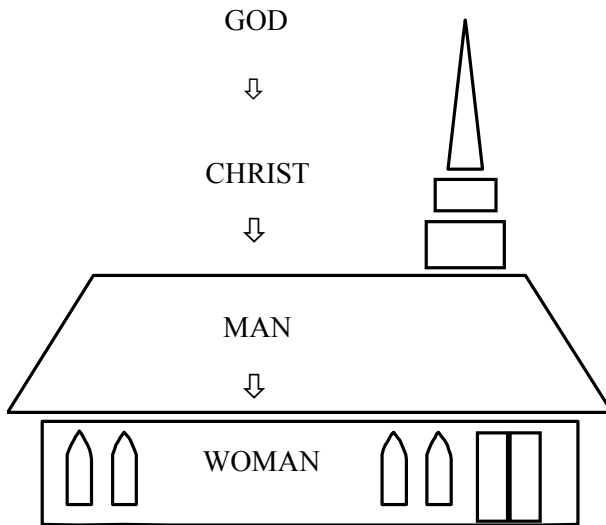
Steve leaned forward in his chair and read the verses quickly. “The word ‘husband’ makes less sense here than it did earlier,” he commented. “Verses eight and nine especially.”

“Verses thirteen through sixteen are the same way,” said the pastor. “Paul is making some observations from nature. Once again he is emphasizing men and women in general.”

Steve checked the passage and nodded in agreement.

“Well, we’ve covered a lot of ground,” said the pastor. “Let’s have a quick review before we go on to verses four and five. Let me borrow one of your notepads, and I’ll draw a picture for you.”

Nancy handed him her pad, and he shifted his chair around so they could watch him draw.



“This is the authority structure of the church. God has authority over Christ, and Christ has authority over the church. Both men and women are to submit to Him and obey Him. Within the church, man has authority over the woman. Part of a woman’s submission to Christ is her submission to the man.”

Nancy frowned. “Does this mean that I have to submit to any man’s authority, no matter who he is?”

“No,” said the pastor. “The context here is the local church.<sup>2</sup> The woman is to come under the man’s authority within that specific setting. They are never to take

<sup>2</sup> Our immediate concern, in light of the context, is the application of the authority structure to the local church. 1 Corinthians 11:16, the last verse of this paragraph, relates the teaching of the

positions of power or authority that God designed for the man to fill. Paul's letters to Timothy deal with many of these roles. Maybe next week we can go over some of them."

The pastor handed the pad back to Nancy and reached for his Bible. "Let's move on to verses four and five."

*"Every man praying or prophesying, having his head covered, dishonoureth his head. But every woman that prayeth or prophesieth with her head uncovered dishonoureth her head: for that is even all one as if she were shaven"* (1 Cor. 11:4-5).

"In verse four, Paul introduces another meaning of the term 'head.' He adds the meaning 'physical head.' The 'head' that is covered or uncovered refers to the physical head, while the 'head' that is dishonored is the authoritative head. As we just learned, the authoritative head of the man is Christ, and the authoritative head of the woman is the man."<sup>3</sup>

Nancy stared at the verses with a puzzled expression. "What does Paul mean when he says 'head covered' and 'head uncovered'?"

"It must be referring to a material covering of some sort," put in Steve. "Probably a veil or something."

"No," replied the pastor. "That's not what Paul is saying. But that is a common misinterpretation of this passage."

Steve raised an eyebrow in surprise and read the verses again. "What else could it be?" he asked.

"Well, let's think about it. If a person's head is covered, then there must be something that is covering it. However, to conclude that the covering is a material of some kind is to read into these verses something that isn't there. Take a closer look at the two phrases 'having his head covered,' and 'with her head uncovered.' The first, *kata kephale echo*, means 'down head having.' The second, *akatakaluptote kephale*, means 'with the head uncovered.' The words themselves give no indication of what the covering is. Although it is natural to think of a covering as a material object, such as a veil, we have no way of determining that from these verses."

"Then how do we find out what the covering is?" asked Nancy.

"The context," said the pastor. "Often a word or phrase can have many different meanings. We depend on the context in which it is used to tell us what meaning makes the most sense. For example, the word 'brig' can mean a two-

previous verses to that of the local "churches of God." The following paragraph, 1 Corinthians 11:17-34, dealing with the conduct of believers at the Lord's table, specifically states, ". . . when ye come together in the church . . ." These statements, occurring in the same chapter, establish the context for interpreting 1 Corinthians 11:2-16, as that of the local church. Thus our interpretation of this verse (11:3) and the remainder of the paragraph is controlled by and limited to the local church and is applicable primarily to believers.

<sup>3</sup> Paul begins his discussion of the authority structure for the church with a figurative use of the word 'head' (v.3). In verses 4-5, he says that the condition of a person's physical head reflects upon their authoritative head. If each occurrence of the word "head" in verses 4-5 refers only to the physical head, verse three has no practical relevance to the rest of the passage. Therefore it seems best to understand "head" in the phrase "dishonoureth his head" as a reference to man's authoritative head, Christ.

masted sailing vessel, or a place of confinement for prisoners. If I said to you, “Let’s go sailing in my brig,” the context would clearly indicate that I’m talking about a sailing vessel, not a place of detention. In our case, these verses haven’t given us enough information to determine what the covering is. We’ll have to examine the verses following four and five in order to reach a conclusion. Start with verse six and read all the way to verse sixteen. Try to determine from the context what the covering is.”

Nancy and Steve put down their pens and began to read. After a moment, Steve looked up.

“I think I found it,” he said. “The last part of verse fifteen says, *‘For her hair is given her for a covering.’*”

“Excellent,” replied the pastor. “Verse fifteen provides us with a clear definition of what the covering is. Notice the ending phrase, ‘for a covering.’ The word ‘for’ is *anti* and in this context means ‘instead of, in place of.’ The word ‘covering’ is *peribolaion* and refers to a ‘mantle, cloak, or material covering.’ Paul’s point is that a woman’s hair has been given to her in place of a material covering. The hair is the covering.”

“I’m still confused,” Nancy said. “If hair is the covering, then what makes a person’s head covered or uncovered?”

“Read verses fourteen and fifteen again. What word does Paul use to describe the hair?”

*“Doth not even nature itself teach you, that, if a man have long hair, it is a shame unto him? But if a woman have long hair, it is a glory to her: for her hair is given her for a covering”* (1 Cor. 11:14-15).

“Oh, I see,” replied Nancy. “Long hair. That must mean that the head is covered if the hair is long, and uncovered if the hair is short.”

“Correct,” said the pastor. “Now let’s review what we’ve learned. We determined from the context that the covering is hair. Verses four, five, fourteen, and fifteen show us how hair serves as a covering. If a man has long hair, then his head is covered and he dishonors his authoritative head. If a woman has short hair, then her head is uncovered and she dishonors her authoritative head.”

“What’s the significance of dishonoring your authoritative head?” asked Steve.

“That’s an important question Steve,” responded the pastor, “because that is the whole point of Paul’s discussion. Remember the authority structure described in verse three? God is the head of Christ, Christ is the head of man, and man is the head of woman. Verses four and five show us how this authority structure is visibly represented in the church. When a man has short hair, he honors his authoritative head, Jesus Christ. In the same way, when a woman has long hair, she honors her authoritative head, the man. From this relationship, we can see that hair is a symbol of submission. Short hair symbolizes the man’s submission to Christ. Long hair symbolizes the woman’s submission to the man, and through him, to Christ. When a man has long hair or a woman has short hair, they shame Jesus Christ and violate 1 Corinthians 10:31 which tells us to do everything to the glory of God.”

“So that’s why you said my question was a good opportunity to teach us about the authority structure of the church,” Nancy said. “I see now how it all fits together. This is fascinating.”

“Wait a minute,” said Steve. “There’s still a problem with all this. How long is long and how short is short? Nancy has always wanted to have long hair, but it only comes down to her shoulders. Who’s to say what’s long and what’s short when it’s different for everyone?”

“Good thinking, Steve,” replied the pastor. “I asked myself the same question when I studied this. My first step was to examine the word ‘hair,’ *kome*, in the last part of verse fifteen. When I did a word study of its use in the New Testament, I discovered that it is only used twice. So, I also investigated its use in the Septuagint and first century Greek literature.”

“What’s the Septuagint?” asked Nancy.

“It’s a Greek translation of the Old Testament. The Old Testament was originally written in Hebrew and Aramaic. Around the second century BC, a group of Jewish scholars translated it into Greek. This translation is very useful because it reveals meanings of Greek words that we would otherwise be unaware of.”

“Can you give me an example?” Steve asked.

“Think back to my illustration with the word ‘brig.’ Suppose I said something like, “The best place to confine prisoners is in the brig.” If you didn’t know what ‘brig’ meant, you could tell from the context of the sentence that it was somewhere where prisoners are kept. And what if a little later I said, “I can’t think of anything I’d rather sail in than a brig.”?”

“I’d realize that ‘brig’ can mean something other than a place to confine prisoners,” replied Steve. “The more you used the word, the better idea I would have of its various meanings.”

“Exactly. The Greek word for hair, *kome*, is used eleven times in the Septuagint. By studying its usage there, I gained a better understanding of its various meanings.”

“What did you learn?” Nancy asked.

“Well, I was able to derive three different uses for the word *kome*: hair, long hair, and long, uncut hair.<sup>4</sup> What I had to do then was determine which meaning made the most sense in the context of 1 Corinthians 11. So, I went back to verses five and six.”

*“But every woman that prayeth or prophesieth with her head uncovered dishonoureth her head: for that is even all one as if she were shaven. For if a woman be not covered, let her also be shorn: but if it be a shame for a woman to be shorn or shaven, let her be covered”* (1 Cor. 11:5-6).

“As I read these verses again, I realized the significance of the comparison that Paul is making. He states that when a woman’s head is uncovered, it is as if her head was ‘shorn’ or ‘shaven.’ ‘Shorn,’ *keiro*, means ‘to cut the hair.’ It occurs only four times in the New Testament. Twice in verse six, once in reference to Paul cutting off his hair (Acts 18:18), and once when speaking of a ‘shearer’ of sheep (Acts

---

<sup>4</sup> See chapter three for more information.



8:32). It is used much more in the Septuagint, again in reference to shearing sheep, and its normal meaning would be to ‘cut short.’ The word ‘shaven,’ *xuraa*, means to ‘have oneself shaved with a razor.’ It occurs three times in the New Testament. Once in verse five, once in verse six, and once in Acts 21:24. It is used more frequently in the Septuagint, usually in reference to shaving off a person’s hair or beard.”<sup>5</sup>

“So what’s the connection between these words and being uncovered?” asked Nancy.

“Well, what we have are three different conditions: uncovered, shorn, and shaven. We know that uncovered means to have short hair. Shorn means to cut short, and shaven means to be completely shaved. If having short hair is different than having it cut short or shaved off, then what is short hair?”

“It’s just hair that is cut,” said Steve.

“Right. This answers your question about how long is long and how short is short. Long hair is uncut hair and short hair is cut hair. A man’s cut hair visibly shows his submission to Christ. A woman’s uncut hair visibly shows her submission to the man, and through him, to Christ. Notice how verse seven completes this train of thought.”

*“For a man indeed ought not to cover his head, forasmuch as he is the image and glory of God: but the woman is the glory of the man.”*(1 Cor. 11:7)

Nancy nodded as she read the verse. “This is what you were telling us earlier about dishonoring your head. God’s glory is at stake.”

“Yes,” replied the pastor. “This verse also supports our contextual definition of the covering as long, uncut hair.”

“How’s that?” asked Steve.

“We know that man has been the image and glory of God since his creation.<sup>6</sup> Yet we find in the Old Testament that God commanded the priests to wear a cloth head covering when they ministered before the Lord.<sup>7</sup> If verse seven is teaching that a man should not wear a material head covering because man is the glory of God, then the priests should not have worn them either. Since God required His priests to wear them, Paul must be referring to something other than a material head covering.”

“That makes sense,” said Steve, thoughtfully. “I think I’m starting to understand what Paul is getting at here. Man is the glory of God, and what man does brings honor or dishonor to God.”

The pastor nodded in agreement. “The theme of glory and shame is woven throughout Paul’s whole discussion. Notice the last part of verse seven: the woman is the glory of the man. What she does also brings honor or dishonor to the man.”

“There’s one thing that still bothers me,” said Nancy, “Why did God put women under the authority of men?”

---

<sup>5</sup> See chapter three for more information.

<sup>6</sup> Gen. 1:26-27; 5:1; 9:6; Jam. 3:9

<sup>7</sup> Exo. 28:40

The pastor smiled wryly. “Well Nancy, I certainly understand why you would ask that question. Especially in light of today’s society. Fortunately, Paul discusses this in the next few verses. Let’s begin by reading verses eight, nine, and ten.”

*“For the man is not of the woman; but the woman of the man. Neither was the man created for the woman; but the woman for the man. For this cause ought the woman to have power on her head because of the angels”* (1 Cor 11:8-10).<sup>8</sup>

“Verse eight explains how the woman is the glory of the man and why the man is given the position of authority. The woman was made *from* the man, and she brings glory to him. She is also under his authority because he was created before her and she was created from his body.”

“Verse nine gives a second reason for man’s headship,” said Steve. “The woman was made specifically for the man. She was designed to be his helper and to accept his leadership.”

“Correct,” replied the pastor.

Nancy shook her head slowly. “I understand what you’re saying, but this certainly wouldn’t go over very well with most of my friends. I even have a hard time accepting it. I guess I’m just used to thinking that men and women are equal before God.”

“They are equal before God, Nancy,” replied the pastor. “Equality is not the issue here; authority is. Remember Steve’s question about God being the head of Christ? God the Father has authority over the God the Son, but both of them are equal. They’re both God. Paul isn’t saying that women are inferior to men. He is simply saying that the woman is under the man’s authority within the church. In fact, he goes on in verses eleven and twelve to emphasize that both men and women are dependent on each other within the body of Christ. No part of the body functions properly without the other parts of the body.”

*“Nevertheless neither is the man without the woman, neither the woman without the man, in the Lord. For as the woman is of the man, even so is the man also by the woman; but all things of God”* (1 Cor. 11:11-12).

“I see,” said Nancy, reading the verses. “Verse twelve means that just as the woman needed the man to begin her existence, so the man needs the woman to continue his existence. And both the man and the woman have God as their ultimate source.”

“Yes. The truth that men and women need each other and are dependent on each other balances the truth that the woman is under the man’s authority. We now come to Paul’s concluding statements. In verse thirteen he returns to his main theme by asking the Corinthians to use their common sense about the difference between a man’s hair and a woman’s hair.”

*“Judge in yourselves: is it comely that a woman pray unto God uncovered? Doth not even nature itself teach you, that, if a man have long hair, it is a shame unto him? But if a woman have long hair, it is a glory to her: for her hair is given her for a covering.”* (1 Cor. 11:13-15)

---

<sup>8</sup> See chapter three for complete coverage of verse ten.

“It seems to me,” said Steve, “that he’s pointing out that long hair is naturally thought of as womanly or feminine. If a man lets his hair grow long, it is generally thought to be unnatural and shameful. Most men want to be seen as manly, not womanly, and so they keep their hair cut.”

“Right,” the pastor nodded. “And what does Paul say that a woman’s hair is?”

“It is her glory,” said Steve. “I see the connection now. The glory of the man is the woman, and the glory of the woman is her long hair.”

“Exactly,” said the pastor. “Paul wants us to realize that the natural order of things is for women to have long hair and men to have short hair. He concludes his discussion with verse sixteen.”

*“But if any man seem to be contentious, we have no such custom, neither the churches of God” (1 Cor. 11:16).*

“What?” said Nancy with a frown. She read the verse again. “This sounds like he’s taking back everything he just said. What does he mean?”

“Paul’s beginning words, ‘if any man seem to be contentious,’ show that he expected opposition to what he was saying. The word ‘contentious’ indicates a person who loves strife. It’s someone who battles over the meanings of words and prolongs an argument indefinitely.”

“What is this person opposing?” asked Nancy.

“That brings in the next phrase, ‘we have no such custom.’ The word ‘custom,’ *sunetheian*, means ‘habit’ or ‘practice.’ Paul is referring to the practice he described in verses four through six: a man praying or prophesying with his head covered, and a woman praying or prophesying with her head uncovered. When he says ‘we have no such custom’ he means that he does not permit this practice. In other words, ‘We do not allow men to worship with uncut hair or women to worship with cut hair.’ The phrase ‘neither the churches of God’ means that not only does Paul condemn this, but all the other churches condemn it as well.”

“That makes it clear that this truth is not only for the Corinthians,” remarked Steve.

“Right. The whole focus and theme of the passage is the authority structure of the church. That means that it is still true for you and me today.”

Nancy looked over at Steve and smiled ruefully. “So much for my trip to the beauty salon this afternoon.”

Steve chuckled and leaned back in his chair. “Just think of all the money we’ll save.”

“Before you go,” said the pastor, “let me ask you some questions as a review. You can use your notes if you need to. First, what’s the theme of this passage?”

“The authority structure of the church,” answered Steve. “God has authority over Christ, Christ has authority over the man, and the man has authority over the woman.”

“What’s the context of this authority structure?”

“The local church,” said Nancy. “Women are to submit to the leadership of the man within the church. They should not take positions of authority that God designed for the man to fill.”

“What is the visible symbol of the man’s and woman’s submission?”

“Their hair,” replied Steve. “The man should keep his hair cut, and the woman should leave her hair uncut.”

“What happens if they violate this command?”

“They shame their authoritative head. The man dishonors Christ, and the woman dishonors the man.”

“Why does that happen?”

“Because man is the glory of God, and woman is the glory of the man,” said Nancy. “When they disobey God, they bring shame to themselves and reflect that shame unto the person they should glorify.”

“What reasons does Paul give for the man being in authority over the woman?”

“The first is man’s priority in creation. The woman was made *from* the man. The second was that the woman was made to be man’s helper. She was made *for* him.”

“How does Paul balance this truth?”

“He goes on to say that men and women need each other and depend on each other,” said Steve. “Woman was created from the man, but man needs the woman to continue his existence.”

“And is all this relevant to us today?”

“Yes,” answered Nancy. “Verse sixteen makes it clear that this was not just for the Corinthians. The authority structure of the church and its visible representation through our hair is just as true for us as it was for them.”

“Fantastic,” smiled the pastor. “You guys are great students. I’m really appreciate your interest as we worked through these verses. Let’s have a word of prayer before you go...”

# 2

## *A Verse-by-Verse Commentary on* **1 Corinthians 11:2-16**

This commentary is written in the hope that pastors who wish to expound the Word of God to their people, will, after studying this, be able to preach through this passage and explain the meaning of each verse. No technical notes have been included here. Chapter four may be consulted for technical information. The text is that of the Authorized Version unless otherwise noted. The comments follow the text phrase by phrase. Hopefully, this pattern will give the pastor the greatest help in determining the meaning of any phrase as it occurs in this passage.

*2 Now I praise you, brethren, that ye remember me in all things, and keep the ordinances, as I delivered them to you.*

**Now I praise you, brethren** – Paul begins this new section that deals with corporate worship problems by praising the Corinthians. The reasons for understanding this section in the light of the corporate worship setting are as follows: (1) In verse 16, Paul indicates that none of the other churches of God practice anything other than what he has taught in this passage. The fact that Paul refers to other local churches implies that the practice Paul is discussing has to do with something taking place in the local church. (2) The two specific aspects of corporate worship that Paul brings up in this passage are praying and prophesying. In 1 Corinthians 14:3-4 he states that those who prophecy speak “unto men” (v. 3) and “edify the church” (v. 4). These verses strongly support the understanding that Paul is dealing with praying and prophesying in a corporate worship setting, not just in family devotions.

**that ye remember me in all things, and keep the ordinances** – Apparently the Corinthians remembered the things Paul had taught them. Whenever situations involving those principles arose, they followed what he taught them.

**ordinances, as I delivered them to you** – These “ordinances” were biblical principles that God inspired Paul to write or to speak to the Corinthians. In 2 Thessalonians 2:15 and Galatians 1:11-12 Paul claims divine authority for both his spoken and written teaching.

*3 But I would have you know, that the head of every man is Christ; and the head of the woman is the man; and the head of Christ is God.*

**But I would have you know** – Paul desires to teach the Corinthians something.

**that the head** – Paul uses the word “head” three times in this passage. This word can refer to (1) a person’s physical head, (2) the source of something (i.e., the head of the river), or (3) an authority figure (i.e., the head of the corporation). Neither the first nor second sense fits this context. The third meaning makes the best sense in this verse and in the overall context.<sup>1</sup>

**the head of every man is Christ** – Within the local church, Christ is the authority over all males. Though God has sovereignly given men the privilege and responsibility of leadership in the church, they must remember that they will give account to Christ for their use of that authority.

**the head of the woman is the man** – The male is the divinely designated authority over the female. A question that is frequently raised in connection with this phrase is, “Isn’t Paul referring to a husband-wife relationship here?” In response to this question, three factors suggest that Paul is referring to the male-female relationship rather than the husband-wife relationship. (1) Paul’s bases the origin of this authority structure on the order of creation — first the male, then the female (vv. 8-10). (2) Paul’s argument in verse 12 would make no sense if he were referring to husbands and wives. For example, if we substitute “husband” for “man” and “wife” for “woman,” the verse would read: “For as the wife is of the husband so is the husband also by the wife; but all things are of God.” (3) There is nothing in this passage that indicates that Paul switches from talking about husbands and wives in verses 3-6 to talking about men and women in verses 6-12. It makes the most sense, therefore, to understand “man” and “woman” throughout the entire passage as referring to the male and female genders.

**the head of Christ is God** – God (the Father) is the central authority in the Trinity. There is no difference in the deity of the persons of the Trinity (Father, Son, and Holy Spirit); there are, however, differences in their offices. The Son is subordinate to the Father, and the Holy Spirit is subordinate to both.<sup>2</sup>

This verse sets forth the order of authority in male-female relationships that God has established within the local church. Craig Blomberg makes a helpful observation about the arrangement of the three parts of this verse. He says,

The order of the three parts of verse 3 also proves significant. Some commentators stress that the sequence does not set up a chain of command, as if Paul had written, “The head of the woman is man, the head of every man is Christ, and the head of Christ is God.” On the other hand, since the problem in Corinth involved men and women (but not Christ) dishonoring their heads, it is natural that he should refer to the heads of the man and of the woman first. The rationale for placing Christ’s relationship to God last is most likely to draw

---

<sup>1</sup> See chapter three for an analysis of the alternative views.

<sup>2</sup> As an aside, the relationship within the Trinity provides a helpful model for the male-female authority structure of the local church. Scripture teaches that both male and female are equal in God’s sight spiritually (Gal. 3:28), yet God has given them different roles. The male is in authority and female is under that authority. This no more makes the woman inferior to the man, than Christ’s submission to the Father makes him inferior to the Father.

attention to it as an analogy for the relationship between men, women, and their heads (the same sequence in v. 12).<sup>3</sup>

The focus of the following verses (4-16) is upon the manner in which this authority structure is to be visibly demonstrated within a local church setting.

4 *Every man praying or prophesying, having his head covered, dishonoureth his head.*

**Every man praying or prophesying** – Paul begins with the role of the male who has the authority and responsibility for the leadership of the church. Paul clearly expects men to be praying and prophesying in the local assembly.

The meaning of the word “prophesy” can be derived from 1 Corinthians 14:3-5. *“But one who prophesies speaks to men for edification and exhortation and consolation. One who speaks in a tongue edifies himself; but one who prophesies edifies the church. Now I wish that you all spoke in tongues, but even more that you would prophesy; and greater is one who prophesies than one who speaks in tongues, unless he interprets, so that the church may receive edifying”* (NASB). From this passage we can see that prophesy is a verbal communication which fulfills the following functions in the local church: (1) it edifies, (2) it exhorts, (3) it comforts, and (4) it evangelizes. The fourth function of prophesy (evangelism) may be derived from 1 Corinthians 14:24, *“But if all prophesy, and an unbeliever or an ungifted man enters, he is convicted by all, he is called to account by all”* (NASB).

**having his head covered** – This phrase literally reads “having down the head.” The word “head” here refers to a man’s physical head. Because Paul has not given us enough information up to this point in the passage to determine what he means, we will leave this phrase undefined until we come to verse seven.

**dishonoureth his head** – There are two “heads” to which Paul may be referring. He may be referring to the physical head of the man, or to the authoritative head of man, Christ. Because Paul introduces this passage with a statement about the authority structure of the church, it makes the most sense to understand this “head” as the authoritative head of man — Christ. The word “dishonoureth” means to “shame”, or “disgrace”. A man’s condition when praying or prophesying is a reflection upon the office and authority of his authority, Christ — just like the behavior of a company’s employee reflects on his boss.

5 *But every woman that prayeth or prophesieth with her head uncovered dishonoureth her head: for that is even all one as if she were shaven.*

**every woman** – Paul now moves to the role of the woman in the local worship service.

---

<sup>3</sup> *1 Corinthians in the NIV Application Commentary* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House, 1994), 209.

**that prayeth or prophesieth** – The implication of this phrase is that these are at least two functions which women may legitimately fulfill within the framework of the corporate worship context.

**with her head uncovered** – Here “uncovered” literally means “uncovered.” This is different from the phrase in verse four, “having down the head.” The question is, “What is the nature of the covering?” The answer will come later in this context.

**dishonoureth her head.** Whatever the “covering” is, it should be noted that the practice of praying or prophesying with an uncovered head, results in shame for the woman’s head. Again, it is most reasonable, in view of verse three, to understand this “head” to be her authoritative head, the man.

**for that is even all one as if she were shaven** – The state of being “uncovered” is equivalent to having a shaved head. A shaved head was clearly a shame. The exact reason it was shameful is still unclear. Some have taken it as a sign of mourning, whereas others have taken it as the sign of an adulterous woman. There is not enough evidence about the Corinthian culture available at present to determine whether Paul had in mind a specific cultural practice in Corinth. Paul may simply have been drawing this conclusion from the natural order of things to which he appeals in v. 14 — Have you ever seen a woman with a shaved head that didn’t look shameful?

**6** *For if the woman be not covered, let her also be shorn: but if it be a shame for a woman to be shorn or shaven, let her be covered.*

**For if the woman be not covered,** – The implication of the word “if” is that the Corinthian women were actually not covering their heads. The verb “be not covered” is in the present tense and signifies that this is an ongoing practice.

**let her also be shorn** – There are two ways to interpret this phrase. The first way is to say that Paul is being somewhat ironic — “let her go ahead and cut her hair off.” Following this interpretation, the next phrase clarifies that it is a shame for a woman to cut or to shave her head, therefore she should be being covered. The second interpretation understands the phrase “let her also be shorn” as “let her remain shorn for the time being.” This is the translation that the NIV marginal note follows in this place. In the final analysis, it doesn’t matter which interpretation of this phrase one follows; the next phrase is the controlling factor of the verse.

**but if it be a shame for a woman to be shorn or shaven, let her be covered** – The bottom line is that it is a shame for a woman to be shorn or shaven, therefore she should be covered. Paul takes it for granted that everyone knows it is a shame for a woman to cut (“to be shorn”) or to shave her hair (“to be shaven”). The verb “covered” is a present tense verb. This means that she should continually be covered. The implication is that since she has not been covered, she should start being covered and stay that way.

Up to this point we have not defined the covering. We have not done so because there has not been enough contextual information to make a clear statement one



way or the other. However, verse seven is a crucial verse because it is in verse seven that Paul gives the reason for what he has said in verses 3-6.

*7 For a man indeed ought not to cover his head, forasmuch as he is the image and glory of God: but the woman is the glory of the man.*

**For a man indeed ought not to cover his head** – Again he is reiterating this principle (see v. 4).

**forasmuch as he is the image and glory of God** – Here the text literally reads “being the image and glory of God.” The word “being” indicates the reason why a man ought not to have his head covered. What is that reason? The reason is the man is the image and glory of God. This ties verses 3-7 together as a unified train of thought. God’s glory is at stake: if man, as the image and glory of God, covers his head, he shames God.

At this point we need to remember God’s requirements for the clothing of the priests in the Old Testament. In Exodus 28:40 God specifically commands the priests to wear a type of cloth head gear – the KJV translates the term as “bonnets;” the NASB and NIV both use the word “turban.”<sup>4</sup> These bonnets were “for glory and for beauty.” On the basis of Exodus 28:40, we can at least be sure of what the covering is not.

Based on what we know from Scripture, we can construct a simple logical argument:

1. God created man in His image and glory (Gen. 1:26).
2. Man is still the image and glory of God (James 3:9; 1 Cor. 11:7).
3. God required His Old Testament priests to wear a material head- covering while fulfilling their religious duties .<sup>5</sup>
4. If 1 Corinthians 11:7 teaches that wearing a material head covering in corporate worship shames God now in New Testament times because man is the image and glory of God, it should have shamed God in Old Testament times as well because man was the image and glory of God then.
5. Since God is always consistent with Himself, we can reasonably conclude that Paul is NOT talking about a material head-covering in these verses. God would not require His priests to wear something which brought shame to Himself.

The way in which man is the glory of God, as distinct from being in the image of God, seems to be that man came from God and is His highest creation.

**but the woman is the glory of the man** – The woman, though created by God, came from man. Since the woman came from the man, she reflects glory upon him. This is what Paul is arguing in verse 8.

---

<sup>4</sup> See also Exod. 29:9; 39:28; Lev. 8:13.

<sup>5</sup> The High Priest wore a “turban” during worship activities (Exo. 28:4, 36-38; 29:6; Lev. 8:9; 16:4). The regular priests wore “bonnets” during worship activities (Exo. 28:40; 29:9; 39:28; Lev. 8:13; Eze. 44:18).

**8** *For the man is not of the woman; but the woman of the man.*

Verses 8-12 have often puzzled commentators. It almost seems that Paul begins to follow a rabbit-trail that is tangential to the main topic. Far from being a rabbit-trail, however, these verses provide a very important part of Paul's whole argument. It is only natural for someone to wonder why God has set man in authority over woman. In verses 8-10 Paul explains the reasons God set up the authority structure this way. In verses 11-12 Paul balances the truth of man's authoritative position with the truth that men and women are both spiritually and physically interdependent.

**For the man is not of the woman** – Here is the reason that the woman is the glory of man, and why man has been given his position of authority: the man did not come from the woman as his source.

**but the woman of the man** – The woman came from the man. As a creation derived from the man, she therefore reflects glory upon the man when she fulfills her God-ordained role. Because man was created first, God has given to man the leadership role, and to woman the subordinate role.

**9** *Neither was the man created for the woman; but the woman for the man.*

**Neither was the man created for the woman** – Verse 9 gives a further reason for the woman's position under man's authority. Man was not created for the woman's benefit.

**but the woman for the man** – The woman was created for the man's benefit. God created Eve to be a helper fitted to meet Adam's needs.

In these two verses (8-9), Paul provides the basis of this authority structure: man's priority in creation (he was first), and the purpose of woman's creation (to be a helper to the man).

**10** *For this cause ought the woman to have power on her head because of the angels.*

**For this cause ought the woman** – "for this cause" at first appears to refer to what just preceded in v. 9. However, when Paul adds "because of the angels" at the end of the verse, he seems instead to be clarifying what he was saying at first. The woman ought to have power on her head because of the angels.

**to have power on her head** – The word "power" means "authority." There seems to be no way to explain indisputably how "angels" provide a reason that a woman should have authority on her head. Nearly every time in which the phrase "to have power on" is used in the New Testament, it refers to having control or power *over* something or someone (cp. Luke 19:17; Rev. 11:6; 16:9; 20:6). If this is the sense the verse would read, "For this cause ought the woman to have control over *her* head because of the angels." This, however, does not seem to make any sense in the context.

**because of the angels** – What is meant here cannot presently be determined with any degree of certainty. In Ephesians 3:9-10, Paul tells us that he was given grace

by God to preach the unsearchable riches of Christ unto the Gentiles and “to make all men see what is the fellowship of the mystery, which from the beginning of the world hath been hid in God, who created all things by Jesus Christ: To the intent that now unto the principalities and powers in heavenly places might be known by the church the manifold wisdom of God.” The reference to the “principalities and powers in heavenly places” speaks of the angels in the heavenly realms. Angels, according to 1 Peter 1:12, are interested in what is happening on earth to God's plans and purposes for His Church. Psalms 34:7 says, “The angel of the Lord encampeth round about them that fear him, and delivereth them.” Hebrews 1:14 and 1 Timothy 5:21 suggest that angels are present at church gatherings. Based on this scriptural data, one possible interpretation of 1 Corinthians 11:10 is that as angels observe men and women worshipping God appropriately covered or uncovered, they are learning about the wisdom of God's design for the authority structure of the local church.

**11** *Nevertheless neither is the man without the woman, neither the woman without the man, in the Lord.*

**Nevertheless** – Paul is balancing the truth that man has been placed in a position of authority over the woman with the truth that men and women are interdependent.

**neither is the man without the woman, neither the woman without the man** – Men and women are mutually dependent upon one another

**in the Lord** – This is the key phrase for this verse. It establishes the realm in which relationship exists: in the Lord. Certainly, within the body of Christ, men and women are interdependent. No part of the body functions properly without the other parts of the body.

**12** *For as the woman is of the man, even so is the man also by the woman; but all things of God.*

This verse applies the truth of the mutual dependence of men and women to the physical realm. Not only are men and women spiritually interdependent, but in the physical realm men are not conceived without the woman's help, nor are women conceived without men's help. Both are needed for procreation.

**For as the woman is of the man** – Man (Adam) was the source of the first woman.

**even so is the man also by the woman** – Now all men come from women.

**but all things of God** – God is the ultimate Source and Creator of all things.

**13** *Judge in yourselves: is it comely that a woman pray unto God uncovered?*

After explaining why God placed man in authority over woman (8-10), and providing the balancing truth of the mutual dependence of men and women (11-12), Paul returns to the specific manner in which the authority structure is to be visibly demonstrated.

**Judge in yourselves** – He is calling for the Corinthians to make a value judgment on the basis of their natural understanding.

**is it comely that a woman pray unto God uncovered** – Literally “is it fitting for a woman to be praying to God uncovered?” Paul still has not clearly defined this covering, but from the logic of verse 7 we can say that he is not referring to a material covering. The implied answer to his question is, of course, “No.” Paul expected that their innate understanding of what is fitting and not fitting would lead them to say that it is not proper for a woman to pray uncovered.

14 *Doth not even nature itself teach you, that, if a man have long hair, it is a shame unto him?*

**Doth not even nature itself teach you** – He continues his argument by appealing to nature. Nature is a silent teacher that instructs by example. However, the natural state of things does reflect the order and design of the omnipotent Creator.

**that, if a man have long hair** – Paul uses the verb translated “have long hair” for the first time. The standard understanding of this verb is “to wear/have long hair” with the implication that it is long by virtue of not being cut.

**it is a shame unto him** – If the natural order of creation, which was designed by God, shows that it is shameful for a man to have long hair, how much more shameful is it for him to participate in worshipping God in prayer or in prophesying with long hair. Paul is arguing from the lesser to the greater. If a man shames himself by having long hair, how much more then does he shame his Creator in whose image he was created!

15 *But if a woman have long hair, it is a glory to her: for her hair is given her for a covering.*

**But if a woman have long hair, it is a glory to her** – In contrast to the man, if a woman has long hair, it brings glory to her. Since this passage is dealing with the authority structure of the local church, the natural implication of Paul’s statement is that when a woman brings glory to herself, she also brings glory to her authoritative head, the man (cf. v. 7b). In this fashion God is glorified as both men and women visibly demonstrate their submission to their authoritative heads — praying and prophesying, men without long hair, women with long hair.

The fact that a woman’s long hair is her glory needs to be emphasized. In our present culture where short hair is the norm for women, God’s Word still declares that a woman should view her long hair as a glory. She should revel in the unique glory that God has given to her alone, and should not allow the world to rob her of her glory.

**for her hair is given her for a covering** – Finally, Paul clearly states that a woman’s hair is the covering he has been talking about. To understand exactly what

Paul means by this phrase, we need to examine three key words. The first is the word for “hair.” This word is used in three different ways:

1. Sometimes it simply refers to a man or woman’s “hair” without any further description. In other words, we can’t tell if the hair was long or short, cut or uncut.
2. At times it refers to long hair, though we can’t tell whether the hair was cut or uncut.
3. Other times it refers to long, uncut hair.

All three of these senses may be found in the Greek Old Testament known as the Septuagint. Because Paul has said that it is a shame for a woman to cut or shave her head (v. 6), it makes the most sense in this context to understand “hair” in verse 15 as long, uncut hair.

The second important word is “for.” This preposition means “in place of,” or “instead of.” Paul is therefore saying that a woman’s long, uncut hair has been given to her *in place of* a covering.

“Covering” is the third significant word in this passage. It is not the same word translated “covered” or “uncovered” in verses 4-7 and 13. The words translated “covered” or “uncovered” in those verses refer to the *state* of being covered or uncovered. They do not specify what is doing the covering. The word “covering” used in verse 15, however, refers to a material veil or covering. So Paul is saying that a woman’s long, uncut hair has been given to her in place of a material covering. If a woman’s hair is her covering, then she is “covered” when she has long, uncut hair, and she is uncovered if she does not have long, uncut hair. A man is covered if he has long, uncut hair, and he is uncovered if he does not have long, uncut hair. (For a discussion of how long is long, see chapter four.)

**16** *But if any man seem to be contentious, we have no such custom, neither the churches of God.*

**But if any man seem to be contentious** – Paul concludes his remarks on the means by which the authority structure of the church is to be symbolized visibly by addressing those who might want to argue about this. The word “contentious” refers to a person who loves strife, and enjoys prolonging an argument.

**we have no such custom** – Paul is referring to the practice he described in verses 4-6, that is, of a woman praying or prophesying with an uncovered head (not having long, uncut hair), or of a man praying or prophesying with a covered head (having long, uncut hair). When he says “we have no such custom,” he means that he does not permit this practice. This word does not refer to a local, temporal custom, like the small-town, Southern custom of waving at everyone you pass. The word “custom” means “habit” or “practice.” In other words, Paul is saying, “We do not allow men to have uncut hair and women to have cut hair.”

**neither the churches of God** – Not only does Paul not practice this, but neither do any of the other local churches. Considering the fact that Paul was the founder of most of the churches in the metropolitan Gentile world, his statement that none of

the other churches of God do differently is powerful. This phrase lays to rest the concept that Paul is dealing with a local, Corinthian custom which has no relevance to the rest of the world. Clearly Paul is stating a universal principle that transcends all cultures and times.

### **Conclusion and Summary**

God inspired the apostle Paul to write this passage in order to correct a problem in the Corinthian's practice of worship in the local church. For whatever reason, it appears that some men had been allowing their hair to grow uncut, and some women had been cutting their hair. However, God has designed cut hair on men and uncut hair on women to visibly represent the authority structure of His church. When people violate this standard they not only bring shame to themselves, but they also, and more significantly, bring shame to their respective authoritative heads. When people follow God's plan they glorify God and as a result also receive glory themselves for their obedience.

## Interpretive Translation and Synopsis of 1 Corinthians 11:2-16

Interpretive Translation	Synopsis
<p><sup>2</sup> Now I praise you because you remember me in all thing and just as I taught them to you, you are holding fast my instructions.</p>	<p><i>Basic idea:</i> In 1 Corinthians 11:2-16 Paul teaches the Corinthians how the headship structure God has established relates to prayer and prophecy in the context of the local church.</p> <p><i>The logic of Paul's teaching.</i> Paul begins by praising them for doing what he had previously taught them (v. 2). Then he introduces some new information that they need to know: God is the head of Christ who is the head of man who is the head of woman (v. 3). This headship structure is set up so that each level is to bring glory to its "head." When men pray or prophesy with their heads "covered" with uncut hair, they bring shame to Christ (v. 4). On the other hand when women pray or prophesy with cut hair, their heads are "uncovered," and they bring shame to man (v. 5a). Since praying or prophesying without uncut hair is just as shameful as if they had cut it short or shave it all off, women should let their hair grow uncut (v. 5b-6).</p> <p>The reason man must not be "covered" by having uncut hair is that man is the glory of God (v. 7). Women on the other hand are the glory of man because they were taken from man and made to help man (vv. 8-9). Another reason woman should have authority on their heads is the angels (v. 10). But this doesn't mean that men are inherently superior to women. Both physically (v. 11) and spiritually (v. 12) we are mutually dependent on each other.</p> <p>Just on the basis of human nature, you Corinthians, ought to understand that is it shameful for a woman to pray to God with cut hair or for a man to have long, uncut hair (vv. 13-14). On the other hand, a woman's long, uncut hair is her glory, and God gave it to her in place of a material covering (v. 15)</p> <p>The fact that all the other churches do what I'm telling you shows that this is not merely my personal opinion but reflects the collective understanding of all of God's people (v. 16).</p>
<p><i>The Principle</i></p>	
<p><sup>3</sup> But I do want you to understand this: The head of every man is Christ, and the head of woman is the man, and the head of Christ is God.</p>	
<p><i>Practices that violate the principle</i></p>	
<p><sup>4</sup> Every man who prays or prophesies with uncut hair shames his spiritual head Christ.</p>	
<p><sup>5</sup> But every woman who prays or prophesies with cut hair is shaming her spiritual head (the man). For praying or prophesying with cut hair is just as shameful as if she had been shaved.</p>	
<p><sup>6</sup> For if a woman does not have uncut hair, she might as well cut it short. But if it is a shame for a woman to cut her hair short or to shave it off, then she should let her hair grow uncut.</p>	
<p><i>The reasons such practices violate the principle</i></p>	
<p><sup>7</sup> A man, on the one hand, must not have uncut hair because he is the image and glory of God, but the woman is the glory of man.</p>	
<p><sup>8</sup> The reason woman is the glory of man: For man did not come from woman, but woman came from man</p>	
<p><sup>9</sup> And man was not created for the benefit of woman, but woman was created for the benefit of man.</p>	
<p><sup>10</sup> For this reason the woman ought to have authority on her head because of the angels</p>	
<p><sup>11</sup> To balance out what I've just said: However, woman is not independent of man, nor is the man independent of the woman in the Lord</p>	
<p><sup>12</sup> For as the woman came from man, so also man comes through the woman. But all things ultimately come from God.</p>	
<p><i>An appeal to reason</i></p>	
<p><sup>13</sup> Evaluate this for yourselves: Is it appropriate for a woman to pray to God without the covering of uncut hair?</p>	
<p><sup>14</sup> Doesn't your own innate sense of right and wrong teach you that if a man has long, uncut hair it is a shame to him?</p>	
<p><sup>15</sup> But if a woman has long, uncut hair it is a glory to her, because uncut hair has been given to the woman in place of a material covering.</p>	
<p><i>Appeal to the universal practice of the Church</i></p>	
<p><sup>16</sup> Now if anyone wants to be argumentative about this, just be aware that we have no other practice than what we have just described to you nor do any of the other churches of God.</p>	

# ***A FOOT? A CUBIT? A YARD?***

By Dr. Nadine M. Brown

[Dr. Nadine M. Brown is a researcher in molecular biology and biochemistry at the Cincinnati Children's Hospital. She received her Ph.D from Clemson University, South Carolina, in 1975. She majored in Zoology and minored in Biochemistry. This article first appeared in *Cornerstone: The Magazine for Youth* (Winter, 1983), pp. 22,23.]

The Bible tells us a woman's long hair is her glory. (I Cor 11:15) Have you ever wondered *how long "long" is?* In looking at this question we again see the touch of the Divine rather than the human in His word. Man wants to have things spelled out--a foot, a cubit, a yard--but God gives principles that cover all times and all peoples. In this case the answer is genetically controlled for each individual, both from his parentage and race. Setting a standard of shoulder-or waist-length hair would not do for most of our brethren of the Black race for their long hair is shorter than that. Isn't it wonderful how God's word covers all possible situations!

Lets look at this "glory." It originates in living tissue, a hair follicle, within the skin. Special cells here manufacture the protein, keratin, then die and are pushed up the follicle as "hair." So hair itself is dead cells and protein. Scientists have recently learned that most people begin life with about 100,000 follicles on their scalp. The total number is present at birth or shortly thereafter and *nothing you can do will add a cubit to your stature or more hair follicles to your head--short of a transplant!*

Then why is hair so different from one person to another? Or in one person from infancy to old age? To quote the author of *Super Hair*, "The essential quality of your hair is predetermined by your genes. You can't change what nature [God] gave you..." We have all heard many old wives' tales about hair, perhaps we can straighten out some of the misunderstanding about hair.

Cutting hair does not make it grow in thicker, for there is no way cutting hair can make more hair follicles appear, hence more hair per square inch.

Cutting hair does not change the texture--course or fine--of hair anywhere on your body. But texture does change with time as we have all noted from the fine silky texture of baby hair to the full-bodied texture of an adult. Also we are aware of the changes in body hair from childhood to adolescence.

Cutting the "dead ends" does not make hair grow faster in the scalp. Since all hair is dead (has no blood supply, no nerves, cannot move by itself, cannot reproduce itself) cutting the dead ends would involve a shave. The hair follicle inside the scalp is the live part of hair.

Neither does cutting the "split" ends of hair help it in any way. It only allows it to split up closer to the scalp. The hair splits if the protein in it is treated harshly--dyed, bleached, given a permanent. It is interesting that beauticians, who are supposed to know about hair care, specialize in abusing it, and then trying to add conditioners to bring "life" back again. Hair will split if a person has put poor quality of materials into it when it was made. Your hair today tells about your diet and general well being over the last few years.

Have you thought that hair, like some spaghetti, just grows on and on until it breaks off or is cut? This is a common misconception. Your hair has some definite growth-rest cycles. During



the growth cycle, scalp hair grows approximately one inch every two to three months. (But, remember, everyone of us is unique and this growth rate is genetically determined.) And the growth cycle may last anywhere from two years to six or eight years. So long hair for one girl may be only eight to ten inches, while for another girl it may be 36 to 48 inches long. No wonder the biblical reference is to long hair for long is unique to each person. Fortunately the growth-rest cycles of our hairs are not synchronized or we would go bald periodically! Instead, approximately 10% of our follicles are in the rest cycle at any time. And a person may normally lose from 25 to 100 hairs a day. Failing to brush or wash your hair will not change this rate, but it may mean several days' hair loss will come out all at once later. At the end of the growth phase, the hair follicle enters a dormant stage. During this time the follicle is getting a rest. At the end of the dormant stage the old hair becomes loose in the follicle and may fall out, or come free as the hair is brushed and a new hair begins to grow.

Another interesting article about hair, or rather the loss thereof appeared in *Readers Digest* (June 1982) entitled "Bald Truths." Baldness--usually temporary--may be associated with high fever, childbirth, surgery, severe weight loss or emotional stress, but 95 percent of all baldness is male pattern baldness. Again, fellows, you can blame your genes, for genetics and the presence of male hormones are mainly to blame. It was interesting that the author of this article included the quote from I Cor. 11:14, "Doth not even nature itself teach you that if a man have long hair, it is a shame unto him?" Therefore, he is suggesting that there is a correlating between male baldness and the scriptural comment that long hair is a shame for a man.

#### References:

Zizmore, Jonathan. *Super Hair: The Doctors' Book of Beautiful Hair*. Berkley Publishing Co. 1978.

Solomon, E.P. and P.W.Davis. *Understanding Human Anatomy and Physiology*. McGraw-Hill, Inc. 1978.

Carlinsky, Dan. "Bald Truths," *Readers Digest* (June, 1982), p. 99.

## The Image and Glory of God: An Interpretive Key to 1 Cor. 11:2-16<sup>1</sup>

First Corinthians 11:2-16 presents the interpreter with a daunting array of challenges,<sup>2</sup> and there is little agreement within the literature on the answers to these issues. The positions surrounding this passage, however, may be cataloged under two basic headings: the nature of the covering and the hermeneutical approach to its modern application.

Historically, the covering was identified as a material item, such as a veil or hat. More recently, certain scholars have argued that the covering is hair.<sup>3</sup> This position subdivides further into those who regard Paul's concern as hair style or those who regard it as hair condition (long and uncut).

More important even than how one identifies the covering is the stance one takes towards its contemporary relevance. The majority of interpreters see Paul addressing a uniquely Corinthian or perhaps first century practice that violated the general principle of a distinction between the sexes. Paul's directive reflects his concern to maintain current, cultural gender distinctives and, therefore, should be applied in a culturally relevant way today. Practically this means that whatever the nature of the covering, it is irrelevant for the modern application of what Paul was teaching.<sup>4</sup> On the other hand, a minority of scholars contend that Paul's argumentation is rooted not in cultural norms but in creation and in God-ordered nature. The practice which Paul requires of the Corinthians is, therefore, a transcultural principle which should still be applied today.

This paper has two specific aims. First, to explore the implications of v. 7 for identifying the nature of the covering, and second, to outline how v. 7 impacts the relevance of this passage to believers today.

### *Setting the Stage: The Divine Order of Headship*

After his opening words of praise in (v. 2), Paul announces the primary principle from which his discussion will flow in verse three: the divine order of authority for the Church. Paul uses the term "head" (*kephale*) to describe three relationships: 1) Christ is the head of man, 2) man is the head of woman, and 3) God is the head of Christ. All three relationships involve functional subordination to their respective head.

There are currently four views on the significance of "head" in this passage. The traditional view understands *kephale* in the sense of "ruler, authority over."<sup>5</sup> Coincident with the growth of feminism within evangelicalism, the view that *kephale* means "source, source of life" has gained broader acceptance among commentators.<sup>6</sup> More recently some have suggested that *kephale* should be understood as "that which is more prominent, pre-eminent."<sup>7</sup> Synthesizing these views, some scholars have suggested that Paul deliberately uses *kephale* as a polyvalent term since man is related to woman both as authoritative head and the original source of her life.<sup>8</sup>

Despite the controversy over this issue, no substantial lexical or exegetical reasons have been given for abandoning *kephale*'s sense of "ruler, authority over."<sup>9</sup> The close parallelism of Paul's three statements (v. 3) strongly suggests that *kephale* means the same thing in each of them. The meaning which makes the best sense in each of the three relationships described in verse three is "authority over."<sup>10</sup>

### *Covering Glory; Shaming One's Head*

In verse 4 Paul addresses both the problem with the Corinthian men's corporate worship practice<sup>11</sup>—they were praying and prophesying with their heads covered. The KJV's "having *his* head covered" makes the verse much more specific than it actually is. The original language reads "on head having" (*kata kephales echon*). The consequence of men praying or prophesying "on head having" is that they were shaming their head (Christ; v. 3). Paul defers the explanation for why praying and prophesying in this manner shamed their head until after his statement concerning the shameful practice by women (5-6). Then, in verse 7, Paul provides the theological rationale for the shameful practice of both practices:

For a man, on the one hand, ought not to cover the head, being (the) image and glory of God; but the woman, on the other hand, is (the) glory of man.<sup>12</sup>

*Theologically, the reason men are morally obligated to not cover their heads is because they are the image and glory of God.*<sup>13</sup> The basis for Paul's argument is Genesis 1:26-27. There the triune God voices His determination to make man in His image and likeness and then does so: "And God created the man in His image, in the image of God He created him, male and female He created them."

Paul's use of Genesis 1:26-27 (and Gen. 2:18-25 in vv. 8-9) raises a host of questions: Do men and women both bear God's image or is the man alone the image-bearer?<sup>14</sup> What is the image of God in man? Why is man God's glory? Where does the idea of man as God's glory come from? What does it mean for man to be God's glory? Why is woman man's glory and what does that mean? How does man's status as God's glory necessitate that his head not be covered in worship?

These are all valid and worthy questions. In the attempt to answer them, however, it appears that virtually everyone who has wrestled with this difficult passage has overlooked two more significant questions:<sup>15</sup> (1) If man's status as the image and glory of God necessitates an uncovered head in worship, how does one account for the OT requirement that priests wear a material covering when ministering in the tabernacle? and (2) What does Paul's appeal to man's created status imply about the continuing relevance of his application?

### Man's Status as the Image and Glory of God

Although the image of God in man was defaced in the fall, it was not erased. Yahweh reaffirmed the presence of His image in man to Noah in Genesis 9:6. That image, though imperfect, is being restored in believers by the sanctifying work of the Spirit (Col. 3:10), and both Paul (1 Cor. 11:7) and James (Jam. 3:9) regard it as an essential aspect of man's nature. Despite the fact that we are still falling short of the glory of God (Rom. 3:23), believers are moving from "glory to glory" and increasingly fulfilling our creative design (2 Cor. 3:18). This biblical data indicates that man is and has always been the image and glory of God.

### Old Testament Worship Attire

Part of the worship regalia that God designed and required both for priests and the high priest was a material headcovering. For the High Priest it was a linen turban called a "mitre"<sup>16</sup>

(Exod. 28:4, 37, 39; 29:6; 39:28, 31; Lev. 8:9; 16:4). The regular priests, on the other hand, wore “bonnets” or “caps” (Exod. 28:40; 29:9; 39:28; Lev. 8:13).<sup>17</sup> These headcoverings were not reserved for special occasions but were the normal garb for all priestly functions.

It seems highly unlikely that God would mandate worship attire that because of man’s status as His image and glory would bring shame upon Himself. This OT data provides a crucial piece of the cipher for this difficult passage. Since man has always been the image and glory of God and God instituted a material covering to be worn in the course of corporate worship, it follows that Paul is *not* saying that a material headcovering shames Christ when men pray or prophesy.<sup>18</sup> In other words, the covering forbidden to men in 11:7 is not a material headcovering.

### Potential Objections Answered

Since the transition between the covenants did not affect man’s status as the image and glory of God, it appears to have no bearing on the application of that status to worship. It has been suggested that Paul is instituting a new worship regulation that supercedes the OT pattern.<sup>19</sup> It is true that we see instances in which OT regulations were replaced or removed (e.g., clean and unclean food laws; Mark 7:19). However, there are no examples where a practice based upon man’s created status is superceded. Man’s created status has remained constant from Eden to the present. Further, Paul argues that when a male covers his head he dishonors his authoritative head, Christ, and thereby dishonors God who established the headship structure.<sup>20</sup> One must conclude then that whatever it was that violated man’s created status and dishonored God in the Corinthians’ worship would have always violated that status and dishonored God.

Another objection might be that praying and prophesying are uniquely New Testament functions. Although the OT does not expressly indicate whether prophecy was a part of the OT priestly worship context,<sup>21</sup> it is indisputable that prayer was a major component of the priests’ duties in representing man to God (2 Chron. 30:27).<sup>22</sup>

One final objection is raised by G. Campbell Morgan. He argues from 2 Corinthians 3:14 that

the man praying or prophesying, covered, dishonours his Head, his Lord and his Master, the One Who is in high authority over him. ... He has not recognized that the veil has been done away in Christ, and the glory is no fading glory, but a lasting one, the glory of His message. In Christ the veil is done away, both for praying, speech to God; and prophesying, speech to man.<sup>23</sup>

Although initially attractive, Morgan’s argument hinges on a faulty analogy. The glory which Paul directs men not to cover is not the unfading glory brought in by Christ, but rather the glory of God that men as men have always had. Further, the veil that is done away in Christ is no physical veil—Moses’ veil was removed once the glory faded from his face. The veil that covers unbelieving Jews’ hearts (not heads) is blindness or hardness of heart that refuses to see Christ as the “end of the law for righteousness” (Rom. 10:4).

### The Identity of the Covering

In order to identify the covering Paul forbids to men, one must correlate the terminology he uses in this passage for being covered/ uncovered and the glory-shame motif he develops.<sup>24</sup> According to verse four, if a man prays or prophesies “on head having,” he shames his head. This

phrase must refer to the state created when a man covers (*katakalyptesthai*) his head (v. 7). In verse 14, Paul specifically identifies ‘wearing long hair’ (*koma*) as dishonoring (*atimia*). In view of the thematic connection between vv. 4 and 14, it is reasonable to conclude that, since long/uncut hair (*kóme*) is a shame to a man (v. 14), it is the implied object of “having” (*echon*) in verse four: “when a man prays or prophesies having [long/uncut hair] on his head, he shames his head.” Given the use of cover (*katakalypto*) in verses 6 and 7, if long/uncut hair is indeed the covering forbidden to men (*ouk opheilei katakalyptesthai*; v. 7), then it must also be the covering women are commanded to have (“let her be covered”; v. 6). Although this inference seems logical enough, there have been several substantive objections raised against it.

### Objections to Identifying the Covering as Long Hair

The first objection to identifying the covering as long hair (v. 15) is the claim that “there is nothing in the word [*kóme*] that dictates length. Rather, it represents that hair which is ornate, a hairdo, ... that coiffure that belongs exclusively to the woman.”<sup>25</sup> A survey of the uses of *kóme* in Greek literature (extra-biblical, LXX, and NT) appears to offer no support for this claim.<sup>26</sup> On the contrary, Septuagintal usage indicates that *kóme* may refer to (1) hair on a man or woman—without any connotation of length or condition (Job 1:20, 16:12; Judith 13:7; Bel 1:36; (2) the long hair of women (3 Macc. 1:18, 4:6); or (3) uncut hair on either a man or a woman (Num. 6:5, Eze. 44:20).<sup>27</sup> The point here is not that *kóme* always means “long/uncut hair,” but rather that it can mean that, and it does not appear to be used alone to denote ornate or coiffured hair.<sup>28</sup>

The second objection is the charge that the long hair view is incompatible with verses 5 and 6. Noel Weeks argues

If the covering is merely long hair, there would be no need to argue that being uncovered is the same as being shaven. To take off the covering would be to shave the head. ... Or if the passage were teaching the inappropriateness of short hair for women, then all the discussion about prayer and prophecy would be irrelevant. If Paul believes that short hair is unbecoming for a woman, then surely it is not unbecoming only for a woman who leads in prayer and prophecy.<sup>29</sup>

In a similar vein Joel Delobel contends

If v. 14 as such is used as a parallel to interpret v. 4, then v. 4 also means ‘long hair’ .... The opposite then in v. 5 can only be ‘short hair,’ but this would lead to a nonsense interpretation in v. 6: ‘if the woman has short hair (*ei ou katakalyptetai*), then she shall cut off her hair’ (*keirastho*).<sup>30</sup>

This objection fails on four grounds. First, both Noel Weeks and Joel Delobel have missed the fact that *kóme* may refer to uncut hair (Num. 6:5). If that is the case here, the opposite would be cut hair, rather than simply short hair. Verse six then would not be nonsensical: “If the woman has cut hair, then let her shear it short.” Second, in verses 5-6, Paul does not equate the condition of having an uncovered head with being shaven or shorn. Rather, he says that being uncovered is the same as being shaven or shorn, implying that “uncovered” refers to a condition *similar to but distinct from* being shaven or shorn. Third, the verb “shorn” (*keiro*) is most commonly used in the context of shearing sheep.<sup>31</sup> Obviously, when one shears sheep, the hair is cut quite short. In this light, verse 6b may be paraphrased “since it is a shame for a woman to have her hair shaved off or cut short, let her be covered by letting her hair grow without cutting

it.” Fourth, it is likely that Paul is speaking ironically in verse 6a: “If a woman is ‘uncovered’ by cutting her hair, then she might as well go ahead and have it shorn short.”

The final major objection is that “the words for covering that Paul uses in verses 4-6 and verse 13 ... most often refer to a [material] covering.”<sup>32</sup> In support of his claim, Schreiner notes (1) that the phrase “on head” (*kata kephales*) occurs in Esther 6:12 and Plutarch’s *Moralia* 200f where it clearly refers to having the head veiled;<sup>33</sup> (2) that “cover” (*katakalupto*) and the related term “uncovered” (*akatakaluptos*) “normally refer to a covering of some kind” as, for example, in Philo, *Allegorical Interpretation*, II, 29<sup>34</sup> and Polybius 15, 27.2;<sup>35</sup> and (3) that Philo, *Special Laws*, 3:60, “uses the phrase [“with the head uncovered”] in reference to a priestess who had just removed her kerchief.”<sup>36</sup>

It is true that these terms and phrases are used with reference to a material covering at times. However, it is not true that they must or necessarily have such reference. For example, a survey of “cover” (*katakalupto*) in the LXX shows that the object used to cover is quite often not a veil or similar item. For example, it may be the fat of sacrificial animals (Exod. 29:22), water (Ezek. 26:19), wings (Isa. 6:2) or even an abstract concept such as dishonor (Jer. 28:51). Further, in the three instances in which the word is used without an explicit object, it involves disguising or covering oneself so completely that the face is either not visible or recognizable.<sup>37</sup> The nature of the covering, therefore, is not immediately clear simply from the use of these terms. Finally, since these terms permit covering by an object other than a veil, if other contextual factors suggest that hair and not a veil is the covering, there is no reason hair cannot be the covering Paul intends.<sup>38</sup>

### *The Hermeneutical Implications of 1 Cor. 11:7*

If men’s status as the image and glory of God and women’s status as the glory of men are unchanging aspects of human nature, it follows that any injunction based on this universal principle will have universal applicability. This conclusion is supported by James’ application of this principle to our speech: it is inconsistent to curse men and bless God, for abuse of an image-bearer necessarily connotes disregard for the original image (Jam. 3:9). Another example that could arguably be used in support of this position is the penalty for intentional slaughter of one made in God’s image—capital punishment. This penalty is established in Genesis 9:5-6, is reiterated in the theocracy (Exod. 21:12-14; Lev. 24:17; Num. 35:33), and is God’s implied expectation for all human government (Rom. 13:4).

The universality of this principle also raises Paul’s application above the cultural level. Regardless of the prevailing cultural views regarding male hair length or style, as long as man is the image and glory of God, he is obligated not to “cover” his head when praying or prophesying publicly. The inverse is true for the woman: her head must be “covered.” Since the issue is hair and not a material covering, this renders moot the question about whether it was a Greek, Roman, or Jewish custom that Paul is requiring adherence to. The entire cultural question is no longer relevant.

### *Conclusion*

In light of the divinely ordained OT priestly regalia, Paul’s appeal to man’s created status as the image and glory of God indicates that the covering he was forbidding to men and requiring

of women was not a material covering. The connections created between vv. 4-7 and 13-15 by Paul's glory-shame motif suggest that the covering is uncut hair. From a hermeneutical standpoint, the fact that Paul bases his argument on man's unchanging status as the image and glory of God, and not on cultural propriety or traditional practices, means that such considerations are not relevant to determining how to apply this passage to the church today. A careful consideration of the nature of Paul's argumentation in 1 Cor. 11:7 leads to the conclusion, therefore, that uncut hair on men and cut hair on women brings shame to God when they pray or prophesy because they are violating God's design for the proper symbolic display of His authority structure in the church. Stated positively, men and women fulfill their respective roles as the glory of God and the glory of man and thereby accurately symbolize the authority structure of the church when they pray and prophesy appropriately covered: cut hair on men and uncut hair on women.

---

<sup>1</sup> This is a slightly revised and corrected edition of a paper presented at the Bible Faculty Leadership Summit in July 2003.

<sup>2</sup> The challenges are lexical, syntactical, discourse analytical, hermeneutical, theological, and practical. Scholars dispute the contextual sense and/or reference of the following terms: head (3-5, 7, 10), man/woman (3-15), uncovered (5, 13), power/authority (10), hair (15), have long hair (14-15), and "for" in "her hair is given her for a covering" (15). Disputed syntactical items include the presence/absence of the definite article in v. 3, the significance of "and" (*de*) in v. 3b, the function of "for this cause" in v. 10 and nevertheless in v. 11. On a discourse level: Is the section one continuous argument, or are verses 3-7a Paul's paraphrase of a Corinthian argument and 7b-16 Paul's response? Are vv. 13-14 statements or are they rhetorical questions? From a hermeneutical standpoint: How does the occasional nature of this epistle condition the relevance of Paul's requirement? Theologically: What is the significance of the headship structure outlined in v. 3? Who are the angels in v. 10 and how do they relate to women having authority on their heads? Practically: How does one effectively call American Christians to submit to this passage's teaching in light of its contested nature and their propensity for radical individualism?

<sup>3</sup> Judith M. Gundry-Volf, "Gender and Creation in 1 Corinthians 11:2-16: A Study in Paul's Theological Method," in *Evangelium, Schriftauslegung, Kirche* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1997), 151-71; Alan Padgett, "The Significance of ἀντί in 1 Corinthians 11:15," *Tyndale Bulletin* 45 (1994): 181-7; Jerome Murphy-O'Connor, "1 Corinthians 11:2-16 Once Again," *CBQ* 50 (1988): 265-74; "Sex and Logic in 1 Corinthians 11:2-16," *CBQ* 42 (1980): 482-500; J. Keir Howard, "Neither Male nor Female: An Examination of the Status of Women in the New Testament," *The Evangelical Quarterly* 55 (1983): 31-42; Stephen A. Reynolds, "Colloquium," *WTJ* 36 (1973): 90-91; James B. Hurley, "Did Paul require Veils or the Silence of Women: A Consideration of 1 Cor 11:2-16 and 14:33b-36," *WTJ* 35 (1973): 190-220; William J. Martin, "1 Corinthians 11:2-16: An Interpretation," in *Apostolic History and the Gospel*, ed. Gasque-Martin (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans, 1970), 231-41; Abel Isaksson, *Marriage and Ministry in the New Temple. A Study with Special Reference to Mt. 19:3-12 and 1 Cor. 11:3-16* (Lund: C.W.K. Gleerup, 1965).

<sup>4</sup> To be fair, some would argue that the covering was a symbol that requires some sort of corresponding symbol today, though not necessarily the one required by Paul. Daniel B. Wallace, "What is the Head Covering in 1 Cor 11:2-16 and Does it Apply to Us Today?," (Biblical Studies Press, 1997); <<http://bible.org/docs/soapbox/covering.htm>> Accessed 7/22/2003.

<sup>5</sup> The literature supporting the traditional view of *kephale* includes, Wayne Grudem, “Does Κεφαλή (‘Head’) Mean ‘Source’ or ‘Authority Over’ in Greek Literature? A Survey of 2,336 Examples,” *Trinity Journal* 6 (1985): 38-59; “The Meaning of Κεφαλή (‘Head’): A Response to Recent Studies,” *Trinity Journal* 11 (1990): 3-72; “The Meaning of Κεφαλή (‘Head’): An Evaluation of New Evidence, Real and Alleged.” *JETS* 44 (2001): 25-65; Joseph A. Fitzmyer, “Another Look at ΚΕΦΑΛΗ in I Corinthians 11:3,” *New Testament Studies* 35.4 (1989): 506-10; “ΚΕΦΑΛΗ in I Cor. 11:3,” *Interpretation* 47 (1993): 52-59; and Schreiner, “Head Coverings, Prophecies and the Trinity,” 124-139, 485-487. It is worth noting that the church fathers generally interpreted κεφαλή as “ruler, authority over” in 1 Cor. 11:3. For citations of church fathers who interpret ‘head’ in this fashion, see Ruth A. Tucker, “Response,” in *Women, Authority and the Bible*, ed. Alvera Mickelsen (Downers Grove: Inter-Varsity Press, 1986), 111-17.

<sup>6</sup> Key proponents of this view include: Stephen Bedale, “The Meaning of κεφαλή in the Pauline Epistles,” *Journal of Theological Studies* 5 (1984): 211-15; Berkeley and Alvera Mickelsen, “What Does *Kephale* Mean in the New Testament?” in *Women, Authority and the Bible*, 97-110; Philip Barton Payne, “Response,” in *Women, Authority and the Bible*, 118-32; Richard S. Cervin, “Does Κεφαλή Mean ‘Source’ or ‘Authority’ in Greek Literature? A Rebuttal,” *Trinity Journal* 10 (1989): 85-112; Catherine Clark Kroeger, “The Classical Concept of *Head* as ‘Source,’” Appendix III in *Equal to Serve*, by Gretchen Gaebelein Hull (Old Tappan, NJ: Fleming H. Revell, 1987), 267-83; and Gordon D. Fee, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians*, NICNT (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1987). Given his understanding of κεφαλή as “source of life,” Fee interprets verse three as follows: Christ is the source of the Christian man’s life; man [Adam] is the source of the woman’s physical life, and God is the source of Christ’s incarnate life (501-505). In support of this interpretation, he offers what appears to be convoluted logic. He relates the middle phrase “man is the head of women” to verses 8 and 12, and then concludes that this must be what Paul is talking about in v. 3. Once that is established, he has to go to great lengths to explain the meanings of the first and third phrases, taking special care to avoid Arianism (Christ was created by the Father) which is precisely what the third phrase would seem to mean on the surface, given his definition of “head.” Once Fee is finished, the reader understands why he introduced this verse as he did: “It should be noted that this theological statement is not something Paul sets out to prove; nor is it the main point of the section. *Indeed, after the references to “every man” and “every woman” shaming their “heads” in vv. 4-5 there is no further reference to it* [italics mine]. Fee’s interpretation rends this verse from its context and leaves it a strange, dangling appendage with neither relevance to Paul’s immediate point, nor internal coherence.

<sup>7</sup> Walter L. Liefeld, “Women, Submission, and Ministry in 1 Corinthians,” in *Women, Authority and the Bible*, ed. Mickelsen (Downers Grove: Inter-Varsity Press, 1986), 134-54; A. C. Perriman, “The Head of a Woman: The Meaning of ΚΕΦΑΛΗ in I Cor. 11:3,” *Journal of Theological Studies* 45.2 (1994): 602-22; Gundry-Volf, “Gender and Creation in 1 Corinthians 11:2-16,” 159. Similarly, R. Weldon Crabb argues that *kephale* does not have the sense of “head or chief of persons” in NT times but that it may have the sense of ‘first,’ ‘foremost,’ or even ‘determiner.’ “The ΚΕΦΑΛΗ Concept in the Pauline Tradition with Special Emphasis on Colossians” (Ph.D. diss., San Francisco Theological Seminary, 1968).

<sup>8</sup> Bruce K. Waltke, “1 Corinthians 11:2-16: An Interpretation,” *BibSac* 135 (1978): 48-51; David K. Lowery, “The Head Covering and Lord’s Supper in 1 Cor 11:2-34,” *BibSac* 143 (1986): 157; Kenneth T. Wilson, “Should Women Wear Headcoverings?,” *BibSac* 148 (1991): 445-46. Waltke’s thesis is that “the word *head* in this context is an intentional *double entendre* and serves as the *Stichwort*, the crucial term about which the rest of the argument is constructed” (51).

<sup>9</sup> As Grudem notes, “these authors [those cited in fnt. 6 above] have taken the meaning ‘source,’ for which there is only one possible example in the fifth century B.C. (*Orphic Fragments*, 21a), two possible (but ambiguous)



examples in Philo, no examples in the Septuagint, and no clear examples applied to persons before or during the time of the New Testament, and called it a ‘common, recognizable, ordinary meaning.’ What kind of logic is this? Forty examples [of *kephale* meaning ‘authority’] make a meaning ‘rare,’ but zero unambiguous examples makes the meaning ‘common’? The meaning ‘authority over,’ which is in all New Testament Greek lexicons, is unlikely and rare and ‘not part of the ordinary range of meanings for the Greek word,’ but the meaning ‘source,’ which is in no lexicon for the New Testament period and is reflected in none of the *early* Fathers, who took it to mean ‘authority,’ is called [by Fee] ‘almost certainly the only one the Corinthians would have grasped’ (Fee, *First Corinthians*, p. 502)” (Grudem, “The Meaning of *Kephale*,” 466).

The articles by Grudem (1990, 2001) and Fitzmyer (1993) provide the best apologetic for the traditional view.

<sup>10</sup> Despite being certain that v. 3 reflects a divine order of authority, I am open to the possibility, suggested by Waltke above (fnt 8), that Paul deliberately plays on the multiple senses of *kephale* throughout the passage, including perhaps even ‘source’ in vv. 7b-9.

<sup>11</sup> There are several items that argue for understanding this passage within the context of the local church. (1) I Corinthians 11:16, the last verse of this paragraph, relates the teaching of the previous verses to that of the local “churches of God.” (2) The following paragraph, I Corinthians 11:17-34, dealing with the conduct of believers at the Lord’s table, specifically identifies the context as “when ye come together in the church” (11:18). (3) The very nature of prophecy as a “speaking unto men” demands the context of the local church, not a private gathering (1 Cor. 14:3-5). (4) 1 Cor. 14:34-36 does not forbid woman from any form of speaking in the church, but most probably forbids them from participating in the evaluating of prophecies given in the congregation. D. A. Carson, “‘Silent in the Churches’: On the Role of Women in 1 Corinthians 14:33b-36,” in *Recovering Biblical Manhood and Womanhood: A Response to Evangelical Feminism* (Wheaton: Crossway Books, 1991), 145. See also Thomas R. Schreiner, “Head Coverings, Prophecies and the Trinity: 1 Corinthians 11:2-16,” in *Recovering Biblical Manhood and Womanhood*, 132.

<sup>12</sup> Theoretically, verse 7a could be translated, “For a man ... is not obligated to cover the head, being (the) image and glory of God.” However, the thrust of the passage indicates that Paul intends to be more definite: men must not cover the head. G. G. Findlay, *St. Paul’s First Epistle to the Corinthians*, in *The Expositor’s Greek Testament* (n.d., repr. Peabody: Hendrickson Publishers, Inc., 2002), 873. This appears to be the approach followed universally by English translations. All other Biblical examples where ὀφείλω is negated support the conclusion that the negative particle (οὐ/μή) preceding ὀφείλω actually negates the infinitive that completes ὀφείλω (Acts 17:29; 2 Cor. 12:14; see also Wisdom 12:15).

Scripture translations are the author’s unless otherwise noted.

<sup>13</sup> The participle ὑπάρχων is causal, indicating the reason men ought not to cover their heads.

<sup>14</sup> Although it is not the purpose of this paper to explore this issue, it is my understanding that both men and women bear the *imago dei*, but men alone are the *gloria dei*, whereas women are the glory of men (*gloria viri*).

<sup>15</sup> In the literature reviewed for this article, I found five authors who alluded to OT worship practice: Alan D. Ingalls, “Headcoverings in the Old Testament,” *Journal of Ministry and Theology* 4.2 (2000): 41-52; Hurley, “Did Paul require Veils or the Silence of Women,” 195; O’Connor, “Sex and Logic,” 485; Howard, “Neither Male nor Female,” 35; and G. Campbell Morgan, *The Corinthians Letters of Paul* (New York: Fleming H. Revell Company, 1946), 135. Of these, Ingalls was the only author who explored the issue at any length, and he did not consider its relevance to man as the image and glory of God.

<sup>16</sup> From the LXX μίτρα. The Hebrew is מצנפת.

<sup>17</sup> κίδαρις is the normal LXX translation of מגבעה, the one exception to this pattern appears to be Exod. 28:4 where it is used (mistakenly?) to translate מצנפת.

<sup>18</sup> Note that I am not arguing that the OT practice necessitates the wearing of a head covering by men when praying or prophesying. Divinely instituted practices will never violate God's moral order, and as a rule will not violate God's design in creation. Such practices, however, are not necessarily prescriptive, especially when connected to the OT worship system which has been superseded in Christ (cf. Heb. 7-10).

<sup>19</sup> Michael Barrett, *Headcovering for Public Worship: An Exposition of 1 Corinthians 11:2-16* (Greenville, SC: Faith Free Presbyterian Church, n.d.), 3.

<sup>20</sup> As Barrett rightly points out: "Any violation of God's established order is ultimately an affront against God Himself" (ibid., 3).

<sup>21</sup> Isaiah and Jeremiah both functioned as priests and prophets (Isa. 6:1; Jer. 1:1). Further, since "prophesy" involves speaking to men for "edification, exhortation, and comfort" (1 Cor. 14:3), it seems appropriate to describe the priestly duty of teaching the people the law as "prophesy" (cf. Deut. 17:9-11; 33:8-10).

<sup>22</sup> "And the Levitical priests arouse and they blessed the people; and their voice was heard and their prayer [תפלה] reached his holy dwelling place, Heaven." See also 1 Sam. 7:5 and 12:23, where Samuel affirms his responsibility to pray for the people.

<sup>23</sup> Morgan, *The Corinthians Letters of Paul*, 137. Ingalls also advances this same argument ("Headcoverings in the OT," 51).

<sup>24</sup> The following terms for shame occur in this passage: αἰσχυνω (4, 5); αἰσχροσ (6); and ἀτιμία (14). Glory (δόξα) occurs three times: twice in v. 7 and once in v. 15. The distribution of these key terms does not, however, completely reflect the development of this motif. Verses 8-9 also contribute to the motif as explanation of why woman is the glory of man.

<sup>25</sup> Barrett, 7. Although no source is given for this claim, it appears to have been derived from Thayer's comment on κόμη: "(According to Schmidt (21, 2) it differs from θρίξ (the anatomical or physical term) by designating the hair as an ornament (the notion of length being only secondary and suggested)." This distinction, however, cannot be supported by Septuagintal use of the term. Κόμη is used 11 times in the LXX (κομάω does not occur in the LXX). Of those 11x, it translates the word for long hair (פָּרֵעַ) 2 times (Num. 6:5; Eze 44:20), the word for corner (פִּנָּה) once (Lev. 19:27), and the word for turban or headdress (פֶּאֶרֶס) once (Eze 24:23). It also seems to be a free translation of עֲרֵךְ in Job 16:12 for the word 'neck.'

<sup>26</sup> Space constraints forbid the listing of the extra-biblical data here—the Persus Digital Library lists 270 extra-biblical occurrences of κόμη ([www.perseus.tufts.edu](http://www.perseus.tufts.edu)). However, none of the most recent major Greek lexicons list 'styled hair,' 'coiffured hair,' or some similar sense for κόμη. BDAG<sup>3</sup> offers one sense: "hair of a person's head, (*long*) hair of women." Louw-Nida lists "hair of the head of human beings." Liddell-Scott-Jones offers "hair of the head."

<sup>27</sup> Note that in Ezek. 44:20, growing κόμη serves at the antithesis of having a shaved head, both conditions being forbidden to priests. Instead, priests were required to cut their hair.

<sup>28</sup> One comment in the BDAG<sup>3</sup> entry on κομάω deserves mention. The sense listed is "wear long hair, let one's hair grow long." Toward the end of the entry, however, it comments: "Perhaps Paul refers to the effeminate manner in which some males coiffured their long hair, rather than to the mere wearing of hair in full length." The fact that men who wore long hair (κομάω) were often regarded as effeminate or even homosexual appears to underlie BDAG<sup>3</sup>'s comment (cf. *Pseudo-Phocylides*, 212, ἄρσεσιν οὐκ ἐπέοικε κομᾶν χλιδαναίς δὲ γυναιξίν "Long hair is not fit for men, but for dainty women."). However, Paul's use of κόμη and κομάω in reference to women

does not support the idea that κόμη itself denotes coiffured hair. The fact that Paul appeals to the natural order in v. 13 and says a woman's κόμη has been *given* to her for a covering in v. 15 suggests that he is speaking of a woman's hair as created by God. If that is the case, it certainly does not come already coiffured.

<sup>29</sup> "On Silence and Head Covering," *WTJ* 35 (1972): 24.

<sup>30</sup> "1 Cor 11,2-16: Towards a Coherent Interpretation," in *L'Apotre Paul* (Leuven: University Press, 1986), 372.

<sup>31</sup> Gen. 31:19; 38:12-13; Deut. 15:19; 1 Sam. 25:2, 4, 7, 11; 2 Sam. 13:23-24; Cant. 4:2; 6:6; Isa. 53:7; Acts 8:32. There are four clear OT instances in which κείρω is used with reference to human hair. In 2 Sam. 14:26 Absalom cuts his hair once a year. Here κείρω translates כָּנַח which means "to shave." In Job 1:20 it translates שָׁבַח, the standard Hebrew term for shearing a sheep. In Micah 1:16 it functions in parallel with ξυρώ ('to shave') and again translates שָׁבַח. It is also used metaphorically in Jer. 7:29 of Jerusalem, as a woman, cutting off her hair in mourning (שָׁבַח). In the light of this pattern of usage, when Paul cut his hair in Acts 18:18, it is probable that he shaved or cut his hair rather short.

<sup>32</sup> Schreiner, "Head Coverings, Prophecies and the Trinity," 126.

<sup>33</sup> Plutarch, *Sayings of the Romans* 200F, is frequently cited to support the conclusion that "on head having" may refer to a material covering. However, it is crucial to note that a word for a material covering (*himation*) is explicitly used: "he was walking with his garment covering his head" (ἐβάδιζε κατὰ κεφαλῆς ἔχων τὸ ἱμάτιον). In regard to Esther 6:12 where Haman, after being humiliated by leading Mordecai through the streets, returns home λυπούμενος κατὰ κεφαλῆς: here the material covering is implicit, however, note that this phrase also lacks the verbal form ἔχων, making it an incomplete parallel to Paul's κατὰ κεφαλῆς ἔχων.

<sup>34</sup> Schreiner is referring to this phrase, "and so we become enslaved, and yield ourselves up to unconcealed impurity" (δεδουλώμεθα καὶ ἀκατακαλύπτω τῇ ἀκαθαρσίᾳ χρώμεθα). No material covering is in view here.

<sup>35</sup> "For he took Danae, the latter's mother-in-law, from the temple of Demeter, dragged her through the middle of the city unveiled, and cast her into prison." τὴν γὰρ Δανάην, ἣτις ἦν πενθερὰ τοῦ προειρημένου, λαβόντες ἐκ τοῦ τῆς Δήμητρος ἱεροῦ καὶ διὰ μέσου τῆς πόλεως ἐλκύσαντες ἀκατακάλυπτον εἰς φυλακὴν ἀπέθεντο.

<sup>36</sup> Schreiner, "Head Coverings, Prophecies and the Trinity," 126. In *Special Laws* 3:56, just four lines previous, Philo specifies, "And the priest shall ... take away from her the head-dress on her head, that she may be judged with her head bare." ὁ δὲ ἱερεὺς .... τοῦπίκρανον ἀφελών, ἵν' ἐπικρίνηται γεγυμνωμένη τῇ κεφαλῇ. This previous description is important because it establishes the conceptual context within which the phrase ἡ μὲν ἀκατακαλύπτω τῇ κεφαλῇ is to be understood.

<sup>37</sup> Gen. 38:15; 2 Chron. 18:29; Sus. 1:32.

<sup>38</sup> Another objection, though less serious, that is frequently raised is the case of the Nazirite vow as an example of men wearing uncut hair with divine approval. The very nature of the vow, however, indicates that it was requiring the participant to behave in an exceptional manner. It was normal to eat the fruit of the vine, to touch the dead when mourning, and for men to have cut hair. That God would make an exception to the normal pattern of behavior serves to confirm it rather than invalidate it.

A Survey of the History of the Interpretation of 1 Corinthians 11:2-16  
A. Philip Brown II, PhD  
Aldersgate Forum 2011

This essay examines two aspects of the history of how 1 Corinthians 11:2-16 has been interpreted:<sup>1</sup> (1) What did Paul mean when he said men should not be covered and women should be covered when praying or prophesying, and (2) What do Paul's requirements regarding men's and women's hair mean.

The aims of this survey are, first, to orient the interpreter to the ways in which this passage has been understood, thereby guarding against an interpretation uninformed by church history. Second, it will demonstrate that the church has historically understood Paul to teach that women should have long hair and men should not. Third, it will provide what I hope is a plausible explanation for how the dominant understanding of this passage developed, that is, that Paul requires women's heads to be covered with both hair and a material head-covering.

The history of interpretation divides naturally into three periods: early and medieval interpretation (AD 120-1500), reformation, post-reformation, and Wesleyan interpretation (AD 1500-1850), and modern interpretation (AD 1850-present). In each period, the identity, setting, and views of the major interpretive figures are discussed, and the distinctive characteristics of that period are summarized.

### ***Early and Medieval Interpretation (A.D. 120–1500)***

The majority of extant commentators from the early and medieval periods identified the covering Paul requires in 1 Corinthians 11:2-16 as a material veil of some sort. These same commentators also understood Paul to teach that a woman was to have long hair and that a man was not.

### **AD 100-200: Irenaeus, Clement of Alexandria, and Tertullian**

**Irenaeus** is the earliest church father to comment on 1 Cor. 11, though he does so only in passing.<sup>2</sup> In his treatise refuting Valentinian gnosticism,<sup>3</sup> he notes that the Valentinians appeal to

---

<sup>1</sup> At present, the only history of the interpretation of 1 Corinthians 11:2-16 published is Linda A. Mercadante's *From Hierarchy to Equality: A Comparison of Past and Present Interpretations of 1 Cor 11:2-16 in Relation to the Changing Status of Women in Society* (Vancouver: G-M-H Books, 1978). Mercadante, however, begins her analysis with Calvin. Ralph N. V. Schutt, "A History of the Interpretation of 1 Corinthians 11:2-16" (M.A. thesis, Dallas Theological Seminary, 1978), covered only two church fathers—Tertullian and Chrysostom—and then jumps to Calvin, his only representative from the 16<sup>th</sup> century. Both Gerald Bray, ed., *1-2 Corinthians* in *Ancient Christian Commentary on Scripture*, ed. Thomas C. Oden (Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 1999), 7:106-109, and Judith L. Kovacs, *1 Corinthians: Interpreted By Early Christian Commentators* in *The Church's Bible*, ed. Robert Louis Wilken (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans, 2005), 179-184, provide citations of various father's views on specific verses, but they do not seek to provide a survey of the history of interpretation.

<sup>2</sup> Irenaeus lived c. A.D. 120-202, was bishop of Lyons (France) and a disciple of Polycarp who was a disciple of the Apostle John.

<sup>3</sup> Valentinian Gnosticism, one of the most influential forms of Gnosticism, taught that Jesus gave his disciples secret knowledge (gnosis) without which one cannot properly interpret Scripture. Only the spiritual mature can appreciate this knowledge. For details, consult Einar Thomassen, *The Spiritual Seed: The Church of the "Valentinians"* (Leiden: Brill, 2006).

1 Cor. 11:10 as a proof text: “in the same Epistle, ... [Paul] says, ‘A woman ought to have a veil upon her head, because of the angels.’”<sup>4</sup>

Since Irenaeus does not dispute the Valentinians’ claim that Paul said this and does not argue contrary to this understanding of Paul, it seems likely that he understood Paul to require women to be veiled in 1 Cor. 11:10. This quotation from Irenaeus also makes it likely that early in the transmission of 1 Corinthians 11, verse 10 was miscopied so that it read “a woman ought to have a veil [κάλυμμα] on her head” instead of reading “a woman ought to have authority [ἐξουσία] on her head.” This may provide a significant clue to why the veil view gained such dominance in the early church.

**Clement of Alexandria**, Egypt (A.D. 153-217) is the second church father whose extant comments are relevant to 1 Cor. 11:2-16. In his work *The Instructor*,<sup>5</sup> he writes concerning the way in which women should go to church:

Let the woman observe this, further. Let her be entirely covered, unless she happen to be at home. For that style of dress is grave, and protects from being gazed at. And she will never fall, who puts before her eyes modesty, and her shawl; nor will she invite another to fall into sin by uncovering her face. For this is the wish of the Word, since it is becoming for her to pray veiled.<sup>6</sup>

Regarding men and women’s hair, Clement instructs men to cut their hair short enough that it doesn’t appear feminine, and women not to cut their hair, but to put it up in a simple style:

Let the head of men be [bare], unless it has curly hair. ... But let not twisted locks hang far down from the head, gliding into womanish ringlets. ... It is enough for women to protect their locks, and bind up their hair simply along the neck with a plain hair-pin, nourishing chaste locks with simple care to true beauty. For meretricious plaiting of the hair, and putting it up in tresses, cutting the hair (κόπτουσι τὰς τρίχας) and plucking off it those treacherous braidings, contribute to make them look ugly.<sup>7</sup>

---

<sup>4</sup> *Against Heresies*, Book 1, ch. 8.2, in Philip Schaff, et al., eds. *The Ante-Nicene Fathers* (New York: The Christian Literature Publishing Co., 1885. BibleWorks, v.8), vol. 1, p. 327; so also Dominic J. Unger and John J. Dillon, *St. Irenaeus of Lyons: Against the Heresies*. Vol. 55, *Ancient Christian Writers* (New York: Paulist Press, 1992), 43. The Greek text of Irenaeus’ statement reads: Τὴν τε μετὰ τῶν ἡλικιωτῶν τοῦ Σωτῆρος παρουσίαν πρὸς τὴν Ἀχαμῶθ, ὁμοίως πεφανερῶκεναι αὐτὸν ἐν τῇ αὐτῇ ἐπιστολῇ, εἰπόντα· Δεῖ τὴν γυναῖκα κάλυμμα ἔχειν ἐπὶ τῆς κεφαλῆς διὰ τοὺς ἀγγέλους. W. W. Harvey, *Sancti Irenaei episcopi Lugdunensis libri quinque adversus haereses*, vol. 1. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1857. Bruce M. Metzger notes, in the second edition of *A Textual Commentary On The Greek New Testament*, that “veil” also occurs in Latin texts of Irenaeus’ writings (New York: United Bible Societies, 2002), 495.

<sup>5</sup> *The Instructor* was written to provide “a guide for the formation and development of Christian character and for living a Christian life.” *Ante-Nicene Fathers*, vol. 2, p. 167.

<sup>6</sup> *The Instructor* 3.11 s.v., “Going to Church,” *Ante-Nicene Fathers*, vol. 2, p. 290. Greek text: Πλεῖον τοῦτο ἐχέτω ἡ γυνή· κεκαλύφθω τὰ πάντα, πλὴν εἰ μὴ οἴκοι τύχοι· σεμνὸν γὰρ τὸ σχῆμα καὶ ἀκατάσκοπον· καὶ οὐποτε αὐτὴ σφαλῆσεται πρὸ τῶν ὀμμάτων τὴν αἰδῶ καὶ τὴν ἀμπεχόνην θεμένη οὐδὲ ἄλλον εἰς ὄλισθον ἀμαρτίας ἐκκαλέσεται τὸ πρόσωπον ἀπογυμνουμένη. Τοῦτο γὰρ ὁ λόγος βούλεται, ἐπεὶ πρέπον αὐτῇ ἐγκεκαλυμμένη προσεύχεσθαι. *Paedagogus*, 3.11.79.3-5 from C. Mondésert, C. Matray, and H.-I. Marrou, *Clément d’Alexandrie. Le pédagogue*, 3 vols. (*Sources chrétiennes* 158. Paris: Éditions du Cerf, 1970).

<sup>7</sup> *The Instructor* 3.11 s.v., “The Hair,” *Ante-Nicene Fathers*, vol. 2, p. 286. Greek text: Πλεῖον ψιλὴ μὲν ἡ τῶν ἀνδρῶν κεφαλὴ, πλὴν εἰ μὴ οὐλας ἔχοι τὰς τρίχας, λάσιον δὲ τὸ γένειον, αἱ δὲ συνεστραμμέναι τῶν τριχῶν ἀπὸ τῆς κεφαλῆς μὴ καθικέσθωσαν ἄγαν εἰς πλοκάμους κατολισθαίνουσαι γυναικειούς ... Ταῖς γυναῖξι δὲ ἀπόχρη μαλάσσειν τὰς τρίχας καὶ ἀναδεῖσθαι τὴν κόμην εὐτελεῶς περόνη τινὶ λιτῇ παρὰ τὸν αὐχένα, ἀφελεῖ θεραπείᾳ συναυξούσαις εἰς κάλλος

A few decades later, **Tertullian** (c. A.D. 160-220), a theologian in Carthage, N. Africa, wrote a tract<sup>8</sup> entitled “On the Veiling of Virgins,” in which he addresses both the issue of veiling and hair length:

Next we turn to the examination of the reasons themselves which lead the apostle to teach that the female ought to be veiled, (to see) whether the self-same (reasons) apply to virgins likewise; ... (let the world, the rival of God, see to it, if it asserts that close-cut hair is graceful to a virgin in like manner as that flowing hair is to a boy.) To her, then, to whom it is equally unbecoming to be shaven or shorn, it is equally becoming to be covered. ... a man is not to cover his head: to wit, because he has not by nature been gifted with excess of hair; because to be shaven or shorn is not shameful to him; ... Accordingly, since the apostle is treating of man and woman – why the latter ought to be veiled, but the former not ... In fact, at this day the Corinthians do veil their virgins. What the apostles taught, their disciples approve.<sup>9</sup>

Tertullian also argues extensively that all women, not just married women, are to be veiled based on 1 Cor. 11:5f.<sup>10</sup> He also implicitly argues that women are to have long hair: “[Paul] says that ‘nature herself,’ ... has assigned hair as a [covering] and ornament to women, ... If ‘it is shameful’ for a woman to be shorn it is similarly so to a virgin too.”<sup>11</sup>

In sum, by the early third century AD, it was a common practice throughout the churches for married women to wear veils in church, if not everywhere in public. The arguments adduced for this practice were primarily arguments from modesty and avoiding causing men to stumble. But clearly, Clement and Tertullian appeal to 1 Cor. 11 as well to support this requirement. The concurrent expectation that women were not to cut their hair and men were to cut theirs received less attention at this time because, at least from these interpreter’s perspective, it was not the primary problem. It would receive more attention in the next century as monasticism gained traction in Christianity.

---

γνήσιον τὰς σώφρονας κόμας. Καὶ γὰρ αἱ περιπλοκαὶ τῶν τριχῶν αἱ ἑταιρικαὶ καὶ αἱ τῶν σειρῶν ἀναδέσεις πρὸς τῷ εἰδεχθεῖς αὐτὰς δεικνύναι κόπτουσι τὰς τρίχας. *Paedagogus*, 3.11.60.2 and 62.2-3. Mondésert, *Clément d’Alexandrie. Le pédagogue (Sources chrétiennes 158. Paris: Éditions du Cerf, 1970).*

<sup>8</sup> All of Tertullian’s extant works were written in Latin.

<sup>9</sup> *On the Veiling of Virgins*, chs. 7-8, *Ante-Nicene Fathers*, vol. 4, pp. 31-33. So also Geoffrey D. Dunn, *Tertullian* (London: Routledge, 2004), 106-107. Tertullian’s statement “What the apostles taught, their disciples approve,” may be a case of the “after-that-therefore-because-of-that” (*post hoc ergo propter hoc*) fallacy. Just because an event follows another event does not mean the first even caused the second event. However, it does appear to be true that the veiling of virgins was a customs observed by Corinthian virgins. For example, Hippolytus of Rome’s (A.D. 170-236) account of a virtuous Christian Corinthian maiden rescued from a brothel where she had been unjustly sentenced. He remarks, “The Corinthian maiden was accustomed to be veiled (as Tertullian intimates), and was taught alike to cherish her own purity and to have no share in affording occasion of sin to others.” *Ante-Nicene Fathers*, vol. 5, pp. 240-42. Whether the Corinthian customs was a consequence of Paul’s teaching or conformity to cultural expectations for modesty cannot be determined given the extant data.

<sup>10</sup> Tertullian makes similar comments regarding veiling in *Against Marcion*: “In precisely the same manner, when enjoining on women silence in the church, that they speak not for the mere sake of learning (although that even they have the right of prophesying, [Paul] has already shown when he covers the woman that prophesies with a veil) ....” *Against Marcion*, book 5, chapter 8, *Ante-Nicene Fathers*, vol. 3, p. 446. See also *On Prayer*, chs. 21-22, *Ante-Nicene Fathers*, vol. 7, pp. 687-89.

<sup>11</sup> *On Prayer*, ch. 22, *Ante-Nicene Fathers*, vol. 7, p. 688.

### AD 300-400s: Epiphanius, Chryostom, Basil, and Augustine on Men

As the early church's emphasis on virginity and purity fostered asceticism and monasticism, a recurring issue was ascetic men wearing long hair as a sign of their supposed holiness and commitment to God. Fourth and fifth century commentators utilized 1 Cor. 11 to address this problem. Two positions emerge from the data: (1) Paul is forbidding men to wear long hair (Epiphanius), (2) Paul is forbidding men to wear either long hair or a veil (Chrysostom, Basil, Augustine).

**Epiphanius** (c. A.D. 315-403), Bishop of Salamis, stands out from other ancient Christian writers because he understood the covering forbidden to men to be long hair. He cites 1 Cor. 11:7 in five different contexts in his polemical work *Panarion*. In each case, he cites the verse as: "A man ought not to wear long hair [κομᾶν] because he is the image and glory of God."<sup>12</sup> For example, he cites 1 Cor. 11:7 in addressing Manicheism's misunderstanding of the value of the body:

And once more, the same apostle says in another passage, "A man ought not to have long hair forasmuch as he is the glory and image of God." And you see how he called hair the glory of God, though it is grown on the body and not in the soul.<sup>13</sup>

There is no manuscript or versional evidence for this rendering of verse seven. It seems most likely, therefore, that it reflects Epiphanius's understanding of verse 7 that "to be covered" (κατακαλύπτεσθαι) refers to "having long hair" (κομᾶν).

Commenting on the practice of some "esteemed brethren" in the cloisters of Mesopotamia, Epiphanius notes that they:

have been detected in another form [of error], that of deliberately having their hair long like a woman's and wearing sackcloth openly. ... Visible sackcloth is out of place in the catholic church, as is uncut hair, because of the apostle's injunction, "A man ought not to have long hair, inasmuch as he is the image of God."<sup>14</sup>

---

<sup>12</sup> ἀνὴρ, γὰρ φησιν, οὐκ ὀφείλει κομᾶν, εἰκὼν καὶ δόξα θεοῦ ὑπάρχων. K. Holl, *Epiphanius, Ancoratus und Panarion* in *Die griechischen christlichen Schriftsteller der ersten drei Jahrhunderte* (Leipzig: Hinrichs, 1922, 1933), vol. 2, pp. 122, 167; vol. 3, pp. 91, 236, 492. Epiphanius also quotes this verse in the same way in his letter to John of Jerusalem. However, the Greek text of Epiphanius's letter is fragmentary and does not contain this excerpt. P. Maas, "Die ikonoklastische Episode in dem Brief des Epiphanius an Johannes," *Byzantinische Zeitschrift* 30 (1929-1930): 281-283. Fortunately, Epiphanius asked Jerome to translate the letter into Latin, and we have a copy of the entire letter through Jerome. "Letter LI. From Epiphanius, Bishop of Salamis, in Cyprus, to John, Bishop of Jerusalem" in *Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers*, series 2, vol. 6, p. 88.

<sup>13</sup> Epiphanius, *The Panarion of Epiphanius of Salamis: Books II and III (Sects 47-80, De Fide)*, trans. by Frank Williams, *Nag Hammadi Studies*, 36 (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1987), 271. Greek text: ὁ αὐτὸς ἀπόστολος «ἀνὴρ οὐκ ὀφείλει κομᾶν, δόξα καὶ εἰκὼν θεοῦ ὑπάρχων». καὶ ὁρᾷς ὡς δόξαν θεοῦ ἔφη τὴν κόμην, ἐπὶ σώματος φερομένην καὶ οὐκ ἐν ψυχῇ; ... καὶ μάτην οὗτος κομποποιεῖ, μᾶλλον δὲ χλεῦν ὑφίσταται παρὰ τοῖς τὴν τελείαν φρόνησιν κεκτημένοις. K. Holl, *Epiphanius, Ancoratus und Panarion*, vol. 3, p. 91.

<sup>14</sup> Epiphanius, *The Panarion of Epiphanius of Salamis*, 634. Greek text: οἱ κατὰ Μεσοποταμίαν ἐν μοναστηρίοις ὑπάρχοντες εἶπουν μάνδραις καλουμέναις, κόμαις γυναικικαῖς <χρῆσθαι> προβαλλόμενοι καὶ σάκκω προφανεῖ ἐπερειδόμενοι. ... ἀλλότριον γὰρ ἐστὶ τῆς καθολικῆς ἐκκλησίας σάκκος προφανῆς καὶ κόμη <μῆ> ἐκτεμνομένη ἀπὸ τοῦ κηρύγματος τῶν ἀποστόλων. «ἀνὴρ, γὰρ φησιν, οὐκ ὀφείλει κομᾶν, εἰκὼν καὶ δόξα θεοῦ ὑπάρχων». K. Holl, *Epiphanius, Ancoratus und Panarion*, vol. 3, p. 492.

Epiphanius continues his argument by addressing the issue of the Nazirites' long hair.<sup>15</sup> He argues that "long hair was proper only for Nazirites" and, citing 1 Cor. 11:14, that it is a shame for Christian men to wear long hair.<sup>16</sup> Since the ascetics were appealing to the OT Nazirite vow, it is clear that they were allowing their hair to grow uncut. This means Epiphanius' use of "to have long hair" (κομᾶν) necessarily refers to wearing long, uncut hair.

**John Chrysostom** (A.D. 347-407), the prince of preachers in the early church and archbishop of Constantinople, preached a series of expository sermons through 1 Corinthians and devoted an entire sermon to 1 Cor. 11:2-16. In reference to men Chrysostom understood 11:4 to be addressing men who were wearing long hair and were covering their heads when praying.<sup>17</sup>

In his view Paul is forbidding both: men must not wear long hair and must not cover their heads when praying or prophesying, though they may cover their heads at other times: "But with regard to the man, it is no longer about covering but about wearing long hair, that he so forms his discourse. To be covered he then only forbids, when a man is praying; but the wearing long hair he discourages at all times."<sup>18</sup>

**Basil the Great** (A.D. 330-379), Archbishop of Caesarea and one of the three "Cappadocian Fathers" along with Gregory of Nazianzen, and Gregory of Nyssa, wrote a letter to the clergy at Neocaesarea in which he apparently understands Paul to be forbidding men to be covered with a material covering:

Gregory did not cover his head at prayer. How could he? He was a true disciple of the Apostle who says, "Every man praying or prophesying, having his head covered, dishonoureth his head." And "a man indeed ought not to cover his head forasmuch as he is the image of God."<sup>19</sup>

---

<sup>15</sup> Apparently certain ascetics extended this appeal claiming that Jesus was a Nazirite. In a work we possess only in fragmentary form, Epiphanius refutes the claim that Jesus was a Nazirite and thus wore long hair: "For they write that the savior had long hair based on the hypothesis that because he was called a Nazoraion, since the Nazirites have long hair, but they are [wrong] for the savior drank wine, but the Nazirites did not drink it" (author's translation). Greek text: κόμην γὰρ ἔχοντα τὸν σωτῆρα γράφουσιν ἐξ ὑπονοίας διὰ τὸ Ναζωραῖον αὐτὸν καλεῖσθαι, ἐπεὶ περ οἱ Ναζιραῖοι κόμας ἔχουσιν. σφάλλονται δὲ οἱ τοὺς τύπους αὐτῶ συνάπτειν πειρώμενοι· οἶνον γὰρ ἔπινεν ὁ σωτῆρ, ὃν οἱ Ναζιραῖοι οὐκ ἔπινον. "Epistula ad Theodosium imperatorem" (fragment 24) in Karl Holl, *Gesammelte Aufsätze zur Kirchengeschichte*, vol. 2 (Tübingen: Mohr, 1928; repr. Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 1964): 361.

<sup>16</sup> Epiphanius, *The Panarion of Epiphanius of Salamis*, 635. His citation of 1 Cor. 11:14 in the context of discussing the Nazirites' uncut hair demonstrates that κομάω could refer to uncut hair.

<sup>17</sup> "...the men went so far as to wear long hair as having spent their time in philosophy, and covered their heads when praying and prophesying, each of which was a Grecian custom." *Homily 26* (11:2-16), under verse 2, *Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers*, series 1, vol. 12, p. 149. Greek text: οἱ δὲ ἄνδρες καὶ ἐκόμων, ἅτε ἐν φιλοσοφίᾳ διατρίψαντες, καὶ περιεβάλλοντο τὰς κεφαλὰς εὐχόμενοι καὶ προφητεύοντες· ὅπερ ἐκάτερον Ἑλληνικοῦ νόμου ἦν. In *epistulam i ad Corinthios* in J.-P. Migne, *Patrologiae cursus completus (series Graeca)*, vol. 61, p. 213.

<sup>18</sup> *Homily 26* (11:2-16), under verse 4, *Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers*, series 1, vol. 12, p. 152. Greek text: Ἐπὶ δὲ τοῦ ἀνδρὸς οὐκέτι τὸν τοῦ καλύμματος, ἀλλὰ τὸν τῆς κόμης οὕτω γυμνάζει λόγον· καλύπτεσθαι μὲν γὰρ τότε μόνον κωλύει, ὅταν εὐχῆται, κομᾶν δὲ αἰεὶ ἀποτρέπει. In *epistulam i ad Corinthios* in J.-P. Migne, *Patrologiae cursus completus (series Graeca)*, vol. 61, p. 217.

<sup>19</sup> Letter CCVII, "To the Clergy at Neocaesarea" in Philip Schaff, et al., eds., *Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers*, series 2, vol. 8 (New York: The Christian Literature Publishing Co., 1885. BibleWorks, v.8), pp. 247-248. Greek text: Γρηγόριος οὐ κατεκαλύπτετο ἐπὶ τῶν προσευχῶν. Πῶς γάρ; ὁ γε τοῦ Ἀποστόλου γνήσιος μαθητῆς τοῦ



In his treatise *On Baptism*, Basil cites 1 Cor. 11:14-15 in answer to the question “[Is] the work enjoined by the command acceptable to God if the manner of performing it is not in conformity with the divine ordinance?” His conclusion is that good works performed in a manner that is contrary to God’s word are not acceptable. Therefore, when praying and prophesying, men should not have long hair and that women should:

The Apostle, using a familiar example in order to present his point in a more lucid manner and to assist his hearers toward an understanding of the properties of the devout life, says: "Does not even nature itself teach you that a man, indeed, if he has long hair, it is a shame to him? But if a woman have long hair, it is a glory to her," and so on. Properly, then, we should follow the customary ways of nature as regards the necessities of this life.<sup>20</sup>

**Augustine** (A.D. 354-430), the Bishop of Hippo in North Africa, comments on this passage in several places. In his treatise *Of the Work of Monks*, he argues that Paul prohibits men from having long hair or wearing a veil:

For the same Apostle saith, that long hair is also instead of a veil: by whose authority these men are hard pressed. Seeing he saith openly, “If a man wear long hair, it is a disgrace to him.” “The very disgrace,” say they, “we take upon us, for desert of our sins:” holding out a screen of simulated humility, to the end that under cover of it they may carry on their trade of self-importance. Just as if the Apostle were teaching pride when he says, “Every man praying or prophesying with veiled head shameth his head;” and, “A man ought not to veil his head, forsomuch as he is the image and glory of God.”<sup>21</sup>

#### **AD 300-400s: Chrysostom, Severian of Gabala, Ambrosiaster, Jerome, Augustine on Women**

Although not apparently as common as the problem of ascetic men wearing long hair, the opposite problem also existed: female ascetics cutting off their hair. The **Synod of Gangra** (c. 340), whose canons were later ratified at the Council of Chalcedon (451), met to condemn the ascetic heresies of Eustathius, who was teaching among other things that married persons could not be saved. Following his teaching, some women had abandoned their husbands and cut off their hair, which they regarded as a sign of submission to their husbands. The Council condemned this behavior with the following: “If any woman from pretended asceticism shall cut off her hair, which God gave her as the reminder of her subjection, thus annulling as it were the ordinance of subjection, let her be anathema.”<sup>22</sup>

---

εἰπόντος, πᾶς ἀνὴρ προσευχόμενος ἢ προφητεύων κατὰ κεφαλῆς ἔχων καταισχύνει τὴν κεφαλὴν αὐτοῦ· καὶ, ἀνὴρ μὲν γὰρ οὐκ ὀφείλει κατακαλύπτεσθαι τὴν κεφαλὴν εἰκὼν καὶ δόξα θεοῦ ὑπάρχων. J.-P. Migne, *Patrologiae cursus completus (series Graeca) (MPG)* (Paris: Migne, 1857-1866), vol. 30, p. 765.

<sup>20</sup> Basil, *Ascetical Works*, trans. by M. Monica Wagner (Washington, D.C.: The Catholic University of America Press, 1962), 408. Greek text: Τοῦ Ἀποστόλου τοίνυν τοῖς ἐν τῇ συνθηεῖα κεκρατημένοις χρησαμένου εἰς σαφεστέραν παράστασιν καὶ βοήθειαν τοῖς ἀκούουσι τῶν τῇ εὐσεβείᾳ πρεπόντων, ἐν τῷ εἰπεῖν· «Ἡ οὐτε αὐτῇ ἢ φύσις διδάσκει ἡμᾶς, ὅτι ἀνὴρ μὲν, ἐὰν κομᾷ, ἀτιμία αὐτῷ ἐστι, γυνὴ δὲ ἐὰν κομᾷ, δόξα αὐτῇ ἐστι;» καὶ τὰ ἐξῆς· ἀκόλουθον ἂν εἶη καὶ ἡμᾶς τοῖς ἐν τῇ φύσει κεκρατημένοις πρὸς τὰ ἀναγκαῖα τῆς παρούσης ζωῆς χρήσασθαι. J.-P. Migne, *Patrologiae cursus completus (series Graeca) (MPG)* (Paris: Migne, 1857-1866), vol. 31, p. 1600.

<sup>21</sup> *Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers*, series 1, vol. 3, p. 522-23.

<sup>22</sup> “Canon XVII” in Schaff, *Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers*, series 2, vol. 14, p. 99. Greek text: Εἴ τις γυναικῶν διὰ νομιζομένην ἄσκησιν ἀποκείροιτο τὰς κόμας, ἃς ἔδωκεν ὁ Θεὸς εἰς ὑπόμνησιν τῆς ὑποταγῆς, ὡς παραλύουσα τὸ πρόσταγμα τῆς ὑποταγῆς, ἀνάθεμα ἔστω. <[http://www.documentacatholicaomnia.eu/04z/z\\_0340-0340\\_Concilium\\_Gangrense\\_Canones\\_GR.pdf.html](http://www.documentacatholicaomnia.eu/04z/z_0340-0340_Concilium_Gangrense_Canones_GR.pdf.html)> Accessed online 10/8/2011. So also Karl Joseph von Hefele, *A History of the Councils of the Church, from the Original Documents* (T. & T. Clark, 1876), 333-34.

**Chrysostom** preached that God had given women long hair as a covering in order to teach them to wear a material covering at all times.

...after saying, “but if it be a shame for a woman to be shorn or shaven,” [Paul] states in what follows his own conclusion, saying, “let her be covered.” He did not say, “let her have long hair,” but, “let her be covered,” ordaining both these to be one, and establishing them both ways, from what was customary and from their contraries: in that he both affirms the covering and the hair to be one, and also that she again who is shaven is the same with her whose head is bare. “For it is one and the same thing,” saith he, “as if she were shaven.”

But if any say, “And how is it one, if this woman have the covering of nature, but the other who is shaven have not even this?” we answer, that as far as her will goes, she threw that off likewise by having the head bare. And if it be not bare of tresses, that is nature’s doing, not her own. So that as she who is shaven hath her head bare, so this woman in like manner. For this cause He left it to nature to provide her with a covering, that even of it she might learn this lesson and veil herself.<sup>23</sup>

**Severian of Gabala** (d. 408), a rival of Chrysostom’s and the one responsible for his exile, concludes that women should be covered out of respect for the angels, which he identifies as bishops, and notes that “it has always been forbidden for women to shear their hair.”<sup>24</sup>

Similarly, **Ambrosiaster** (mid-late 300s), a Latin commentator whose identity is uncertain at present,<sup>25</sup> taught that women must be veiled when praying or prophesying:

The veil signifies power, and the angels are bishops ... A woman therefore ought to cover her head because she is not the likeness of God but is under subjection. Because transgression began

---

<sup>23</sup> *Homily 26* (11:2-16), under verse 6, *Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers*, series 1, vol. 12, pp. 152-53. Greek text: καὶ εἰπὼν, «Εἰ δὲ αἰσχρὸν γυναικὶ κείρεσθαι ἢ ξυρᾶσθαι,» τίθησι τὸ παρ’ ἑαυτοῦ λοιπὸν λέγων, «Κατακαλυπτέσθω.» Καὶ οὐκ εἶπε, Κομάτω, ἀλλὰ, «Κατακαλυπτέσθω,» ἀμφοτέρωτα ταῦτα ἐν εἶναι νομοθετῶν, καὶ ἐκατέρωθεν αὐτὰ κατασκευάζων, ἀπὸ τε τῶν νενομισμένων, ἀπὸ τε τῶν ἐναντίων. Τὴν τε γὰρ περιβολὴν καὶ τὴν κόμην ἐν εἶναι φησι. τὴν τε ἐξυρηνμένην καὶ τὴν γυμνὴν ἔχουσιν κεφαλὴν, τὸ αὐτὸ πάλιν. «Ἐν γὰρ ἐστὶν, φησι, καὶ τὸ αὐτὸ τῆ ἐξυρηνμένη.» Εἰ δὲ λέγοι τις, Καὶ πῶς ἐστὶν ἐν, εἴ γε αὕτη μὲν τὸ κάλυμμα τῆς φύσεως ἔχει, ἐκείνη δὲ ἡ ἐξυρηνμένη οὐδὲ τοῦτο; ἐροῦμεν ὅτι τῆ προαιρέσει κάκεινο ἔρριψε τῷ γυμνῇ ἔχει τὴν κεφαλὴν. εἰ δὲ μὴ γυμνῇ τῶν τριχῶν, τοῦτο τῆς φύσεως ἐστὶν, οὐκ ἐκείνης. Ὡστε καὶ ἡ ἐξυρηνμένη γυμνῇ ἔχει τὴν κεφαλὴν, κάκεινη ὁμοίως. Διὰ γὰρ τοῦτο τῆ φύσει ἐπέτρεψεν αὐτὴν σκεπάσαι, ἵνα καὶ ἀπ’ ἐκείνης τοῦτο μαθοῦσα καλύπτηται. Migne, *PG*, p. 217.

<sup>24</sup> “...since women also were prophesying by the Holy Spirit. And when the Spirit is at work, it is an absolute necessity for ministering angels to be present. And for this reason women ought to be covered. [Paul] determined this, not from an ancient custom but from their situation. And although the men who wore long hair in ancient times cut off part of it, [they still] wore it longer than was necessary; however, it was always forbidden for a woman to shear her hair” (author’s translation). Greek text: ...ἐπειδὴ καὶ γυναῖκες προεφήτευσον ἐκ πνεύματος ἁγίου. τοῦ δὲ πνεύματος ἐνεργοῦντος πᾶσα ἀνάγκη τοὺς λειτουργοὺς ἀγγέλους παρεῖναι, καὶ δεῖ διὰ τοῦτο κατακαλύπτεσθαι τὴν γυναῖκα. Οὐκ ἀπὸ τοῦ παλαιοῦ ἔθους ἀλλ’ ἀπὸ τοῦ κατ’ αὐτοὺς ἐδοκίμασε τοῦτο. καὶ οἱ κομῶντες τὸ παλαιὸν ἐκ μέρους ἀποκείροντες ἐπὶ πλεῖον ἢ ἔδει κομῶντες, γυναικὶ δὲ αἰεὶ τὸ κείρεσθαι ἀπεδοκίμασθη. “*Fragmenta in epistulam i ad Corinthios*” in K. Staab, *Pauluskommentar aus der griechischen Kirche aus Katenenhandschriften gesammelt* (Münster: Aschendorff, 1933), p. 262.

<sup>25</sup> For a discussion of the various theories, see the translator’s introduction in *Commentaries on Romans and 1-2 Corinthians: Ambrosiaster*, trans. and ed. by Gerald Lewis Bray, *Ancient Christian Texts* (Downers Grove: IVP Academic, 2009), p. xvi.

with her, she ought to indicate this by covering her head in church out of reverence for the bishop.<sup>26</sup>

In a fascinating aside, **Jerome** (A.D. 345-429), translator of the Latin Vulgate, states that it was common for monastic women to shave their heads, signifying they had renounced the world and its pleasures.<sup>27</sup> He justifies the practice by noting:

not that afterwards they go about with heads uncovered in defiance of the apostle's command, for they wear a close-fitting cap and a veil.<sup>28</sup>

**Augustine** argues that women must cover their heads in his treatise *On the Holy Trinity*,:

the man is the image of God, and on that account removes the covering from his head, which he warns the woman to use ... why is the woman also not the image of God? For she is instructed for this very reason to cover her head, which he is forbidden to do because he is the image of God.<sup>29</sup>

Augustine extends this requirement to married women as well: "it is not becoming even in married women to uncover their hair, since the apostle commands women to keep their heads covered."<sup>30</sup>

The picture that emerges from this data is helpful for several reasons. First, it demonstrates that even native Greek speakers could understand Paul's directions to men differently. Second, it reveals that long hair and veils were the only options being considered by the early church. Third, there is no evidence for the common modern view that this passage addresses a cultural practice relevant only to 1<sup>st</sup> century Corinth. All commentators understood it to be universally authoritative and normative. Fourth, it clarifies that the words "wear long hair" (κομάω) and "long hair" (κόμη), in this passage, were understood to refer to long, uncut hair. When the topic is discussed, there is no evidence that a distinction between cutting and trimming was ever made.

#### Other early writers and medieval commentators

Other early writers whose comments on this text are extant include Ambrose (339-397), Pelagius (355-435),<sup>31</sup> Theodoret of Cyrus (393-457),<sup>32</sup> and an anonymous dialogue between a

---

<sup>26</sup> Ambrosiaster and Bray, *Commentaries on Romans and 1-2 Corinthians: Ambrosiaster*, 172. Migne, *PL*, 17:240C-D: "Potestatem velamen significavit, angelos episcopos dicit ... Mulier ergo idcirco debet velare caput; quia non est imago Dei, sed ut ostendatur subjecta. Et quia praevaricatio per illam inchoata est, hoc signum debet habere; ut in Ecclesia propter reverentiam episcopalem non habeat caput liberum."

<sup>27</sup> "It is usual in the monasteries of Egypt and Syria for virgins and widows who have vowed themselves to God and have renounced the world and have trodden under foot its pleasures, to ask the mothers of their communities to cut their hair ..." "Letter 147. To Sabinianus" in *Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers*, series 2, vol. 6, p. 292.

<sup>28</sup> "Letter 147. To Sabinianus" in *Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers*, series 2, vol. 6, p. 292.

<sup>29</sup> *Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers*, series 1, vol. 3, p. 158.

<sup>30</sup> Letter 245, *Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers*, series 1, vol. 1, p. 588.

<sup>31</sup> For a selection of quotations from Ambrose and Pelagius, see Gerald Bray, *1-2 Corinthians in Ancient Christian Commentary on Scripture*, 7:106-109, and Judith Kovacs, *1 Corinthians: Interpreted by Early Christian Commentators*, 179-184. References to the primary sources for these early church commentators are provided by Bray.

Montanist and an Orthodox Christian (c. 4<sup>th</sup> c.).<sup>33</sup> None of these early writers, however, offer anything substantially different from the common interpretation of the passage cited above. Since the western medieval commentators relied heavily upon the early church fathers, it is not surprising to find them offering no alternative interpretation of this passage.

In the eastern church the standard positions identified above continued to be taught. For example, John of Damascus (676-749) summarizes 1 Cor. 11:2-16 with “women are not permitted to pray or prophesy uncovered, and the men may not wear long hair,” and explains that the woman is to be covered as a symbol of submission, but the man is to have his head bare as a symbol of authority.<sup>34</sup> Similarly, Photius (820-886) and Theophylact (1100s) understand the covering to be a veil.<sup>35</sup>

### **Reformation, Post-Reformation, and Wesleyan Interpretation (A.D. 1500–1850)**

No essential change in the understanding of this passage is evident in major Reformation, Post-Reformation, or Wesleyan commentators: the covering is a material covering and men are not to have long hair and women are to have long hair.<sup>36</sup>

---

<sup>32</sup> Theodoret of Cyrus wrote very brief comments on 1 Cor. 11:3-8. With regard to verse 4 he mentions that men were wearing long hair and covering their heads: “For according to the Greek custom [the Corinthian men] were also wearing long hair, and having their heads covered they were praying to God. Author’s translation. Greek text: Κατὰ γὰρ τὸ Ἑλληνικὸν ἔθος καὶ κόμας εἶχον, καὶ τὰς κεφαλὰς κεκαλυμμένας ἔχοντες προσήυχοντο τῷ Θεῷ. *Interpretatio in xiv epistulas sancti Pauli* in J.-P. Migne, *Patrologiae cursus completus (series Graeca) (MPG)* 82 (Paris: Migne, 1857-1866), p. 312. The syntax of this sentence could possibly be construed to indicate that “wearing long hair” was the means by which their heads were covered. However, the rendering given above seems to fit best both syntax and the known interpretive tendencies of the time better.

With regard to verses 5-6 he wrote only one sentence: “[Paul] demonstrated sufficiently from [her] long hair that being covered is fitting for the woman” (author’s translation.) Greek text: Ἀποχρώντως ἔδειξεν ἀπὸ τῆς κόμης ἀρμόττον τῇ γυναικὶ τὸ καλύπτεσθαι. Ibid. What Theodoret meant by this statement is not entirely clear since verses five and six do not mention “long hair.” Possibly, he was inferring from Paul’s statements that, since it is a shame for a woman to shave or cut her hair short, she must have long hair, and, following what had become a standard line of argument, that a woman’s long hair was a sign that she should wear an additional material covering when praying or prophesying.

<sup>33</sup> Ficker, Gerhard. “Widerlegung Eines Montanisten.” *Zeitschrift für Kirchengeschichte* 26 (1905): 458-63. See Kovacs, *1 Corinthians*, 180-82, for an English translation of the dialogue section relevant to 1 Cor. 11.

<sup>34</sup> τὸ μὴ τὰς γυναῖκας ἀκατακαλύπτως εὔχεσθαι, ἢ προφητεύειν, καὶ τὸ μὴ τοὺς ἀνδρας κομᾶν. ... Σύμβολα δέδοται ἀνδρὶ καὶ γυναικὶ, πολλὰ μὲν καὶ ἕτερα· τῷ μὲν τῆς ἀρχῆς, τῇ δὲ τῆς ὑποταγῆς. Μετὰ δὲ ἐκείνων καὶ τοῦτο, τὸ ταύτην μὲν κατακαλύπτεσθαι, τοῦτον δὲ γυμνὴν ἔχειν τὴν κεφαλὴν. *Commentarii in epistulas Pauli* in Migne, *Patrologiae cursus completus (series Graeca)* (Paris: Migne, 1857-1866), vol. 95, p. 683.

<sup>35</sup> Photius: καὶ τῆς ὑποταγῆς σύμβολα τὸ ἐπὶ τῆς κεφαλῆς κάλυμμα φέρειν “to wear a veil upon the head is a symbol of submission” B. Laourdas and L.G. Westerink, eds., *Photii patriarchae Constantinopolitani Epistulae et Amphilochia*, in *Bibliotheca Scriptorum Graecorum et Romanorum Teubneriana* (Leipzig: Teubner, 1983-1985), Letter 210. Theophylact, according to Adam Clarke, notes “τὸ τοῦ ἐξουσιάζεσθαι σύμβολον, τουτέστι, τὸ κάλυμμα, the symbol of being under power, that is, a veil, or covering.” *The New Testament of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ* (Philadelphia: Thomas, Cowperthwait & Co., 1838), p. 132.

<sup>36</sup> For substantial bibliographies covering Latin, German, French, and English commentaries from 1500 to 1800, see William Smith and John Mee Fuller, *A Dictionary of the Bible*, 2nd ed., vol. 1, part 1 (London: John Murray, 1893), 656, 658-59; and Archibald Robertson and Alfred Plummer, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary*

**Philipp Melancthon** (1497-1560) lectured on 1 Corinthians at the University of Wittenberg in the summer and fall of 1521. Luther published his lectures as *Annotations on the First Epistle to the Corinthians* the following year. Melancthon had only brief comments on 11:2 and 11:7. Regarding the point of the passage, he writes, “But this is the point of the argument: a woman is a servant, therefore she should cover her head, but a man has no need to since he is free.”<sup>37</sup>

**Martin Luther** (1483-1546) did not give any extended treatment to the first half of 1 Corinthians 11 (vv. 2-16), though he often comments on the latter half of the chapter. His one passing reference to 1 Cor. 11:5<sup>38</sup> and his gloss on Gen. 3:16<sup>39</sup> indicate that he regarded Paul as requiring a material head covering.

**John Calvin** (1509-1564), in his commentary on 1 Corinthians 11:6, writes:

If anyone should now raise the objection that her hair, being her natural covering, is therefore all that is needed, Paul says that it is not, for it is a covering of such a kind that it requires another one to cover it! And from this we can hazard the likely conjecture that women, who had lovely hair, were in the habit of doing without any covering in order to show off its beauty. Therefore Paul intentionally remedies this fault, by bringing forward a view quite the opposite to theirs, that, instead of this making them attractive to men, and awakening men’s lust, it only makes themselves spectacles of unseemliness.<sup>40</sup>

**John Lightfoot** (1602-1675), a rabbinical scholar and vice-chancellor of the University of Cambridge, in his *Hebrew and Talmudical Exercitations on the First Epistle to the Corinthians*, concludes that Paul was addressing the Jewish custom of men veiling and women unveiling themselves when praying.<sup>41</sup>

Men therefore veiled themselves when they prayed, partly, for a sign of reverence towards God, partly, to show themselves ashamed before God, and unworthy to look upon him. In which thing that these Corinthians did yet Judaize, although now converted to Christianity, appears sufficiently from the correction of the apostle.

---

*on the First Epistle of St. Paul to the Corinthians*, 2nd ed., *International Critical Commentary* (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1914), pp. lxvii-lxxx.

<sup>37</sup> Philipp Melancthon, *Annotations on the First Epistle to the Corinthians*, trans. John Patrick Donnelly (Milwaukee: Marquette University Press, 1995), p. 117. Latin text: Haec autem argumenti summa est: Mulier serva est, debet igitur operire caput, vir contra non debet, cum sit liber (p. 116). Melancthon wrote a second Latin commentary on 1 Corinthians in 1559: *Argumentum et brevis explicatio prioris epistolae ad Corinthios*, in *Corpus Reformatorum* (Halle: C. A. Schwetschke, 1848), vol. 15. Unfortunately, it has not been translated into English.

<sup>38</sup> Helmut T. Lehmann, ed., *Luther’s Works*, vol. 36 (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1958), p. 152.

<sup>39</sup> “That is the veil or covering by which one may see that she is under her husband’s authority.” Quoted in Heinrich August Wilhelm Meyer, *Critical and Exegetical Handbook to the Epistles to the Corinthians*, trans. by D. Douglas Bannerman (New York: Funk & Wagnalls, 1890), p. 251.

<sup>40</sup> Jean Calvin, *The First Epistle of Paul the Apostle to the Corinthians*, trans. by John W. Fraser, ed. by David W. and Thomas F. Torrance (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1996), p. 231. So also, apparently, Theodore Beza in *The Bible, That Is, the Holy Scriptures Contained in the Olde and Newe Testament, Translated According to the Ebrew and Greeke, and Conferred With the Best Translations in Divers Languages. With Most Profitable Annotations Upon All the Hard Places*, trans. by Laurence Tomson (London: Deputies of C. Barker, 1599), *ad loc.* The annotations were written without attribution by Beza, Ioac Camer., P. Loseler Villerius.

<sup>41</sup> John Lightfoot, *Hebrew and Talmudical Exercitations on the First Epistle to the Corinthians* in *Horæ Hebraicæ et Talmudicæ*, vol. 4 (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1859), pp. 231-41.

**John Collings** (1623-1690), a non-conformist English Presbyterian, wrote the comments on 1 Corinthians in Matthew Poole's well-known *Annotations upon the Holy Bible*.<sup>42</sup> He understood Paul to forbid an external covering to men and to forbid women from praying or prophesying with loose, disheveled hair or without a veil:

by the uncovered head in this verse, is not only to be understood uncovered with some other covering besides her hair, but with her hair dishevelled, hanging loose at its length, for else it is not all one to have the head uncovered with a hat, or hood, or quouif, and to be shaven.<sup>43</sup>

**John Wesley** (1703-1791), in his *Explanatory Notes on the New Testament*, seems to regard the covering which is prohibited to men as including either a veil or long hair:

Covered—either with a veil or with long hair. Dishonoureth his head—St. Paul seems to mean, As in these eastern nations veiling the head is a badge of subjection, so a man who prays or prophesies with a veil on his head, reflects a dishonour on Christ, whose representative he is.”<sup>44</sup>

Wesley takes 11:5 to refer to a woman who prays or prophesies without her face veiled.<sup>45</sup>

**Adam Clarke** (1762-1832), in his commentary on the New Testament, assumes the standard position and regards a veil as the covering forbidden to men and required of women. He also concludes that this passage teaches that men are not to have long hair and that woman should.<sup>46</sup>

Nature certainly teaches us, by bestowing it, that it is proper for women to have long hair; and it is not so with men. The hair of the male rarely grows like that of a female, unless art is used, and even then it bears but a scanty proportion to the former. Hence it is truly womanish to have long hair, and it is a shame to the man who affects it.

Other contemporary Methodist commentators reflect the same position.<sup>47</sup>

---

<sup>42</sup> Matthew Poole, who died in 1679, had completed his annotations up through Isaiah. The various other authors who finished the commentary are noted in John Lewis, *A Complete History of the Several Translations of the Holy Bible and New Testament Into English*, 3<sup>rd</sup> ed. (London: Printed for W. Baynes, 1818), p. 346.

<sup>43</sup> John Collings in Matthew Poole, *Annotations upon the Holy Bible*, vol. 3 (orig., 1680; New York: Robert Carter & Brothers, 1863), 577. Collings inclined toward the veil view, but consistently introduced the possibility of ‘uncovered’ being loose, disheveled hair throughout his comments.

<sup>44</sup> John Wesley, *Explanatory Notes on the New Testament*, vol. 2 (orig. 1754; London: Thomas Cordeux, 1813), p. 431.

<sup>45</sup> “[a woman who] under the immediate impulse of the Spirit . . . prays or prophesies without a veil on her face, as it were disclaims subjection, and reflects dishonour on man, her head. For it is the same, in effect, as if she cut her hair short, and wore it in the distinguishing form of the men. In those ages, men wore their hair exceeding short, as appears from the ancient statues and pictures.: *Explanatory Notes*, p. 431. Similar comments may be found in contemporary non-Wesleyan commentators such as Simon Browne, who wrote the commentary on 1 Corinthians found in Matthew Henry's *Exposition of the Old and New Testaments* (1708–1710), Philip Doddridge, *The Family Expositor*, vol. 4 (London: John Wilson, 1739), pp. 298-301, and Johann Albrecht Bengel, *Gnomon of the New Testament*, trans. by Charlton Lewis and Marvin R. Vincent, vol. 2 (orig. 1742; reprint, Philadelphia: Perkinpine & Higgins, 1862), pp. 223-27.

<sup>46</sup> Adam Clarke, *The New Testament of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ* (Philadelphia: Thomas, Cowperthwait & Co., 1838), p. 133. Similarly, Hermann Olshausen, *Biblical Commentary on St. Paul's First and Second Epistles to the Corinthians*, trans. by John Edmund Cox. (orig. 1830-32; Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1855), pp. 174-175; Albert Barnes, *Notes, Explanatory and Practical, on the First Epistle of Paul to the Corinthians* (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1841), pp. 219-220.

### **Modern Interpretation (A.D. 1850–present)**

On the whole, modern interpreters deviated little from identifying the covering Paul requires as a veil or material headdress until the mid-twentieth century.<sup>48</sup> Although the view that the covering Paul required or forbade was itself long hair had been held popularly by various groups throughout the 20<sup>th</sup> century, Abel Isaakson was the first to offer the scholarly community an extended argument for this position in print.<sup>49</sup>

More recently, a growing number of scholars have come to the same conclusion, though often independently of Isaakson.<sup>50</sup> In a recent article on this passage, Francis Watson remarks

---

<sup>47</sup> Thomas Coke, *A Commentary on the New Testament*, vol. 6 (New York: Paul & Thomas, 1812), pp. 160, 240-41. Joseph Sutcliffe, *A Commentary on the New Testament*, vol. 2-B (London: Holdsworth and Ball, 1835), pp. 639-40. Joseph Benson, *The Holy Bible, Containing the Old and New Testaments (According to the Present Authorized Version) With Critical, Explanatory, and Practical Notes*, vol. 2 (New York: Lane & Tippet, 1839), pp. 177-79. Electronic searches in *The Arminian Magazine*, *The Wesleyan-Methodist Magazine*, *Methodist Review* and other Methodist periodical literature prior to 1850 disclose no substantive articles on the exegesis of this passage.

<sup>48</sup> For example, Charles Hodge, *An Exposition of the First Epistle to the Corinthians* (New York: R. Carter, 1857), p. 207; H. Meyer, *Critical and Exegetical Handbook to the Epistles to the Corinthians* (orig. 1869; New York: Funk & Wagnalls, 1890), p. 248; A. R. Faussett in *A Commentary, Critical and Explanatory, on the Old and New Testaments*, vol. 2 (Hartford: S. S. Scranton, 1871), pp. 283-85; Henry Alford, *The Greek Testament*, vol. 2 (Boston: Lee, Shepard, and Dillingham, 1873), p. 566. See Mercandante and Schutt for surveys of additional 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> century commentators.

<sup>49</sup> Abel Isaakson, *Marriage and Ministry in the New Temple. A Study with Special Reference to Mt. 19:3-12 and 1 Cor. 11:3-16* (Lund: C.W.K. Gleerup, 1965), esp. 166-68. Isaakson offered five arguments in favor of his position: (1) “Contemporary Judaism knew nothing of any prohibition against a man having his head covered at public worship. On the contrary, there were in the sacred writings specific ordinances that the priests should wear different kinds of headgear at public worship (see, for example, Exod. 28:36-40; Ezek. 44:18)”; (2) “the Greek phrase ἀκατακάλυπτω τῆ κεφαλῆ corresponds to the Hebrew phrase ראש מנוול or ראש פרוני = (having loose hair hanging down). This can be seen from the fact that the LXX uses the same Greek phrase to render this Hebrew expression [in Lev. 13:45 and Num. 5:18]”; (3) “Since the whole passage deals with the question of men’s and women’s hair, when they appear at public worship, the missing object of ἔχων must be τῆν κόμη, which can easily be supplemented from the context (cf. vv. 14-15); (4) “In v. 14 it is the man’s long hair in particular which is degrading to him; (5) Paul clearly chose this unusual expression for long hair bearing in mind the part the word κεφαλῆ plays in his exposition. In 1947, Stefan Lösch made a similar argument in “Christliche Frauen in Corinth (1 Cor. 11.2–16): Ein neuer Lösungsversuch,” *ThQ* 127 (1947) 216–61. However, it received little attention.

<sup>50</sup> Philip B. Payne, “Wild Hair and Gender Equality in 1 Corinthians 11:2-16,” *Priscilla Papers* 20, no. 3 (2006): 9-18; Alan F. Johnson, *1 Corinthians*, ed. Grant R. Osborne, *The IVP New Testament Commentary Series* (Downers Grove: InterVarsity, 2004); Giancarlo Biguzzi, *Velo e silenzio. Paolo e la donna in 1Cor 11,2-16 e 14,33b-36* (SupplRivBib, 37; Bologna, 2001); Marlis Gielen, “Beten und Prophezeien mit unverhülltem Kopf? Die Kontroverse zwischen Paulus und der korinthischen Gemeinde um die Wahrung der Geschlechtsrollensymbolik in 1 Kor 11,2-16,” *ZNW* 90.3-4 (1999): 220-249; Raymond Collins, *First Corinthians (Sacra Pagina Series 7; Collegeville, Minnesota: The Liturgical Press, 1999)*; J. D. G. Dunn, *The Theology of Paul the Apostle* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1998), 590-91; Horsley, *1 Corinthians*, Abingdon New Testament Commentary (Nashville: Abingdon, 1998), 153-54; David E. Blattenberger III, *Rethinking 1 Corinthians 11.2-16 Through Archaeological and Moral-rhetorical Analysis* (Lewiston, NY: E. Mellen Press, 1997). Judith M. Gundry-Volf, “Gender and Creation in 1 Corinthians 11:2-16: A Study in Paul’s Theological Method,” in *Evangelium, Schriftauslegung, Kirche* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1997), 151-71; Wolfgang Schrage, *Der erste Brief an die Korinther (1 Kor 6,12-11,16)*, 491-94; Alan Padgett, “The Significance of ἀντί in 1 Corinthians 11:15,” *Tyndale Bulletin* 45 (1994): 181-7; Jerome Murphy-O’Connor, “1 Corinthians 11:2-16 Once Again,” *CBQ* 50 (1988): 265-74; “Sex and Logic in

that this understanding is beginning to acquire the status of “a broad consensus in recent scholarship.”<sup>51</sup> One may further subdivide this position into those who regard Paul’s concern as one of hair style on both men and women,<sup>52</sup> or those who regard hair condition—men must not have long hair, which is feminine, and women must not allow their hair to hang loose, but put it up on their heads—as the issue at stake.<sup>53</sup> On the other hand, the traditional way of reading this passage as dealing with a material head-covering of some sort continues to have its contemporary supporters.<sup>54</sup>

### ***An Interpretation of the History of Interpretation***

Given the broad consensus of the history of interpretation on this passage, how does one justify the assertion that hair alone is the covering at issue? This is certainly a fair question, and one that should be addressed directly.

First, it is important to realize that the “hair-only” position is not an abandonment of the church’s historic understanding of this passage. The church fathers and early commentators surveyed above consistently understood that Paul, and thus God, forbade men to have long hair

---

1 Corinthians 11:2-16,” *CBQ* 42 (1980): 482-500; J. Keir Howard, “Neither Male nor Female: An Examination of the Status of Women in the New Testament,” *The Evangelical Quarterly* 55 (1983): 31-42; Stephen A. Reynolds, “Colloquium,” *WTJ* 36 (1973): 90-91; James B. Hurley, “Did Paul require Veils or the Silence of Women: A Consideration of 1 Cor 11:2-16 and 14:33b-36,” *WTJ* 35 (1973): 190-220; William J. Martin, “1 Corinthians 11:2-16: An Interpretation,” in *Apostolic History and the Gospel*, ed. Gasque-Martin (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans, 1970), 231-41. For others holding this view, see Jason David BeDuhn, “‘Because of the Angels’: Unveiling Paul’s Anthropology in 1 Corinthians 11,” *JBL* 118 (1999): 296 n. 7.

<sup>51</sup> Francis Watson, “The Authority of the Voice: A Theological Reading of 1 Cor 11.2-16,” *NTS* 46 (2000): 534 n. 20. The fact that Preston Massey’s 2007 *NTS* article focuses on refuting this position suggests the strength it has gained in recent scholarship. Preston T. Massey, “The Meaning of *κατακαλύπτω* and *κατὰ κεφαλῆς ἔχων* in 1 Corinthians 11.2–16,” *New Testament Studies*, 53.4 (2007): 502-523.

<sup>52</sup> Payne, “Wild Hair and Gender Equality in 1 Corinthians 11:2-16”; Johnson, *1 Corinthians*; Gundry-Volf, “Gender and Creation in 1 Corinthians 11:2-16”; Dunn, *The Theology of Paul the Apostle*; Horsley, *1 Corinthians*; Howard, “Neither Male nor Female”; Hurley, “Did Paul Require Veils or the Silence of Women”; Isaakson, *Marriage and Ministry in the New Temple*.

<sup>53</sup> Specifically, men must not let their hair grow uncut, and women should not cut their hair, which is their covering, but let it grow long. Raymond Collins, *First Corinthians*, 407; Marlis Gielen, “Beten und Prophezeien mit unverhülltem Kopf?”; Reynolds, “Colloquium”; Blattenberger, *Rethinking 1 Corinthians 11.2-16* (with some hesitation between the long hair and hairstyle views); W. J. Martin, “1 Corinthians 11:2-16: An Interpretation.” Although the emphasis of Martin’s article is that the woman is not to cut her hair, he qualifies this by asserting there just needs to be an unambiguous distinction between the gender’s hair (239, fn. 19). Linda Belleville analyzes these authors similarly, including them under the view she describes as “The Corinthian men were letting their hair grow long, while the women were cutting theirs into boyishly short, unruly locks.” “*Κεφαλή* and the Thorny Issue of Headcovering in 1 Corinthians 11:2-16,” in *Paul and the Corinthians: Studies on a Community in Conflict: Essays in Honour of Margaret Thrall* (Leiden: Brill, 2003), 217.

<sup>54</sup> Among the most recent advocates of this view are Gordon Fee, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians*, NICNT; Ben Witherington III, *Conflict & Community in Corinth: A Socio-rhetorical Commentary on 1 and 2 Corinthians* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1995), 232; David E. Garland, *1 Corinthians*, Baker Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2003), 506. Although Anthony C. Thiselton considers the evidence strong that Paul’s concern is long hair on men and unloosed hair on women, he, nonetheless, regards the material head-covering view as “more probable.” *The First Epistle to the Corinthians: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, New International Greek Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2000), 825.



and expected it of women. The position espoused here stands in continuity with this aspect of church's historic position, while dissenting from the common understanding that an additional covering (the veil) is also in view.

Second, several factors provide a plausible explanation for what I regard as a misunderstanding of Paul's language regarding a covering: (1) the ambiguity of Paul's language, (2) the Mediterranean cultural ethos, (3) early glosses in Greek manuscripts and early translations of the passage in Latin and Coptic, (4) the influence of Irenaeus and Tertullian, and (5) inattention to Paul's theological argumentation in 1 Cor. 11:7.

### **The Ambiguity of Paul's language**

The language Paul uses is unusual in some places and ambiguous in others. For example, the phrase in v. 4 "having on/down head" (κατὰ κεφαλῆς ἔχων) lacks an explicit direct object to identify what is "down from the head." Since this is the only occurrence of this phrase without an explicit direct object in all extant Greek literature up to and including the first century A.D.,<sup>55</sup> it is not a simple matter to determine its meaning.

The fact that Basil and Chrysostom, both native Greek speakers, understood this phrase differently attests to its ambiguity. In addition, the language Paul uses, although admittedly ambiguous, readily lends itself to being understood in reference to a material covering. As Preston Massey and others have demonstrated, the καλύπτω word group was commonly used in reference to material coverings being on or not on the head.<sup>56</sup> The absence of any information regarding the precise nature of what was going on in Corinth compounds the difficulty of understanding Paul's language.

### **The Mediterranean cultural ethos**

Jewish, Greek, and Roman cultures all supported the use of a veil for feminine modesty.<sup>57</sup> Although not universally required, when modesty was a consideration, the veil was almost universally considered appropriate.<sup>58</sup> Precisely who was to wear one (virgin or married), and where it should be worn (in public only or both in public and in private) were matters of cultural diversity.

---

<sup>55</sup> A TLG morphological search (performed in October 2011) for any form of ἔχων within one line of the phrase κατὰ κεφαλῆς in any text from the 8<sup>th</sup> c. B.C. through 1<sup>st</sup> c. AD returned no relevant examples from the extant texts of 1344 authors.

<sup>56</sup> Massey, "The Meaning of κατακαλύπτω and κατὰ κεφαλῆς ἔχων in 1 Corinthians 11.2–16," 502-523. So also, Witherington, 233;

<sup>57</sup> For an extended demonstration of Greek use of the veil in pre-classical, classical, and post-classical periods of Greek culture, see Preston Massey, "The Veil and the Voice: A Study of Female Beauty and Male Attraction in Ancient Greece" (PhD diss., Indiana University, 2006), pp. 202-51; Lloyd Llewellyn-Jones, *Aphrodite's Tortoise: The Veiled Woman of Ancient Greece* (Oakville, CT: David Brown Book Co., 2003), esp. 55-80. See also, Blattenberger, *Rethinking 1 Corinthians 11.2-16*.

<sup>58</sup> Massey's analysis of Greek literature up to the first century A.D. identifies seven different meanings which may attach to the wearing of a veil (1) a veil symbolizes a woman is married, (2) a veil maintains a woman's modesty, (3) a veil communicates marital fidelity, (4) a veil protects a woman from undesired gazes, (5) a veil may be used to show respect to a man, (6) a veil functioned as a gender-distinguishing piece of clothing, and (7) a veil may be used to adorn or beautify. The non-use of the veil could signal grief at a death, disrespect to a man, or promiscuous availability and was considered shameful. "The Veil and the Voice," pp. 252-80.

Further, it has become increasingly well-documented that it was a common 1<sup>st</sup> c. Roman practice for men to veil their heads when worshipping.<sup>59</sup> Although the evidence for the precise origin of the use of the *tallith* by Jews is inconclusive, the OT practice by priests certainly creates a background amenable to the practice, and the Talmud may well have canonized practices whose origin dates well before the 3<sup>rd</sup> century AD. The use of some form of head-covering for various purposes throughout the Roman Empire in combination with the common usage of elements of Paul’s language provides a plausible setting in which Paul’s instructions could fairly easily be construed to be addressing veiling concerns.

#### Early Glosses and Translations of 1 Cor. 11:10

As noted previously, Irenaeus (c. 120-202) cites 1 Cor. 11:10 as “A woman ought to have a veil upon her head, because of the angels.”<sup>60</sup> If Irenaeus were simply quoting the text the way the Valentinians did, he might be expected to point out their error. Since he does not, as noted in Schaff and also suggested by Dillon and Unger,<sup>61</sup> this may indicate that an early marginal gloss (explanation) for the word “authority” (ἐξουσίαν) actually made it into the text of some early copies of Paul’s letter to the Corinthians.<sup>62</sup> Given the way Irenaeus cites this verse, it is possible that his copy of 1 Corinthians had been corrupted and read “veil” (κάλυμμα) instead of “authority” (ἐξουσίαν) in 11:10.

There are currently no extant copies of 1 Corinthians in Greek that have “veil” (κάλυμμα) in verse 10.<sup>63</sup> This fact suggests perhaps that the dispersal of such copies was not wide spread. There are, however, early translations that have the word *veil* instead of *authority* in verse 10. Adam Clarke notes that “some copies of the Itala (Old Latin) have also *velamen*, a veil. . . and in an ancient edition of the Vulgate, . . . the verse stands thus: *Ideo debet mulier velamen habere*

---

<sup>59</sup> David W. J. Gill, “The Importance of Roman Portraiture for Head-coverings in 1 Corinthians 11:2-16.” *Tyndale Bulletin* 41, no. 2 (1990): 245-260; Richard Oster, “Use, Misuse and Neglect of Archaeological Evidence in Some Modern Works on 1 Corinthians (1Cor 7,1-5; 8,10; 11,2-16; 12,14-26).” *Zeitschrift für die Neutestamentliche Wissenschaft* 83 (1992): 52-73; Ben Witherington III, *Conflict & Community in Corinth: A Socio-Rhetorical Commentary on 1 and 2 Corinthians* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1995); Craig S. Keener, *1-2 Corinthians* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2005).

<sup>60</sup> Interestingly, Epiphanius quotes Irenaeus extensively in his *Panarion* and preserves Irenaeus’ quotation of 1 Cor. 11:10 precisely as found in Irenaeus’ *Against Heresies*: δεῑ την̄ γυνᾱϊκᾱ κάλυμμᾱ ἔχειν ἐπὶ τῆς̄ κεφαλῆς̄ διὰ τοὺς̄ ἀγγέλους̄. K. Holl, *Epiphanius, Ancoratus und Panarion in Die griechischen christlichen Schriftsteller* (Leipzig: Hinrichs, 1915), vol. 1, p. 423.

<sup>61</sup> Schaff, *Ante-Nicene Fathers*, vol. 1, p. 327. Unger and Dillon confirm that Irenaeus’s text reads *kalumma* at this point. They conclude that *kalumma* “must have been in the Western text that the Gnostics used, or they changed from power to veil according to the sense of the symbol to fit their purpose.” *St. Irenaeus of Lyons: Against the Heresies*, 173-74.

<sup>62</sup> Just as we make marginal notes in books today, it was not unusual for early Christians to make marginal comments in their copies of New Testament manuscripts. When these manuscripts were copied later, sometimes the copyist would mistake a marginal note for a marginal correction, and insert into the text or replace the original text with the marginal text. Bruce M. Metzger, *The Text of the New Testament: Its Transmission, Corruption, and Restoration*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1992), 194-95.

<sup>63</sup> Reuben J. Swanson, ed., *New Testament Greek Manuscripts: 1 Corinthians* (Wheaton: Tyndale House Publishers, 2003), 165. So also NA<sup>27</sup>. Swanson does note four manuscripts that have *κάλυμμα* in v. 4; however, all of these mss date from 9<sup>th</sup> c. or later.

*super caput suum: et propter angelos.*”<sup>64</sup> As noted in the UBS<sup>4</sup> apparatus, part of the Bohairic Coptic tradition reads *veil* as well.<sup>65</sup> Given the relative literalness of this translation, it is likely that the Greek manuscript(s) used to produce these translations had *κάλυμμα* in verse 10.

If Greek manuscripts were circulating which read *κάλυμμα*, *veil*, instead of *ἐξουσίαν*, *authority*, such manuscripts would have effectively rendered any other interpretive options impossible for those who read them. Should anyone have suggested a different understanding of this passage, the response would have been, “Paul says ‘veil,’ so it has to be about veils.”

### **The Influence of Irenaeus and Tertullian**

Both Irenaeus and Tertullian exercised considerable influence over Christian interpretive consensus as it developed in the 3<sup>rd</sup> century, particularly in the West. The influence of both men is evident in the frequency with which they are cited by contemporary and subsequent church fathers and in church councils. Tertullian in particular was very vocal in insisting that women be veiled at all times, not merely when worshipping. The forcefulness of their writings as well as the breadth of their influence were factors contributing to the dominance of the material-covering view.

### **Inattention to Paul’s Theological Argumentation**

An exploration of extant ancient Christian commentary on 1 Corinthians 11:7 discovers extended discussions of what it means for men to be in the image of God, whether women share the image of God, what the image and glory of God are and how man is the glory of God. What is missing from ancient commentaries is consideration of how verse seven supports and relates to Paul’s theological argument within the passage as a whole. Specifically, it appears that no attention was given to the theological implications of Paul’s argument in 1 Cor. 11:7 for the divinely required practice of priests wearing a material head-covering (Exod. 28:4, 40).<sup>66</sup> Paul’s argument that man’s status as the glory of God obligates him to pray and prophesy with an uncovered head flies directly in the face of God’s design of caps and turbans for those leading His people in worship—if the covering to which Paul refers is a material head covering.

The implications of Paul’s statement for Exodus 28:4, 40 appears to have been in ancient commentators’ “blindspot” as they traveled through this text. Potential explanations for this oversight include the (1) de-emphasis on the OT that resulted from hostility between the synagogue and the church in first and second centuries,<sup>67</sup> (2) the early rise of allegorical readings of Scripture, and the OT especially, that minimized attention to the literal meaning of the text,

---

<sup>64</sup> Clarke, *The New Testament of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ*, 132. The quality of Old Latin translations was sufficiently varied that Jerome was commissioned to produce a faithful translation into Latin. Jerome’s translation is known as the Vulgate.

<sup>65</sup> Aland, Barbara, et al., eds., *The Greek New Testament*, 4<sup>th</sup> rev. ed. (Westphalia: United Bible Societies, 2001), 592.

<sup>66</sup> Almost all the discussion of 1 Cor. 11:7 revolves around the significance of the man as the image and glory of God and woman as the glory of man. For example, see Chrysostom, *Homily 26* (11:2-16), under verse 7, *Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers*, series 1, vol. 12, p. 153.

<sup>67</sup> For further discussion, see Craig A. Evans, “Christianity and Judaism: Parting of the Ways,” in *The Dictionary of the Later New Testament and its Developments* (Downers Grove: IVP Academic, 1997), pp. 159-170, and Philip S. Alexander, “‘The Parting of the Ways’ from the Perspective of Rabbinic Judaism,” in *Parting of the Ways: Jews and Christians* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1999), pp. 1-26.

and (3) theological issues relating to Christology and the meaning of man as the image of God that obscured the implications of Exodus 28 for this text. The reasons for lack of attention to this issue probably varied from person to person. Regardless, this absence of wholistic attention to the way in which Paul develops his theological argument made it easier to read the text as requiring a material covering.

### **Conclusion**

The momentum of the Mediterranean cultural ethos in combination with Paul's ambiguous language would have been strongly in the direction of a material head-covering. Factoring in the additional possibility that the word *veil* was mistakenly introduced into early copies of 1 Corinthians, the influence of Irenaeus and Tertullian on the early church's understanding of this passage, and the general inattention to Paul's theological argumentation, it is hardly surprising that the history of interpretation is what it is. What is interesting is evidence in Epiphanius and Chrysostom that elements of the passage were understood by some in the way I am arguing. Taken together these factors provide a plausible explanation for the development of the dominant understanding of this passage.

# Witherington & Massey *versus* Chrysostom & Epiphanius: Long Hair Prohibited as Covering in 1 Cor 11:4, 7<sup>1</sup>

A. Philip Brown II  
God's Bible School & College

Every man who prays or prophesies having on head dishonors his head, ...  
For indeed a man ought not to cover his head, because he is the image and glory of God,  
(1 Cor 11:4, 7)

---

## Summary

**Part 1:** Two scholars argue in print that 1 Cor. 11 must be talking about a material covering, and that it can't be talking about hair because the key words Paul uses always refer to a material covering. If this is true, then my position is a non-option. I examine the evidence these scholars offer and demonstrate that they have misread the evidence, concluding that these words are *not* always or necessarily used to refer to a material covering.

**Part 2:** I look at the words that are used for long hair and demonstrate that in both Classical (pre 300 BC) and Koine (300 BC – 200 AD) Greek, one of the meanings of these words is “uncut hair.” Since (a) that meaning is possible, and (b) it fits the context better than other options, and (c) other ancient interpreters understood Paul to be talking about uncut hair as well, there appears to be sufficient reasons to accept “uncut hair” as the meaning that Paul intended.

---

## Introduction

A survey of available church fathers' interpretations of 1 Cor 11:4 and 7 exposes two significant interpreters, Chrysostom and Epiphanius, who diverged from the standard “the-covering-is-a-veil” consensus<sup>2</sup> into closer alignment with an emerging modern consensus: the covering is hair.<sup>3</sup> Two recent surveys of extra-biblical Hellenistic data by Ben Witherington III and Preston Massey claim that the phrase “having on head” in 1 Cor 11:4 necessarily refers to the wearing of a material head covering.<sup>4</sup> The **first section** of this essay argues 1) that these surveys misread the extra-biblical data,<sup>5</sup> 2) that examples of the word “uncut hair” (*kóme*) can be the direct object of the verb “have” 3) that Paul was likely referring to “uncut hair” in verse four, 4) that two significant church fathers understood the covering to which Paul refers to be or include “uncut hair,” and 5) that data in the context of 1 Cor. 11:2-16 better supports understanding “uncut hair” as the covering Paul has in mind.

The **second section** 1) provides evidence from Greek literature that both of the key words used in 1 Cor 11 for hair may refer to *uncut* hair, 2) demonstrates that all available evidence from the church fathers indicates that they understood these terms in 1 Cor. 11 to refer to uncut hair, and 3) concludes by offering an explanation for how why almost all the church fathers understood Paul to be addressing veils and not hair in 1 Cor. 11:4-12.

## An Analysis of “having on head” in Extra-Biblical Literature

Ben Witherington III and Preston Massey have each argued separately from extra-biblical linguistic evidence that Paul's language in 1 Cor 11:4-7 cannot refer to anything other than a material head-covering. The following section of this essay addresses the question does the phrase in v. 4 “having on *his*” necessarily to refer to a material head-covering?

The phrase translated “having on head” (*kata kephales echon*) reads literally “on (the) head having.” This phrase occurs nowhere else in the NT or the Septuagint. A search of the *Thesaurus Linguae Graecae*<sup>6</sup> and the Duke Databank of Documentary Papyri<sup>7</sup> reveals that this exact construction occurs nowhere else in extant Greek literature.<sup>8</sup> This lack of evidence makes it difficult to discern Paul’s meaning.

### Data Advanced by Ben Witherington

In 1995 Ben Witherington stated in his commentary on 1 Corinthians,

the discussions by Murphy-O’Connor, Hurley, Padgett, and others of hair and hairstyles are quite beside the point. The issue is headcoverings. . . . Plutarch uses the same phrase that Paul does, *kata kephales*, to refer to something resting on the head, not hair and much less long, flowing hair (*Regum* 200F; *Aitia Romana* 267C; *Vitae Decem Oratorae* 842B; *Pyrrhus* 399B; *Pompeius* 640C; *Caesar* 739D).<sup>9</sup>

The extended list of citations Witherington offers from Plutarch<sup>10</sup> gives the impression of a substantial array of evidence for the material-covering position. There are, however, several problems with this evidence.

The first problem is that two of the cited sources are irrelevant: *Vitae Decem Oratorae* 842B and *Pyrrhus* 399B. In both of these texts the phrase “on the head” (*kata tes kephales*) occurs in the context of someone being struck on the head, in the first with a staff and the second with a sword.<sup>11</sup> Neither have anything to do with something resting on the head.

Second, although the rest of the texts cited from Plutarch do provide partial parallels to Paul’s construction, each of them has one significant difference.

(1) Plutarch’s *Moralia*, “Sayings of Romans,” provides the closest parallel to 1 Cor 11:4. Recounting Scipio the Younger’s arrival in Alexandria to inspect it for the Roman Senate, Plutarch says, “after disembarking, he was walking with his toga covering his head.”<sup>12</sup> Although this statement has been often cited as confirmation that Paul was referring to a material head covering,<sup>13</sup> most commentators ignore the fact that Plutarch supplies “toga” as the explicit object of “covering,” whereas Paul does not. In other words, Plutarch explicitly states that a garment was covering Scipio’s head.

(2) In his *Life of Pompey*, Plutarch describes Demetrius as: “that fellow would be already reclining at table in great state, having the hood of his toga drawn down behind his ears.”<sup>14</sup> Again, in contrast with Paul’s language, the verb “having” has “toga” as its explicit direct object.

(3) In his *Life of Caesar*, Plutarch describes Caesar’s reaction when he realized Brutus was against him: “but when he saw Brutus with his sword drawn in his hand, then he pulled his garment over his head, and made no more resistance.”<sup>15</sup> In this instance, the verb “pulled” has “garment” as its explicit direct object.

(4) In his *Roman Questions*, Plutarch recounts the supposed reasons why the first three divorces in Roman history took place: “the second was Sulpicius Gallus, because he saw his wife pull her cloak over her head.”<sup>16</sup> As in the previous example, “cloak” is the explicit direct object of “pull.”

In each of the four examples above, the construction “on the head” (*kata kephales*) is not used by itself to indicate something resting on the head as was claimed.<sup>17</sup> Rather it is used to indicate where the person’s garment was being worn. In every case the verbs “to have” and “to draw” have “toga, garment” as their explicit direct object which identified what was being worn on or drawn over the head (*kata kephales*).

Third, Witherington does not inform his reader that the phrase *kata tes kephales* by itself has a wide range of usages, many of them having nothing to do with material head coverings or even “something resting on the head.”<sup>18</sup> For example, it may mean “at the head” as in—“he killed his brother in a match by throwing a discus at his head.”<sup>19</sup> It may mean “headlong, head first” as in—“[Gaius] might be cast down headlong.”<sup>20</sup> Or, it may mean “on the head” as in—“I would take pickle sauce and go [and] pour it on his head.”<sup>21</sup> The fact that *kata tes kephales* is used in a broad variety of contexts is significant because it undermines the claim that this phrase transparently refers to a material head-covering.

Finally, it is particularly noteworthy that when Plutarch discusses why Romans cover their heads when worshipping<sup>22</sup> and why Roman sons cover their heads but daughter go with uncovered heads when escorting their dead parents to the grave,<sup>23</sup> the phrase “on the head” with or without “having” is entirely absent.<sup>24</sup> In these contexts, none of the vocabulary Plutarch uses occurs in 1 Cor 11. In other words, in the very context in which it would be most natural for Plutarch to use *kata kephales* if it normally referred to a head covered with something material, he does not use the phrase.

### Data Advanced by Preston Massey

In his 2007 article, under the section “The Meaning of *kata kephales echon*,” Preston Massey makes the following claim regarding the phrase “having on head”: “though generally used with an object (but understood without the object), always implies some kind of garment or cloth coming down from the head.”<sup>25</sup> He then footnotes (n. 71) the following statement:

Besides the references already cited, *kata tes kephales to himation* (a covering down from the head) may be found in the following texts: Dionysius of Halicarnassus *The Roman Antiquities* III.71, VI.3.3, XI.26.4, XII.16.4, XV.9.7, XIX.8.3; Plutarch *Pompey* XL.4; *Caesar* LXVI.12 *The Sayings of the Romans* 200F; *The Roman Questions* 266C and 267C; *Fortune of the Romans* 319C (which has the similar *apheilen apo tes kephales to himation*; and Josephus, *Ant.* III.270.<sup>26</sup>

Contrary to Massey’s claim, the phrase *kata tes kephales* does not occur in the available Greek literature unless it has an explicit direct object. It is, therefore, baseless to claim that it is “understood without the object” to always imply “some kind of garment or cloth coming down from the head.” Nonetheless, Massey’s footnote appears to be an impressive list of citations supporting his conclusion that the phrase “having on head” refers to a material covering.

Upon inspection, however, two major problems appear. First, of the six references to Dionysius of Halicarnassus, three do not contain the phrase as was claimed. In fact, they have nothing to do with head coverings at all.<sup>27</sup> Specifically, in one, Dionysius refers to Postumius “setting up camp high above” (lit. on the head of) his enemies<sup>28</sup>; the second describes how Siccus’ enemies got above him and rolled stones on him, killing him<sup>29</sup>; and the third describes Meton being thrown out of the theater head first.<sup>30</sup>

The second problem is that citing texts that contain terms such as “toga” or “garment” does nothing to prove that the phrase *kata tes kephales*, which does not contain such terms, refers to a material covering. That is similar to saying that since the phrase “with a hat on his head” occurs frequently in English literature, the blank in the phrase “with \_\_\_\_\_ on his head” must refer to a hat.

Less significant, but still noteworthy, the other texts Massey cites do not contain the exact phrase under question but use language similar to that found in the Plutarch examples previously discussed.<sup>31</sup>

(5) In his *Roman Antiquities*, Dionysius of Halicarnassus describes a statue as: “This statue ... was shorter than a man of average stature, having a mantle over the head.”<sup>32</sup> Here “mantle,” a term related to the word “covering” used in 1 Cor 11:15 (*peribolaion*), is used rather than “toga.” It is significant that Dionysius supplied an explicit direct object for “having,” indicating what was on the head of the statue.

(6) In chapter 12 in *Roman Antiquities*, Dionysius describes Camillos preparing to depart after praying: “Camillos ... since he had prayed and had drawn his garment over his head, desired to turn ...”<sup>33</sup> Here the verb “had drawn” has “garment” as its explicit direct object and “over the head” (*kata tes kephales*) indicates where Camillos drew his garment.

(7) In chapter 15 in *Roman Antiquities*, Dionysius describes a Roman praying: “When he was about to depart, he both drew his garment over his head and held up his hands to the sky, as the custom is, and made prayer to the gods.”<sup>34</sup> Once again the direct object “garment” of the verb “drew” is explicit.

From all the foregoing evidence, it should be clear that *kata kephales* is the natural phrase that would be used to describe where a person would wear a veil or mantle—“on the head.” On the other hand, where else but “on the head” would one wear hair? The fact that Hellenistic writers regularly make use of this phrase in non-veiling contexts,<sup>35</sup> without any qualification to indicate that a material covering is not in view, provides solid evidence that “on the head” does not normally indicate or imply a condition of having the head covered with anything. Massey’s assertion that “on the head having” (*kata kephales echon*) “always implies some kind of garment or cloth coming down from the head” is incorrect.<sup>36</sup>

### ***Kata kephales* in the Septuagint**

There is one occurrence of the phrase “on the head” as a description of a covered head in the Septuagint. In Esther 6:12, Haman is described as hurrying home mourning, with his head covered. The Septuagint translates the Hebrew phrase “head being covered” with *kata kephales*.

Several items are noteworthy here. First, the phrase *kata kephales* was not used with the verb *echo* as in 1 Cor 11:4. Second, the fact that one early Greek copy of the Septuagint has a scribal correction which corrects *kata kephales* to *katakekalummenos kephalen* (“having an covered head”) suggests that at least one Greek scribe felt that *kata kephales* was too ambiguous a rendering and changed it to a more explicit construction. In other words, Esth. 6:12 suggests that *kata kephales* may be used to refer to “a covered head.” However, in light of all the preceding evidence, “a covered head” is neither the necessary meaning nor the normal usage of



this phrase. Further, it is illegitimate to isolate the investigation of *kata kephales* from its relationship to the verb *echo*.<sup>37</sup>

### Conclusion regarding “having on head”

What should we conclude from the foregoing analysis? First, it is clear that the precise phrase Paul used is unusual.<sup>38</sup> Second, as Esther 6:12 shows, the phrase *kata kephales* without the verb *echo* could be used to refer to a covered head. However, since Paul does not use this phrase by itself, the parallel while suggestive is not conclusive. Third, in regard to the examples found in Plutarch and Dionysius, in each case where the key verbs (*echo*, *helko*, *ephelko*) occur with *kata kephales*, they invariably have an explicit object such as “toga,” “garment,” or “mantel.” Paul, on the other hand, does not supply an explicit object for *echo*.

### *Kóme* as the Direct Object of *echo*

In both Classical and Hellenistic Greek the verb “have” (*echo*) takes “hair, long hair” (*kóme*) as a direct object to describe a person who has let their hair grow long. For example,

- 1) In his play entitled *Birds* Aristophanes writes: “Since then you are a slave, [how is that] you have long hair (*kóme echo*)?”<sup>39</sup>
- 2) In his play entitled *Clouds*, Aristophanes has a father lament that he is being ruined by his son who “has long hair (*kóme echo*) and races horses and chariots.”<sup>40</sup>
- 3) In “Proverbs which Alexandrus Used,” Plutarch describes a long-haired boxer, “who being mocked as weak by his opponents since he had long hair (*kóme echo*), having entered the competition, overcame them.”<sup>41</sup>
- 4) A commentator on Aristotle from the 1-2 c. B.C. describes a group of people whose men had long hair (*kóme echo*) down to their knees and below.<sup>42</sup>

These examples demonstrate that it is neither impossible nor even unlikely that the intended object of “having” (*echo*) in the phrase “having on his head” (*kata kephales echo*) is “long hair” (*kóme*). This inference appears to be supported by Paul’s use of this term in vv. 14-15.

The previous examples lead us to consider two early church interpreters who understood the covering Paul was forbidding to men to include long hair or to be long hair.

### John Chrysostom on 1 Corinthians 11:4

John Chrysostom (A.D. 347-407) was an elder at the church in Antioch where he earned a reputation as a “golden-mouthed” preacher. He was later appointed, against his will, archbishop of Constantinople. During his time in Antioch he preached a series of expository sermons through 1 Corinthians and devoted an entire sermon to 1 Cor 11:2-16. In reference to verse four, Chrysostom understood Paul to be addressing men who were wearing long hair and were covering their heads with a material covering when praying. He says, “the men went so far as to wear long hair as [though] having spent their time in philosophy, and covered their heads when praying and prophesying, each of which was a Grecian custom.”<sup>43</sup>

Chrysostom argues that Paul is forbidding men from wearing anything on their heads, including long hair:

Now regarding the man, it is no longer about a covering but about wearing long hair, that [Paul] forms his discourse. To be covered then [Paul] only forbids, when a man is praying; but wearing

long hair he discourages at all times. ... For this reason also [Paul] said at the beginning, “Every man praying or prophesying, having any thing on his head, dishonoreth his head.” He did not say, “covered,” but “having any thing on his head;” signifying that even if a man should pray with a bare head, yet if he have long hair, he is like one who is covered [with a material covering]. “For the hair,” says [Paul], “is given for a covering.”<sup>44</sup>

Three aspects of Chrysostom’s explanation of verse four are particularly noteworthy. First, He contrasts “having on head” (*kata kephales echon*) with “being veiled” (*kekalummenos*),<sup>45</sup> and he explicitly denies that “having on head” means “being veiled.”

Second, he states that Paul used the phrase “having on head” in order to show that even if a man prays with a bare head, but has long hair, it is the same as if his head were covered. In other words, Chrysostom understands Paul to mean something like “a man may not pray or prophesy with anything on his head,” excluding both long hair and a material covering.

Third, Chrysostom uses the phrase “may have long hair,” implying that he regards “long hair” (*kóme*) as a legitimate implicit object of “having” (*echo*) in the phrase *kata kephales echon* in verse four.

### Epiphanius of Salamis on 1 Corinthians 11:7

Epiphanius (c. A.D. 315-403), Bishop of Salamis and Metropolitan of the Church of Cyprus, stands out from other ancient Christian writers because he understood the covering forbidden to men to be wearing long hair. He cites 1 Cor 11:7 in five different contexts in his polemical work *Panarion*. In each case, he cites the verse as: “A man ought not to wear long hair [*koman*] because he is the image and glory of God.”<sup>46</sup> For example, he cites 1 Cor 11:7 in addressing Manicheism’s misunderstanding of the value of the body:

And once more, the same apostle says in another passage, “A man ought not to have long hair forasmuch as he is the glory and image of God.” And you see how he called hair the glory of God, though it is grown on the body and not in the soul.<sup>47</sup>

There is no NT manuscript or versional evidence for rendering verse seven as Epiphanius does.<sup>48</sup> It seems most likely, therefore, that it reflects Epiphanius’s understanding that “to be covered” (*katalupto*) refers to “having long hair” (*koman*). This relatively early interpretation is noteworthy because it calls into question the argument advanced by Massey that “a study of the verb *katalupto* will permit a translation only of textile head coverings.”<sup>49</sup>

Commenting on the practice of some “esteemed brethren” in the cloisters of Mesopotamia, Epiphanius notes that they:

have been detected in another form [of error], that of deliberately having their hair long like a woman’s and wearing sackcloth openly. ... Visible sackcloth is out of place in the catholic church, as is uncut hair, because of the apostle’s injunction, “A man ought not to have long hair, inasmuch as he is the image of God.”<sup>50</sup>

Epiphanius continues his argument by addressing the issue of the Nazirites’ long hair.<sup>51</sup> He argues that “long hair was proper only for Nazirites” and that it is a shame for Christian men to wear long hair, citing 1 Cor 11:14.<sup>52</sup> Since the ascetics were appealing to the OT Nazirite vow, it is clear that they were allowing their hair to grow uncut. This means Epiphanius’ use of “to have long hair” (*koman*) necessarily refers to having uncut hair.<sup>53</sup>

Although there do not appear to be any extant comments by Epiphanius on 1 Cor 11.5-6, precisely the same verb that occurs in verse seven (*katakalupto*) also occurs twice in verse six (*katakalupto*). If, as appears likely, Epiphanius understood “to be covered” (*katakalupto*) in verse seven to mean “to have uncut hair” (*koman*), then it is most likely that he would have understood the same verb in verse six (*katakalupto*) to have that meaning as well. Given that understanding verse six would read, “If a woman does not have uncut hair, then let her shear it off; but since it is a shame for a woman to be shorn or shaven, let her allow her hair to grow uncut.”<sup>54</sup>

The purpose of looking at Chrysostom and Epiphanius is not to appeal to their exegesis as authoritative. Rather, the purpose is to note that two well-educated, native Greek speakers 250 years after Paul did not understand the phrases “having on head” (*kata kephales echon*) or “to be covered” (*katakalupto*) to refer necessarily to a material head-covering. Rather, Chrysostom understood “having on head” (*kata kephales echon*) as a generic phrase meaning “having anything on his head” which primarily had long hair in view, though it included a veil as well. Epiphanius, on the other hand, understood the verb “to be covered” (*katakalupto*) in 1 Cor 11:7 to be referring to having relatively long, uncut hair.

### Contextual Reasons to Read *kóme* as the Object of *echon*

Since the ultimate determiner of textual meaning is always context, the interpreter of 1 Cor 11:2-16 should seek for the implied object of “having” (*echon*) in the context. If nothing in the context argued for a covering other than a garment as the object of “having,” this would be a natural inference to draw from the evidence. However, several contextual reasons support the conclusion that Paul intends the Corinthians to identify the implicit object of “having” (*echon*) as “uncut hair” (*kóme*).

First, as I argued in chapter 4,<sup>55</sup> Paul’s argument from man’s created status as the glory of God (11:7) implies that whatever practice dishonors man’s head (Christ) has always dishonored his head. Although the *imago dei* in man was defaced in the fall (Col 3:10), it was not erased (Gen 9:6; Jam 3:9). In the same way, while man falls short of God’s glory (Rom. 3:23), his role as the glory of God was not eliminated.<sup>56</sup> Given the persistence of man’s status as the glory of God and the necessity of honoring his head that his status entails, the OT requirements for priests to wear a material head-covering become relevant for determining the nature of the covering.<sup>57</sup> It is improbable that God would require OT priests to do something that would dishonor him, i.e., wear a material head-covering when performing their mediatorial office. It is unlikely, therefore, that Paul has wearing material head-coverings in view.

Second, the connections created between Paul’s glory-shame motif<sup>58</sup> and his terminology for being covered/uncovered support the conclusion that the covering he has in mind is *kóme*. Specifically with regard to men, a man shames his “head” when he prays or prophesies “having on head” (*kata kephales echon*; v. 4). This phrase refers to the state created when a man covers (*katakalupto*) his head (v. 7). In verse 14, Paul identifies ‘wearing long/uncut hair’ (*koma*) as dishonoring (*atimia*). In view of the thematic connection between vv. 4 and 14, it is reasonable to conclude that, since wearing *kóme* is a shame to a man (v. 14), it is the implied object of “having” (*echon*) in verse four: “when a man prays or prophesies having [uncut hair] on his head, he shames his head.”

With regard to woman, the same word for ‘uncovered’ (*akatakaluptos*) occurs in verses 5 and 13 describing the state Paul regards as shameful for a woman when praying. Paul’s discussion of *kóme* as a woman’s glory in v. 15 links *kóme* to Paul’s uncovered-is-shameful-covered-is-glory theme. If uncut hair is indeed the covering forbidden to men (v. 7, 14), then the natural inference would be that it is also the covering women are commanded to have (v. 6).

Third, since Paul grounds his argument in a headship relationship reflective of the economic Trinity (v. 3), in the order and purpose of Creation (v. 8-9), in what the created order (*φύσις*) suggests is fitting (vv. 13-14), and concludes with an appeal to the universal practice of the early church (v. 16), it is likely that he has in view a covering which is transcultural, not limited by time or place, and thus universally applicable. *Kóme* is such a covering.

### ***Komao* and *kóme* in Hellenistic Literature and the Church Fathers**

In order to answer the question whether Paul’s language supports the conclusion that he intends “uncut hair” as the referent for *kóme*, I investigated Hellenistic literature for the use of the two key terms *komao* and *kóme* as well as the terminology used for cutting hair. I also considered the church father’s understanding of *komao* and *kóme* in this passage.

#### ***Komao* — “To have long hair”**

The verb *komao* “wear/have long hair,” occurs in the NT only in 1 Corinthians 11:13-14. It does not occur in the Septuagint. It occurs only once in Josephus where he is describing the practice of Nazirites who “allow their hair to grow long.”<sup>59</sup> It occurs once in Pseudo-Phocylides: “Long hair is not proper for boys, but for youthful women.”<sup>60</sup> Philo uses *komao* metaphorically with the sense “plume oneself, give oneself airs”<sup>61</sup> and appears to be making something of a play on words since he quotes a phrase from Num. 6:5 in the LXX “nourishes the hair of his head”<sup>62</sup> and then interprets it to indicate that “he is holy who promotes the growth in the principal portion of himself of the principal shoots of the doctrines of virtue, and who in a manner prides himself [*komonta*] and takes delight in these doctrines.”<sup>63</sup>

Plutarch uses the verb *komao* to describe the following:<sup>64</sup>

- the Spartan’s practice of wearing their hair and beards long<sup>65</sup>
- allowing the hair of the beard to grow long enough to be seen by its wearer<sup>66</sup>
- the practice of Greek men letting their hair grow long when misfortune comes (such as a death), in contrast to the women who cut off their hair in such situations<sup>67</sup>
- the customary practice of women to grow long hair as opposed to men who normally have their hair cut<sup>68</sup>
- wearing long hair as the special function of a Roman archon<sup>69</sup>
- the Parthian practice of wearing long bushy hair to make themselves appear more formidable<sup>70</sup>
- Caius Marius wearing long hair from the day of his exile until his return at the age of more than 70 years<sup>71</sup>
- a man having a head of much long curly hair<sup>72</sup>
- male show-offs who wore long hair and talked big<sup>73</sup>

- of a Greek despot, Lykurgus, who made boys wear long hair and girls cut their hair and wear boy's clothes<sup>74</sup>
- of Greek youths who wore their hair long because they were not yet men<sup>75</sup>
- of Greek young men who let their hair grow long after the age of puberty<sup>76</sup>
- of an army of young men who escort Cicero with their hair let loose as a sign of their distress and desire to entreat mercy<sup>77</sup>

As the evidence above shows, *komao* can be used with various metaphorical senses (e.g., to have loose, unkempt hair, or putting on airs). Nonetheless, the normal meaning of the word throughout Koine literature is “to allow the hair to grow long by not cutting it, wear long hair.”

### ***Kóme* — “Long/Uncut hair”**

*Kóme* occurs in the NT only in 1 Cor. 11:15. It occurs eleven times in the Septuagint. Of those 11x, it refers to uncut hair twice (nazirite vow—Num. 6:5; regulations for priests' hair—Ezek. 44:20).<sup>78</sup> In Lev. 19:27 Israelite men are prohibited from making “a round cutting of the hair” of their head.<sup>79</sup> Job 1:20 describes Job as rising and shaving “the hair of his head.”<sup>80</sup> The remaining canonical occurrences are metaphorical uses (Job 16:12; 38:32) or mistranslations (Ezek. 24:23). Four occurrences are found in apocryphal books, two of which refer to men's hair (Judith 13:7; Bel. 1:36) and two refer to women's hair (3 Macc. 1:18; 4:6).

*Kóme* occurs 19 times in Josephus, 18 times reference to hair, and once in reference to hyssop bunches. Josephus uses *kóme* to denote Samson's hair which was not to be cut as a Nazirite.<sup>81</sup> After Samson's hair was shaved, Josephus notes that “in the process of time Samson's *kóme* grew again.”<sup>82</sup> According to Josephus, the prophet Samuel was a Nazirite whose hair was permitted to grow long.<sup>83</sup> Absalom's *kóme* supposedly grew at such a rapid rate that, according to Josephus, it needed to be cut every 8<sup>th</sup> day.<sup>84</sup> While David was fleeing Absalom, Mephibosheth didn't cut his *kóme*.<sup>85</sup>

This survey of the uses of *kóme* in Koine literature indicates that it does not always or necessarily refer to uncut hair, though it may if the context makes it clear. It may refer to the hair of men or women and is typically used to denote long or feminine-length hair.

### **Paul's Terminology for Cutting Hair<sup>86</sup>**

The terms used by Paul in 1 Cor. 11:5-6 for cutting, *xuroo* and *keiro*, mean “shave” and “shear, cut short” respectively. Although the verb *keiro* may refer to a range of degrees of cutting,<sup>87</sup> it is most commonly used in the context of cutting something short, e.g., shearing sheep, harvesting grain.<sup>88</sup> It appears that the standard term for cutting that did not involve the removal of a large quantity of hair was *apokeiro*,<sup>89</sup> though *keiro* could also be used.<sup>90</sup> For example, in Plato's *Phaedo*, Socrates strokes the hair (*trichas*) at the back of Phaedo's neck and says, “Tomorrow, perhaps, Phaedo, you will cut off [*apokeiro*] this beautiful hair.”<sup>91</sup> In Josephus's account of the Samson narrative, the angel tells his mother “not to cut his hair.”<sup>92</sup> According to Josephus, Absalom's hair was so thick and fast-growing that his hair (*kóme*) had to be cut (*apokeiro*) every 8 days! Philo describes young male slaves who “have very long hair, being either completely unshorn [*me keiromenoi*], or else having only the hair on their foreheads evened at the end so as to make them of an equal length all round.”<sup>93</sup>



Paul's comparison of being "uncovered" to two degrees of cut hair in verse six ("shorn or shaven") supports the conclusion that he has in mind a lesser degree of the same state, i.e., cut hair. Taking "with her head uncovered" to refer to being uncovered due to having cut hair yields a coherent reading of verses 5-6, as the following paraphrase suggests:

<sup>5</sup> But every woman praying or prophesying with an uncovered head [due to having cut hair] shames her head, for such a state is one and the same [in terms of its shame] as the woman whose head is shaved. <sup>6</sup> For if a woman is not covered [with uncut hair], then let her cut it short, but if it is a shame for a woman to have her hair shaved off or cut short, let her be being covered [by letting her hair grow without cutting it].

### The Early Church's Interpretation of Paul's use of *kóme* and *komao*

The early church's interpretation regarding Paul's use of *komao* and *kóme* in 1 Cor. 11:14-15 is remarkably uniform. In no case are these words taken to refer to hair that is long and yet cut. The consistent understanding that emerges from the extant record is that men are not to have uncut hair and women are to have uncut hair. Examples of this understanding include:

The Synod of Gangra: "If any woman from pretended asceticism shall cut off her hair, which God gave her as the reminder of her subjection, thus annulling as it were the ordinance of subjection, let her be anathema."<sup>94</sup>

Severian of Gabala: "... Since even women were prophesying by the Spirit. But while the Spirit was at work it was entirely necessary for ministering angels to be present, and it was necessary, for this reason, for the women to be covered. Not from ancient custom, but from their situation he determined this. And although the men who wore long hair in ancient times cut off part of it, [they still] wore it longer than was necessary; however, it was always forbidden for a woman to shear her hair."<sup>95</sup>

Augustine, in *Of the Work of Monks*, who argues that Paul prohibits men from having long hair: "For the same Apostle saith, that long hair is also instead of a veil: by whose authority these men are hard pressed. Seeing he saith openly, "If a man wear long hair, it is a disgrace to him." "The very disgrace," say they, "we take upon us, for desert of our sins:" holding out a screen of simulated humility, to the end that under cover of it they may carry on their trade of self-importance."<sup>96</sup>

### An Interpretation of the Church Father's Interpretation of 1 Cor 11:2-16

Given the exceedingly broad consensus of the extant church father's understanding that Paul is addressing a material head-covering in this passage, how does one justify the assertion that *kóme* is the covering at issue? This is certainly a fair question, and one that should be addressed directly.

First, it is important to realize that the "*kóme*-only" position is not an abandonment of the church's historic understanding of this passage. The church fathers and early commentators consistently understood that Paul, and thus God, forbade men to have *kóme* and expected it of women. The position espoused here stands in continuity with this aspect of the church's historic position, while dissenting from the common understanding that an additional covering (the veil) is also in view.

Second, several factors provide a plausible explanation for what I regard as a misunderstanding of Paul's language regarding a covering: (1) the ambiguity of Paul's language, (2) the Mediterranean cultural ethos, (3) early glosses in Greek manuscripts and early

translations of the passage in Latin and Coptic, (4) the influence of Irenaeus and Tertullian, and (5) inattention to Paul's theological argumentation in 1 Cor. 11:7.

### The Ambiguity of Paul's language

The language Paul uses is unusual in some places and ambiguous in others. The fact that native Greek speakers understood *kata kephales echon* differently attests to its ambiguity. In addition, the language Paul uses, although admittedly ambiguous, readily lends itself to being understood in reference to a material covering. As an inductive survey of the uses of the *kalupto* word group readily demonstrates, it was commonly used in reference to material coverings being on or not on the head. The absence of any information regarding the precise nature of what was going on in Corinth compounds the difficulty of understanding Paul's language.

### The Mediterranean cultural ethos

Jewish, Greek, and Roman cultures all supported the use of a veil for feminine modesty.<sup>97</sup> Although not universally required, when modesty was a consideration, the veil was almost universally considered appropriate.<sup>98</sup> Precisely who was to wear one (virgin or married), and where it should be worn (in public only or both in public and in private) were matters of cultural diversity.

Further, it has become increasingly well-documented that it was a common 1<sup>st</sup> c. Roman practice for men to veil their heads when worshipping.<sup>99</sup> Although the evidence for the precise origin of the use of the *tallith* by Jews is inconclusive, the OT practice by priests certainly creates a background amenable to the practice, and the Talmud may well have canonized practices whose origin dates well before the 3<sup>rd</sup> century AD. The use of some form of head-covering for various purposes throughout the Roman Empire in combination with the common usage of elements of Paul's language provides a plausible setting in which Paul's instructions could fairly easily be construed to be addressing veiling concerns.

### Early Glosses and Translations of 1 Cor. 11:10

Irenaeus (c. 120-202) cites 1 Cor. 11:10 as "A woman ought to have a veil upon her head, because of the angels."<sup>100</sup> If Irenaeus were simply quoting the text the way the Valentinians did, he might be expected to point out their error. Since he does not, as noted in Schaff and also suggested by Dillon and Unger,<sup>101</sup> this may indicate that an early marginal gloss for the word "authority" (*exousian*) actually made it into the text of some early copies of Paul's letter to the Corinthians.<sup>102</sup> Given the way Irenaeus cites this verse, it is possible that his copy of 1 Corinthians had been corrupted and read "veil" (*kalumma*) instead of "authority" (*exousian*) in 11:10.

There are currently no extant copies of 1 Corinthians in Greek that have "veil" (*kalumma*) in verse 10.<sup>103</sup> This fact suggests perhaps that the dispersal of such copies was not wide spread. There are, however, early translations that have the word *veil* instead of *authority* in verse 10. Adam Clarke notes that "some copies of the Itala (Old Latin) have also *velamen*, a veil. ... and in an ancient edition of the Vulgate, ... the verse stands thus: *Ideo debet mulier velamen habere super caput suum: et propter angelos.*"<sup>104</sup> As noted in the UBS<sup>4</sup> apparatus, part of the Bohairic Coptic tradition reads *veil* as well.<sup>105</sup> Given the relative literalness of this translation, it is likely that the Greek manuscript(s) used to produce these translations had *κάλυμμα* in verse 10.

If Greek manuscripts were circulating which read *κάλυμμα* instead of *ἐξουσίαν* such manuscripts would have effectively rendered any other interpretive options impossible for those who read them. Should anyone have suggested a different understanding, the response would have been, “Paul says ‘veil,’ so it has to be about veils.”

### **The Influence of Irenaeus and Tertullian**

Both Irenaeus and Tertullian exercised considerable influence over Christian interpretive consensus as it developed in the 3<sup>rd</sup> century, particularly in the West. The influence of both men is evident in the frequency with which they are cited by contemporary and subsequent church fathers and in church councils. Tertullian in particular was very vocal in insisting that women be veiled at all times, not merely when worshipping. The forcefulness of their writings as well as the breadth of their influence were factors contributing to the dominance of the material-covering view.

### **Lack of Attention to Paul’s Theological Argumentation**

An exploration of extant ancient Christian commentary on 1 Corinthians 11:7 discovers extended discussions of what it means for men to be in the image of God, whether women share the image of God, what the image and glory of God are and how man is the glory of God. What is missing from ancient commentaries is consideration of how verse seven supports and relates to Paul’s theological argument within the passage as a whole. Specifically, it appears that no attention was given to the theological implications of Paul’s argument in 1 Cor. 11:7 for the divinely required practice of priests wearing a material head-covering (Exod. 28:4, 40).<sup>106</sup> Paul’s argument that man’s status as the glory of God obligates him to pray and prophesy with an uncovered head flies directly in the face of God’s design of caps and turbans for those leading His people in worship—if the covering to which Paul refers is a material head covering.

The implications of Paul’s statement for Exodus 28:4, 40 appears to have been in ancient commentators’ “blindspot” as they traveled through this text. Potential explanations for this oversight include the (1) de-emphasis on the OT that resulted from hostility between the synagogue and the church in first and second centuries,<sup>107</sup> (2) the early rise of allegorical readings of Scripture, and the OT especially, that minimized attention to the literal meaning of the text, and (3) theological issues relating to Christology and the meaning of man as the image of God that obscured the implications of Exodus 28 for this text. The reasons for lack of attention to this issue probably varied from person to person. Regardless, this absence of wholistic attention to the way in which Paul develops his theological argument made it easier to read the text as requiring a material covering.

### **Conclusion**

The momentum of the Mediterranean cultural ethos in combination with Paul’s ambiguous language would have been strongly in the direction of a material head-covering. Factoring in the additional possibility that the word *veil* was mistakenly introduced into early copies of 1 Corinthians, the influence of Irenaeus and Tertullian on the early church’s understanding of this passage, and the general inattention to Paul’s theological argumentation, it is hardly surprising that the history of interpretation is what it is. What is interesting is evidence in Epiphanius and Chrysostom that elements of the passage were understood by some in the way



the proponents of the “*kóme* is the covering” position are arguing. Taken together these factors provide a plausible explanation for the development of the dominant understanding of this passage.

---

<sup>1</sup> This essay is an simplified version of my article, “Chrysostom & Epiphanius: Long Hair Prohibited as Covering in 1 Cor 11:4, 7,” *BBR* 23.3 (2013): 365-376.

<sup>2</sup> Church fathers whose available comments on 1 Cor 11:2-16 indicate that they understood the covering to be a veil of some sort include: Irenaeus, Clement of Alexandria, Tertullian, Basil the Great, Ambrose, Jerome, Augustine, Pelagius, Theodoret of Cyrus, and Ambrosiaster.

<sup>3</sup> Francis Watson commented in 2000 that the understanding that 1 Cor 11:2-16 is addressing hair and not veils is beginning to acquire the status of “a broad consensus in recent scholarship.” “The Authority of the Voice: A Theological Reading of 1 Cor 11.2-16,” *NTS* 46 (2000): 534 n. 20. Whether the consensus is “broad” is open for debate, but its growth is easily documented. Examples of interpreters holding this position include: Kirk R. MacGregor, “Is 1 Corinthians 11:2-16 a Prohibition of Homosexuality?” *BibSac* 166 (2009): 201-16; Philip B. Payne, “Wild Hair and Gender Equality in 1 Corinthians 11:2-16,” *Priscilla Papers* 20, no. 3 (2006): 9-18; Alan F. Johnson, *1 Corinthians* (IVPNTCS; Downers Grove: InterVarsity, 2004); Giancarlo Biguzzi, *Velo e silenzio. Paolo e la donna in 1Cor 11,2-16 e 14,33b-36* (SupplRivBib 37; Bologna, 2001); Marlis Gielen, “Beten und Prophezeien mit unverhülltem Kopf? Die Kontroverse zwischen Paulus und der korinthischen Gemeinde um die Wahrung der Geschlechtsrollensymbolik in 1 Kor 11,2-16,” *ZNW* 90 (1999): 220-49; Raymond Collins, *First Corinthians* (Sacra Pagina Series 7; Collegeville, Minn.: Liturgical Press, 1999); J. D. G. Dunn, *The Theology of Paul the Apostle* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1998) 590-91; Richard A. Horsley, *1 Corinthians* (ANTC; Nashville: Abingdon, 1998): 153-54; David E. Blattenberger III, *Rethinking 1 Corinthians 11.2-16 through Archaeological and Moral-Rhetorical Analysis* (Lewiston, NY: Mellen, 1997); Judith M. Gundry-Volf, “Gender and Creation in 1 Corinthians 11:2-16: A Study in Paul’s Theological Method,” in *Evangelium, Schriftauslegung, Kirche: Festschrift für Peter Stuhlmacher zum 65. Geburtstag* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1997), 151-71; Wolfgang Schrage, *Der erste Brief an die Korinther (1 Kor 6,12-11,16)* (EKKNT 7/2; Zürich/Braunschweig: Benziger/Neukirchen-Vluyn: Neukirchener, 1991), 491-94; Alan Padgett, “The Significance of ἀντί in 1 Corinthians 11:15,” *TynB* 45 (1994): 181-7; Jerome Murphy-O’Connor, “1 Corinthians 11:2-16 Once Again,” *CBQ* 50 (1988): 265-74; “Sex and Logic in 1 Corinthians 11:2-16,” *CBQ* 42 (1980): 482-500; J. Keir Howard, “Neither Male nor Female: An Examination of the Status of Women in the New Testament,” *EQ* 55 (1983): 31-42; Stephen A. Reynolds, “Colloquium,” *WTJ* 36 (1973): 90-1; James B. Hurley, “Did Paul require Veils or the Silence of Women: A Consideration of 1 Cor 11:2-16 and 14:33b-36,” *WTJ* 35 (1973): 190-220; William J. Martin, “1 Corinthians 11:2-16: An Interpretation,” in *Apostolic History and the Gospel* (F. F. Bruce Festschrift; ed. W. W. Gasque; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1970), 231-41. For others holding this view, see Jason David BeDuhn, “‘Because of the Angels’: Unveiling Paul’s Anthropology in 1 Corinthians 11,” *JBL* 118 (1999): 296 n. 7.

<sup>4</sup> Ben Witherington III, *Conflict & Community in Corinth: A Socio-rhetorical Commentary on 1 and 2 Corinthians* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1995), 233-34; Preston T. Massey, “The Meaning of κατακαλύπτω and κατὰ κεφαλῆς ἔχων in 1 Corinthians 11.2-16,” *NTS* 53 (2007): 502-23.

<sup>5</sup> The significance of this misreading is highlighted by the fact that Massey’s work has already been quoted as demonstrating, along with others, that veils not hair are under consideration in the passage. Mark Finney, “Honour, Head-Coverings and Headship: 1 Corinthians 11.2-16 in Its Social Context,” *JSNT* 33 (2010): 31.

<sup>6</sup> Online: <http://www.tlg.uci.edu/> [accessed June 23, 2012]. This database catalogs most extant literary texts written in Greek from Homer to the fall of Byzantium in A.D. 1453.

<sup>7</sup> Online: <http://papyri.info/> [accessed June 23, 2012]. This site allows users to search simultaneously the Advanced Papyrological Information System (APIS), the Duke Databank of Documentary Papyri (DDbDP) and the Heidelberger Gesamtverzeichnis der griechischen Papyrusurkunden Ägyptens (HGV).

<sup>8</sup> Specifically, the phrase κατὰ κεφαλῆς ἔχων without an explicit direct object for ἔχων occurs in no (electronically available) extant Greek literature from the 8<sup>th</sup> c. B.C. to the 3<sup>rd</sup> c. A.D., unless in church fathers who are quoting this passage. This is true regardless of whether κεφαλῆς is anarthrous or not. A search of the *Duke Databank of Documentary Papyri* at Papyri.Info yielded only three instances of κατὰ τῆς κεφαλῆς, all of which were dated after A.D. 200. Further, in none of these cases did the phrase refer to covering the head but to the head as the location of a blow or wound. In *Les Papyrus Fouad I* 29.11, (A.D. 224), a father complains of his son’s head being

wounded by someone throwing a stone (ρίψαντος ἐξ αὐτῶν τινος λίθον, τραυματαίος ὁ υἱός μου, ἀπὸ μακρόθεν ἐστηκώς, ἐγένετο κατὰ τῆς κεφαλῆς). *P.Oxy.* 33.2672dupl (A.D. 218), lines 15-18, also registers a complaint regarding someone being struck on the head with a stone (καὶ λίθῳ με ἐνετίναξεν κατὰ τῆς κεφαλῆς). *P.Oxy* 16.1885 (c. A.D. 509), line 8 speaks of someone being struck repeatedly on the head and receiving a mortal wound (κατὰ τῆς κεφαλῆς κόψας ἀφειδῶς καὶ θανατηφόρον ἐπενεγκῶν).

<sup>9</sup> Ben Witherington III, *Conflict & Community*, 233. As the following discussion will demonstrate, Witherington is certainly correct that κατὰ κεφαλῆς by itself does not refer to hair or long, flowing hair.

<sup>10</sup> Plutarch (c. A.D. 46-120), a contemporary of the Apostle Paul and Josephus, was among other things a Greek historian and biographer, best known for his works *Parallel Lives* and *Customs (Moralia)*.

<sup>11</sup> *Vitae Decem Oratorum* 842B: ἀπαντήσας ῥάβδῳ τε κατὰ τῆς κεφαλῆς τοῦ τελώνου κατήνεγκε; “he struck the officer on the head with his staff.” *Plutarch’s Morals* (trans. W. W. Goodwin; Little, Brown, and Co., 1874), 5.39; *Pyrrhus* 24.3: καὶ φθάσας τὸν βάρβαρον ἐπληξε κατὰ τῆς κεφαλῆς τῷ ξίφει πληγὴν; “and before the Barbarian could strike, struck him such a blow on the head with his sword....” *Plutarch’s Lives* (LCL; trans. B. Perrin; Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1955), 9.426-27.

<sup>12</sup> *Regnum* 200F: ἀποβὰς ἐβάδιζε κατὰ τῆς κεφαλῆς ἔχων τὸ ἰμάτιον. *Plutarch’s Moralia* (LCL; trans. F. C. Babbitt; Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1961), 3.190-91.

<sup>13</sup> For example, David E. Garland, *1 Corinthians* (BECNT; Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2003), 517; Charles H. Talbert, *Reading Corinthians: A Literary and Theological Commentary on 1 and 2 Corinthians* (New York: Crossroads, 1987), 87; Gordon D. Fee, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians* (NICNT; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1987), 506-7.

<sup>14</sup> *Pompeius* 640C: ἐκεῖνος ἤδη κατέκειτο σοβαρός, ἔχων δι’ ὧτων κατὰ τῆς κεφαλῆς τὸ ἰμάτιον. Translation adapted from Pompey 40.4.6-7 in *Plutarch’s Lives* (LCL; trans. B. Perrin; Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1955), 5.218-19.

<sup>15</sup> *Caesar* 739D: ὅτε Βροῦτον εἶδεν ἐσπασμένον τὸ ξίφος, ἐφειλκύσατο κατὰ τῆς κεφαλῆς τὸ ἰμάτιον καὶ παρῆκεν ἑαυτόν. *Caesar* 66.7.1 in *Plutarch’s Lives* (LCL; trans. B. Perrin; Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1958), 7.598-99.

<sup>16</sup> *Aetia Romana* 267C: δεύτερος δὲ Σουλπίκιος Γάλλος ἐφελκυσμένην ἰδὼν κατὰ κεφαλῆς τὸ ἰμάτιον. *Plutarch’s Moralia* (LCL; trans. F. C. Babbitt; Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1962), 4.26-27.

<sup>17</sup> Witherington, *Conflict & Community*, 233.

<sup>18</sup> *Conflict & Community*, 233. Witherington’s assertion, “the discussions by Murpy-O’Connor, Hurley, Padgett, and others of hair and hairstyles are quite beside the point. The issue is headcoverings,” appears to reflect his personal certainty more than it does the nature of the available evidence.

<sup>19</sup> Pseudo-Apollodorus, *Bibliotheca*, 3.160.3: συγγυμναζόμενον αὐτὸν βαλὼν δίσκῳ κατὰ τῆς κεφαλῆς κτείνει. R. Wagner, *Apollodori bibliotheca* (Mythographi Graeci 1; Leipzig: Teubner, 1894).

<sup>20</sup> Josephus, *Jewish Antiquities*, 19.71: διαρριπτοῦντα ὄσαι κατὰ κεφαλῆς.

<sup>21</sup> Epictetus, *Discourse*, 2.20.29: ἔβαλον ἂν γάριον καὶ ἀπελθὼν κατὰ τῆς κεφαλῆς αὐτοῦς κατέχεον. For other uses of this phrase, see Josephus who uses phrase κατὰ τῆς κεφαλῆς three times to refer to something happening to someone’s head and none of them have anything to do with veils or hair (*Antiquities*, 1.50.4; 2.252.2; 13.117.5).

<sup>22</sup> *Moralia* 266C-E.

<sup>23</sup> *Moralia* 267A-B.

<sup>24</sup> As noted before, the phrase does occur in *Moralia* 267C in his parenthetical remark about divorce, but that has no direct bearing on why Roman sons escort their parents to their grave bare headed.

<sup>25</sup> Massey, “The Meaning of κατακαλύπτω and κατὰ κεφαλῆς ἔχων in 1 Corinthians 11.2–16,” 522. This article developed from Massey’s dissertation, “The Veil and the Voice: A Study of Female Beauty and Male Attraction in Ancient Greece” (Ph.D. diss., Indiana University, 2006).

<sup>26</sup> Massey, “The Meaning of κατακαλύπτω and κατὰ κεφαλῆς ἔχων in 1 Corinthians 11.2–16,” 522.

<sup>27</sup> This is not simply a case of citing the wrong references in Dionysius of Halicarnassus, since a TLG search of Dionysius’ works turns up no other instances of this phrase.

<sup>28</sup> *Roman Antiquities*, 6.3.3.

<sup>29</sup> *Roman Antiquities*, 11.26.4, line 6.

<sup>30</sup> *Roman Antiquities*, 19.8.3, line 6.

<sup>31</sup> Plutarch's *The Roman Questions* 266C reads "having a toga on their head" (ἐπὶ [not κατὰ] τῆς κεφαλῆς ἔχοντες τὸ ἱμάτιον), a similar phrase but one in which, as has been noted in all the previous examples, the direct object of ἔχοντες is explicit unlike the situation in 1 Cor 11:4.

<sup>32</sup> εἰκόνα ... ἐλάττων ἀνδρὸς μετρίου τὴν περιβολὴν ἔχουσα κατὰ τῆς κεφαλῆς. Author's translation. Cf. *The Roman Antiquities of Dionysius of Halicarnassus*, (LCL; trans. E. Cary; Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1961), 2.254-55.

<sup>33</sup> ὁ Κάμιλλος ... ἐπειδὴ τὴν εὐχὴν ἐποίησατο καὶ κατὰ τῆς κεφαλῆς εἵλκυσε τὸ ἱμάτιον, ἐβούλετο μὲν στραφῆναι ... *The Roman Antiquities of Dionysius of Halicarnassus*, (LCL; trans. E. Cary; Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1961), 7.236-37.

<sup>34</sup> Μέλλων δ' ἀπιέναι τὴν τε περιβολὴν κατὰ κεφαλῆς εἵλκυσε καὶ τὰς χεῖρας ἀνασχὼν εἰς τὸν οὐρανόν, ὡς ἔθος ἐστίν, ἀρὰς ἐποίησατο τοῖς θεοῖς. Author's translation. Cf. *The Roman Antiquities of Dionysius of Halicarnassus*, (LCL; trans. E. Cary; Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1961), 7.310-11.

<sup>35</sup> Dionysius, *Roman Antiquities*, VI.3.3; XI.26.4, line 6; XIX.8.3, line 6; Plutarch, *Vitae Decem Oratorae* 842B; *Pyrrhus* 399B; *Les Papyrus Fouad I* 29.11; *P.Oxy.* 33.2672dupl, lines 15-18; Josephus, *Ant.*, 1.50.4; 2.252.2; 13.117.5.

<sup>36</sup> For a similar, independent evaluation of Massey's *NTS* article, see the unpublished critique by Philip Payne which he references in his *Man and Woman: One in Christ* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2009), 167 n. 104: [http://www.pbpayne.com/wp-admin/Massey\\_critique.pdf](http://www.pbpayne.com/wp-admin/Massey_critique.pdf) [accessed June 23, 2012].

<sup>37</sup> For an explanation of the syntagmatic and paradigmatic relationships of words or phrases within the context of a sentence, see Peter Cotterell and Max Turner, *Linguistics and Biblical Interpretation* (Downers Grove: InterVarsity, 1989), 155-61, 188-89.

<sup>38</sup> For a similar conclusion, see Blattenberger, *Rethinking 1 Corinthians 11:2-16*, 36.

<sup>39</sup> Author's translation. Aristophanes, *Birds*, line 911: ἔπειτα δῆτα δοῦλος ὦν κόμην ἔχεις; Aristophanes lived c. 446–386 B.C. and was a comic playwright in ancient Athens.

<sup>40</sup> Author's translation. Aristophanes, *Clouds*, line 14: ... διὰ τουτονὶ τὸν υἱόν. ὁ δὲ κόμην ἔχων ἰππάζεται τε καὶ ξυνωρικεῦεται.

<sup>41</sup> Author's translation. Centuria 2.8.2: Τὸν ἐν Σάμῳ κομήτην: Σάμιός τις ἐγένετο πύκτης, ὃς ἐπὶ μαλακίᾳ σκωπτόμενος, ἐπειδὴ κόμας εἶχεν, ὑπὸ τῶν ἀνταγωνιστῶν, συμβαλὼν αὐτοῦς ἐνίκησεν. F. G. Schneidewin and E. L. von Leutsch, eds., *Corpus Paroemiographorum Graecorum* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1839; repr. Hildesheim: Olms, 1965), 1.337.

<sup>42</sup> ἐπειδὴν δὲ νεανίσκοι γένωνται, κομῶσι, καὶ οἱ ἄλλοι πάντες Πυγμαῖοι κόμην ἔχουσι μακροτάτην μέχρι ἐπὶ τὰ γόνατα καὶ ἔτι κατωτέρω καὶ πάγωνα μέγιστον πάντων ἀνθρώπων, ὥστε ἔλκεσθαί φασιν αὐτοῦς πρὸς τοῖς ποσίν, ἅτε μικρῶν ὄντων, τοὺς πάγωνα, ἐξόπισθεν δὲ τὴν κόμην εἶναι πολὺ κάτωθεν τῶν γονάτων. S. P. Lampros, *Excerptorum Constantini de natura animalium libri duo. Aristophanis historiae animalium epitome in Commentaria in Aristotelem Graeca* suppl. 1.1 (Berlin: Reimer, 1885), ch. 2.67, line 7.

<sup>43</sup> *Homily 26* (11.2-16), under verse 2 (*NPNF*<sup>1</sup> 12.149). οἱ δὲ ἄνδρες καὶ ἐκόμων, ἅτε ἐν φιλοσοφίᾳ διατρίψαντες, καὶ περιεβάλλοντο τὰς κεφαλὰς εὐχόμενοι καὶ προφητεύοντες· ὅπερ ἐκάτερον Ἑλληνικοῦ νόμου ἦν. *Epistulam i ad Corinthios* (PG 61.213).

<sup>44</sup> Translation adapted from *Homily 26* (11.2-16), under verse 4, (*NPNF*<sup>1</sup> 12:152). ἐπὶ δὲ τοῦ ἀνδρὸς οὐκέτι τὸν τοῦ καλύμματος, ἀλλὰ τὸν τῆς κόμης οὕτω γυμνάζει λόγον· καλύπτεσθαι μὲν γὰρ τότε μόνον καλῶναι, ὅταν εὐχῆται, κομᾶν δὲ αἰεὶ ἀποτρέπει. ... οὕτω καὶ ἐπὶ τοῦ ἀνδρὸς, ὅτι «ἐὰν κομᾶ, ἀτιμία αὐτῷ ἐστίν». οὐκ εἶπεν, ἐὰν καλύπτηται, ἀλλ' «ἐὰν κομᾶ». διὸ καὶ ἀρχόμενος ἔλεγε· «πᾶς ἀνὴρ προσευχόμενος ἢ προφητεύων, κατὰ κεφαλῆς ἔχων». οὐκ εἶπε, κεκαλυμμένος, ἀλλὰ, «κατὰ κεφαλῆς ἔχων», δεικνύς ὅτι καὶ γυμνῆ εὐχῆται τῇ κεφαλῇ, κόμην δὲ ἔχῃ, ἴσος ἐστὶ τῷ κεκαλυμμένῳ. ἢ γὰρ «κόμη», φησὶν, «ἀντὶ περιβολαίου δέδοται». *Epistulam i ad Corinthios* (PG 61.217).

<sup>45</sup> Chrysostom uses forms of καλύπτω at least 15 times throughout his sermon to refer to a veiled head.

<sup>46</sup> ἀνὴρ, γὰρ φησιν, οὐκ ὀφείλει κομᾶν, εἰκὼν καὶ δόξα θεοῦ ὑπάρχων. Karl Holl, *Epiphanius, Ancoratus und Panarion in Die griechischen christlichen Schriftsteller der ersten drei Jahrhunderte* (Leipzig: Hinrichs, 1922, 1933), 2.122, 167; 3.91, 236, 492. Epiphanius also quotes this verse in the same way in his letter to John of Jerusalem. However, the Greek text of Epiphanius's letter is fragmentary and does not contain this excerpt. P. Maas,

“Die ikonoklastische Episode in dem Brief des Epiphanius an Johannes,” *ByzZ* 30 (1929-1930): 281-83. Fortunately, Epiphanius asked Jerome to translate the letter into Latin, and we have a copy of the entire letter through Jerome. “Letter LI. From Epiphanius, Bishop of Salamis, in Cyprus, to John, Bishop of Jerusalem” (*NPNF*<sup>2</sup> 6:88).

<sup>47</sup> Epiphanius, *The Panarion of Epiphanius of Salamis: Books II and III (Sects 47-80, De Fide)* (Nag Hammadi Studies 36; trans. F. Williams; Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1987), 271. ὁ αὐτὸς ἀπόστολος «ἀνὴρ οὐκ ὀφείλει κομᾶν, δόξα καὶ εἰκὼν θεοῦ ὑπάρχων». καὶ ὄρᾳς ὡς δόξαν θεοῦ ἔφη τὴν κόμην, ἐπὶ σώματος φερομένην καὶ οὐκ ἐν ψυχῇ; ... καὶ μάτην οὗτος κομποποιεῖ, μᾶλλον δὲ χλεύην ὑφίσταται παρὰ τοῖς τὴν τελείαν φρόνησιν κεκτημένοις. Holl, *Epiphanius, Ancoratus und Panarion*, 3.91.

<sup>48</sup> Reuben J. Swanson, ed., *New Testament Greek Manuscripts: 1 Corinthians* (Wheaton: Tyndale House, 2003), 165. So also B. Aland and K. Aland, eds., *Novum Testamentum Graece* (27th ed.; Stuttgart: Deutsche Bibelgesellschaft, 1993).

<sup>49</sup> Massey, 502. It is beyond doubt that κατακαλύπτω and ἀκατακαλύπτω τῆ κεφαλῆ are used with reference to a material covering. That they necessarily have such reference, however, does not follow. A survey of κατακαλύπτω in the LXX and other Hellenistic literature shows that the object used to cover is often not a veil or similar item. For example, it may be the fat of sacrificial animals (Exod. 29:22), water (Ezek. 26:19), wings (Isa. 6:2) or even an abstract concept such as dishonor (Jer. 28:51). When persons were the object of κατακαλύπτω, the items used for covering include another human person (Josephus, *J.W.* 6:208), a cloth covering a corpse (Plut. *Agis et Cleomenes*. 20.4.4), an awning over a carriage (Xenophon, *Cyropaedia* 6.11), or metaphorically an argument (Plato. *Letters* 340A) or arrows (Josephus, *J.W.* 2:547). Further, in three instances in which the word is used without an explicit object, it involves disguising or covering oneself so completely that the face is either not visible or recognizable (Gen 38:15; 2 Chr 18:29; Sus 1:32). With regard to ἀκατακαλύπτω, while Philo (*Special Laws* 3:56-60) and Polybius (15.27.2) use the term with reference to a head uncovered by a material veil, it is also used by Philo in the phrase, “and so we become enslaved, and yield ourselves up to unconcealed impurity” (δεδουλώμεθα καὶ ἀκατακαλύπτω τῆ ἀκαθαρσία χρώμεθα; *Allegorical Interpretation*, 2.29), where a material covering is not in view. The nature of the covering, therefore, is not immediately clear simply from the use of these terms.

<sup>50</sup> Epiphanius, *The Panarion of Epiphanius of Salamis*, 634. οἱ κατὰ Μεσοποταμίαν ἐν μοναστηρίοις ὑπάρχοντες εἶπουν μάνδραις καλουμέναις, κόμαις γυναικικαῖς <χρῆσθαι> προβαλλόμενοι καὶ σάκκω προφανεῖ ἐπερειδόμενοι. ... ἀλλότριον γάρ ἐστι τῆς καθολικῆς ἐκκλησίας σάκκος προφανῆς καὶ κόμη <μη> ἐκτεμνομένη ἀπὸ τοῦ κηρύγματος τῶν ἀποστόλων. «ἀνὴρ, γὰρ φησιν, οὐκ ὀφείλει κομᾶν, εἰκὼν καὶ δόξα θεοῦ ὑπάρχων». Holl, *Epiphanius, Ancoratus und Panarion*, 3.492.

<sup>51</sup> Apparently certain ascetics extended this appeal claiming that Jesus was a Nazirite. In a work we possess only in fragmentary form, Epiphanius refutes the claim that Jesus was a Nazirite and thus wore long hair: “For they write that the savior had long hair based on the hypothesis that he was called a Nazoraion since the Nazirites have long hair. But they err who attempt to identify him as a Nazirite, for the savior drank wine which the Nazirites did not drink” (author’s translation). κόμην γὰρ ἔχοντα τὸν σωτῆρα γράφουσιν ἐξ ὑπονοίας διὰ τὸ Ναζωραῖον αὐτὸν καλεῖσθαι, ἐπεὶ περ οἱ Ναζιραῖοι κόμας ἔχουσιν. σφάλλονται δὲ οἱ τοὺς τύπους αὐτῶ συνάπτειν περὶ ὧμενοι. οἶνον γὰρ ἔπινεν ὁ σωτῆρ, ὃν οἱ Ναζιραῖοι οὐκ ἔπινον. “Epistula ad Theodosium imperatorem” (fragment 24) in Karl Holl, *Gesammelte Aufsätze zur Kirchengeschichte* (Tübingen: Mohr, 1928; repr. Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 1964), 2.361.

<sup>52</sup> Epiphanius, *The Panarion of Epiphanius of Salamis*, 635.

<sup>53</sup> Epiphanius, 635. His citation of 1 Cor 11:14 in the context of discussing the Nazirites’ uncut hair demonstrates that κομάω could refer to uncut hair, an observation that bears on how he would have understood κόμη.

<sup>54</sup> εἰ γὰρ οὐ κατακαλύπτεται [=κομᾶ] γυνή, καὶ κειράσθω. εἰ δὲ αἰσχρὸν γυναικὶ τὸ κείρασθαι ἢ ξυραῖσθαι, κατακαλυπτέσθω [=κομάτω].

<sup>55</sup> “Εἰκὼν καὶ Δόξα Θεοῦ: An Interpretive Key to 1 Cor. 11:2-16” presented at the 2003 BFLS.

<sup>56</sup> Although it is not the purpose of this essay to explore the relationship of the *imago dei* in both men and women, I understand Paul to be teaching that while both men and women bear the *imago dei*, men function as the *gloria dei* and women function as the glory of men (*gloria viri*).

<sup>57</sup> The divinely specified attire for the High Priest included a linen turban (תַּבְּנֶטֶת; Exod 28:4, 37, 39; 29:6; 39:28, 31; Lev 8:9; 16:4). Regular priests, on the other hand, wore “bonnets” or “caps” (הַבְּבִיטָה; Exod 28:40; 29:9; 39:28; Lev 8:13). Cf. Alan D. Ingalls, “Headcoverings in the Old Testament,” *Journal of Ministry and Theology* 4.2

(2000): 41-52. Although praying was clearly a component of the OT priests' duties (Num 6:22-24; 2 Chr 30:27), the OT does not expressly state that prophecy was a priestly function. However, Isaiah and Jeremiah both functioned as priests and prophets (Isa 6:1; Jer 1:1). Further, since "prophecy," in Paul's language, involves speaking to men for "edification, exhortation, and comfort" (1 Cor 14:3), it seems appropriate to describe the priestly duty of teaching the people the law as "prophecy" (cf. Deut 17:9-11; 33:8-10).

<sup>58</sup> The following terms for shame occur in this passage: *αἰσχύνω* (11:4, 5); *αἰσχρός* (11:6); and *ἀτιμία* (11:14). Glory (*δόξα*) occurs three times: twice in v. 7 and once in v. 15. The distribution of these key terms does not, however, exhaust the development of this motif, since verses 8-9 also contribute to the motif by explaining why woman is the glory of man. Paul's concern for glory/shame in worship flows naturally from his argument that all things should be done for God's glory (1 Cor 10:31) and extends into his discussion of the Lord's Table (1 Cor 11:22). Paul's concern for God's glory in these contexts indicates that he is not appealing primarily to 1st c. honor-shame social conventions but to a theological principle that transcends cultural norms. For a discussion of the role honor-shame conventions played in the Greco-Roman world, see Mark Finney, *Honor and Conflict in the Ancient World: 1 Corinthians in its Greco-Roman Setting* (London: T. & T. Clark, 2012).

<sup>59</sup> Josephus, *Antiquities* 4.72: *ναζιραῖοι δὲ οὗτοι καλοῦνται κομῶντες*. Josephus lived and wrote in the 1<sup>st</sup> c. AD and was a contemporary of Paul.

<sup>60</sup> Pseudo-Phocylides, line 212: *ἄρσεσιν οὐκ ἐπέοικε κομᾶν, χλιδαναῖς δὲ γυναιξίν*. This is an apocryphal work that appears to have been written between 100 BC – AD 100. Pieter van der Horst, *The Sentences of Pseudo-Phocylides* (SVTP 4; Leiden: Brill, 1978).

<sup>61</sup> LSJM, s.v. *komao*, sense 2.

<sup>62</sup> *τρέφοντα κόμην τρίχα κεφαλῆς*.

<sup>63</sup> Philo, *Quod deus sit immutabilis* 1.88. *The Works of Philo Judaeus, the Contemporary of Josephus*, trans. by C. D. Yonge (London: Henry G. Bohn, 1854-55), 4 vols. A similar metaphorical usage occurs in *Sibylline Oracle* 11:82.

<sup>64</sup> Most of the following English translations are taken from or adapted from *Plutarch's Moralia*, trans. by Frank Cole Babbitt, *Loeb Classical Library* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1962), vols. 1-15.

<sup>65</sup> *Sayings of the Spartans* 230B: "Why do [the Spartans] wear long hair and grow long beards?" *διὰ τί κομῶσι καὶ πώγωνοτροφοῦσιν*. See also *Life of Lysander* 1.1: "a statue of Lysander, wearing his hair and beard long, in the ancient fashion" *Λυσάνδρου δὲ ἐστὶν εἰκονικός, εὖ μάλᾳ κομῶντος ἔθει τῷ παλαιῷ καὶ πώγωνα καθειμένου γενναῖον*. The Latin title for *Sayings of the Spartans* is *Apophthegmata Laconica*. *Sayings of the Spartans* 232D: "Why do they wear their hair long? He said because this is the (most) natural and inexpensive of ornaments." *διὰ τί κομῶσιν* εἶπεν ὅτι τῶν κόσμων ὁ φυσικός καὶ ἀδάπανος οὗτός ἐστι. See also Plutarch, *Sayings of the King* 189F.

<sup>66</sup> *Sayings of the Spartans* 232E.4: "A Spartan, being asked why he grew the hair of his beard so very long, said, 'So that I may see my grey hairs and do nothing unworthy of them.'" *Λάκων ἐρωτηθεὶς, δι' ἣν αἰτίαν τὰς τοῦ πώγωνος τρίχας ἐπὶ πολὺ κομᾷ, εἶπεν ἵνα βλέπων τὰς πολιὰς μὴδὲν ἀνάξιον αὐτῶν πράττω*.

<sup>67</sup> *Sayings of the Spartans* 267B: "So in Greece, whenever any misfortune comes, the women cut off their hair and the men let it grow" *καὶ γὰρ παρ' Ἑλλήσιν ὅταν δυστυχία τις γένηται, κείρονται μὲν αἱ γυναῖκες κομῶσι δ' οἱ ἄνδρες*.

<sup>68</sup> *Sayings of the Spartans* 267B: "...for it is usual for men to have their hair cut and for women to let it grow." *ὅτι τοῖς μὲν τὸ κείρεσθαι ταῖς δὲ τὸ κομᾶν σύνθηές ἐστιν*.

<sup>69</sup> *Roman and Greek Questions* 274B: "Therefore also with us ... to wear long hair ... is the special function of an archon." *διὸ καὶ παρ' ἡμῖν τὸ μὲν ... κομᾶν ... ἴδια λειτουργήματα τοῦ ἀρχοντός ἐστι* (Latin title: *Aetia Romana et Graeca*)

<sup>70</sup> *Life of Crassus* 24.2: "...the rest of the Parthians, still keeping to the Scythian fashion, wore their hair long and bushy to make themselves more formidable." *τῶν ἄλλων Πάρθων ἔτι Σκυθικῶς ἐπὶ τὸ φοβερόν τῷ ἀνασίλλω κομῶντων*. See also Plutarch, *Sayings of the King* 189E.

<sup>71</sup> *Life of Caius Marius* 41.6: "[Marius] with his hair uncut from the day that he had been an exile, and now above seventy years of age" *κομῶν ἀφ' ἧς ἔφυγεν ἡμέρας, ὑπὲρ ἐβδομήκοντα γεγονώς ἔτη*

<sup>72</sup> *Life of Cimon* 5.2: "He was not an ill-looking man, as Ion the poet says, but tall, and with a thick curly head of hair." *ἦν δὲ καὶ τὴν ἰδέαν οὐ μεμπτός, ὡς Ἴων ὁ ποιητὴς φησιν, ἀλλὰ μέγας, οὖλη καὶ πολλῇ τριχὶ κομῶν τὴν κεφαλὴν*.

<sup>73</sup> *De Stoicorum repugnantiis* 1038C: ὑψαυχενεῖν καὶ κομᾶν καὶ μεγαληγορεῖν. See also Plutarch, *De Stoicorum repugnantiis* 1036C.

<sup>74</sup> *Virtues of Women* (Latin title: *Mulierum virtutes*) 261F: “In fact it is recorded in history that he imposed on the boys the custom of wearing long hair and golden ornaments, and the girls he compelled to cut their hair and to wear boys’ clothes and the short undergarment.” ἰστόρηται γάρ, ὅτι τοὺς μὲν ἄρρενας παῖδας ἤσκει κομᾶν καὶ χρυσοφορεῖν, τὰς δὲ θηλείας ἠνάγκαζε περιτροχάλα κείρεσθαι καὶ φορεῖν ἐφηβικὰς χλαμύδας κατὰ τῶν ἀνακώλων χιτωνίσκων. See also *Life of Lysander* 1.1-2.

<sup>75</sup> *Virtues of Women* 261E: “when he was a mere youth with others of his age who were still wearing their hair long (whom they called ‘harassers,’ from their long hair presumably)” ὅπερ ἐστὶν ἀντίπαις, ὅτι μειράκιον ὦν παντάπασι μετὰ τῶν ἡλικίων ἔτι κομῶντων (οὐς κορωνιστὰς ὡς ἔοικεν ἀπὸ τῆς κόμης ὠνόμαζον)

<sup>76</sup> *Lycurgus* 22: “For this reason, although they all let their hair grow long after the age of puberty” διὸ κομῶντες εὐθύς ἐκ τῆς τῶν ἐφήβων ἡλικίας

<sup>77</sup> *Cicero* 31: “as many as twenty thousand young men escorted him with their hair untrimmed and joined in his suppliant entreaties to the people.” καὶ δισμυρίων οὐκ ἐλάττους νέων παρηκολούθουν κομῶντες καὶ συνικετεύοντες

<sup>78</sup> In both of these references it translates the word עָרַף (HALOT: “loosely hanging and unplaited hair on the head”). Both these contexts make it explicitly clear that the hair is uncut by prohibiting a razor from touch the hair (Num. 6:5) or by forbidding the hair to be uncut and requiring it to be cut (Ezek. 44:20).

<sup>79</sup> Here the Hebrew reads “do not round off the corner of your head” (לֹא תִקַּף רַחֵקוֹ שְׂפָתַיִךָ).

<sup>80</sup> ἐκέειρατο τὴν κόμην τῆς κεφαλῆς Here the Hebrew reads “and he shaved his head” and does not have a word for “hair” (וַיִּשְׂרַף אֶת־הַיּוֹנִתִּים).

<sup>81</sup> *Ant.* 5.278, 311-14.

<sup>82</sup> *Ant.* 5.314.

<sup>83</sup> κόμη τε οὐδ’ αὐτῷ ἀνεῖτο; *Ant.* 5.347.

<sup>84</sup> *Ant.* 7.189, 239. Contrast this to the biblical account in 2 Sam. 14:26 where Absalom cut his hair once a year.

<sup>85</sup> *Ant.* 7.267. This same range of usage occurs in Plutarch. See, for example, *Aetia Romana* 267A-B where κόμαις implicitly denotes uncut hair.

<sup>86</sup> My best efforts, which are admittedly limited, to turn up any discussion in Classical or Koine literature in which a distinction is made between cutting and trimming hair have failed. For example, in Musonius Rufus’ essay “On Cutting the Hair,” in which he discusses what legitimates men cutting their hair, no lexical or semantic distinction between cutting and trimming is made. Cora E. Lutz, *Musonius Rufus, “The Roman Socrates”* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1947). My review of all the cognate forms of κείρω in LSJM (απο-, περι-, κατα-, αμφι-, κτλ) found none of them having the sense of cut a small amount of hair, equivalent to our “trim.” The noun κουρά, which refers to “cropping of the hair,” does not denote anything more specific than cutting, without reference to the amount cut. A search from 8<sup>th</sup> c. BC to 2<sup>nd</sup> c. AD yielded 11 collocations of τέμνω and κόμη, and nine collocations of κόπτω and κόμη, none of which yielded any insight on this question. This is an area where more research is needed. Specifically, corpus-wide searches for the κόπτω and τέμνω word groups should be conducted to ascertain how they interact with the other Greek vocabulary in the semantic domain of hair. My current conclusion then is that there is no basis to believe that Paul would have distinguished between cutting and trimming as is often done in English.

<sup>87</sup> See, for example, Plutarch, *Regum* 177A; Philo, *Contempl.* 1:51; *T. Jos.* 23:9; 24:10.

<sup>88</sup> Gen 31:19; 38:12-13; Deut 15:19; 1 Sam 25:2, 4, 7, 11; 2 Sam 13:23-24; Cant 4:2; 6:6; Isa 53:7; Acts 8:32. There are four clear OT instances in which κείρω is used with reference to human hair. In 2 Sam. 14:26 Absalom cuts his hair once a year. Here κείρω translates לָבַל “to shave.” In Job 1:20 it translates יָגַל, the standard Hebrew term for shearing a sheep. In Micah 1:16 it functions in parallel with ξυρώ (‘to shave’) and again translates יָגַל. It is also used metaphorically in Jer. 7:29 of Jerusalem, as a woman, cutting off her hair in mourning (יָגַל). In the light of this pattern of usage, when Paul cut his hair in Acts 18:18, it is probable that he shaved or cut his hair rather short.

<sup>89</sup> ἀποκείρω does not occur in the NT or the LXX.

<sup>90</sup> For example, in Plutarch's *Moralia*, "Sayings of Kings," 177: A barber asks how shall I cut your hair? (πῶς σε κείρω). *Plutarch's Moralia*, trans. by Frank Cole Babbitt, *Loeb Classical Library* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1961), vol. 3. p. 38-39. In Plutarch, "Bravery of Women, 261F: Aristodemos forced boys to wear long hair (κομᾶν) and girls to cut (κείρεσθαι) their hair. *Ibid.*, p. 573-74.

<sup>91</sup> Αὐρίον δὴ, ἔφη, ἴσως, ὦ Φαίδων, τὰς καλὰς ταύτας κόμας ἀποκερῆ. J. Burnet, *Platonis opera*, vol. 1 (repr. 1967; Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1900): 89, section b, line 5.

<sup>92</sup> τὰς κόμας αὐτῶ μὴ ἀποκείρειν; *Ant.* 5.278; cf. *Ant.* 5.312.

<sup>93</sup> Philo, *The Contemplative Life*, 1.51: βαθυχαῖται γὰρ εἰσιν ἢ μὴ κειρόμενοι τὸ παράπαν ἢ τὰς προμετωπίδους αὐτὸ μόνον ἐξ ἄκρων εἰς ἐπανάσωσιν καὶ γραμμῆς κυκλοτεροῦς ἠκριβωμένον σχῆμα. L. Cohn and S. Reiter, *Philonis Alexandrini opera quae supersunt*, vol. 6. (repr. De Gruyter, 1962; Berlin: Reimer, 1915).

<sup>94</sup> "Canon XVII" in Schaff, *Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers*, series 2, vol. 14, p. 99. εἴ τις γυναικῶν διὰ νομιζομένην ἄσκησιν ἀποκείροιτο τὰς κόμας, ἃς ἔδωκεν ὁ Θεὸς εἰς ὑπόμνησιν τῆς ὑποταγῆς, ὡς παραλύουσα τὸ πρόσταγμα τῆς ὑποταγῆς, ἀνάθεμα ἔστω. Online at [http://www.documentacatholicaomnia.eu/03d/0340-0340,\\_Concilium\\_Gangrense,\\_Canones,\\_GR.pdf](http://www.documentacatholicaomnia.eu/03d/0340-0340,_Concilium_Gangrense,_Canones,_GR.pdf). Accessed 7/28/2012. So also Karl Joseph von Hefele, *A History of the Councils of the Church, from the Original Documents* (T. & T. Clark, 1876), 333-34.

<sup>95</sup> Author's translation. ... ἐπειδὴ καὶ γυναῖκες προεφήτευον ἐκ πνεύματος ἁγίου. τοῦ δὲ πνεύματος ἐνεργοῦντος πᾶσα ἀνάγκη τοὺς λειτουργοὺς ἀγγέλους παρεῖναι, καὶ δεῖ διὰ τοῦτο κατακαλύπτεσθαι τὴν γυναῖκα. Οὐκ ἀπὸ τοῦ παλαιοῦ ἔθους ἀλλ' ἀπὸ τοῦ κατ' αὐτοὺς ἐδοκίμασε τοῦτο. καὶ οἱ κομῶντες τὸ παλαιὸν ἐκ μέρους ἀποκείροντες ἐπὶ πλείον ἢ ἔδει κομῶντες, γυναικὶ δὲ αἰεὶ τὸ κείρεσθαι ἀπεδοκιμάσθη. "Fragmenta in epistulam i ad Corinthios" in K. Staab, *Pauluskommentar aus der griechischen Kirche aus Katenenhandschriften gesammelt* (Münster: Aschendorff, 1933), p. 262.

<sup>96</sup> *Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers*, series 1, vol. 3, p. 522-23.

<sup>97</sup> For an extended demonstration of Greek use of the veil in pre-classical, classical, and post-classical periods of Greek culture, see Massey's dissertation, "The Veil and the Voice: A Study of Female Beauty and Male Attraction in Ancient Greece" (PhD diss., Indiana University, 2006), pp. 202-51; Lloyd Llewellyn-Jones, *Aphrodite's Tortoise: The Veiled Woman of Ancient Greece* (Oakville, CT: David Brown Book Co., 2003), esp. 55-80. See also, Blattenberger, *Rethinking 1 Corinthians 11.2-16*.

<sup>98</sup> Massey's analysis of Greek literature up to the first century A.D. identifies seven different meanings which may attach to the wearing of a veil (1) a veil symbolizes a woman is married, (2) a veil maintains a woman's modesty, (3) a veil communicates marital fidelity, (4) a veil protects a woman from undesired gazes, (5) a veil may be used to show respect to a man, (6) a veil functioned as a gender-distinguishing piece of clothing, and (7) a veil may be used to adorn or beautify. The non-use of the veil could signal grief at a death, disrespect to a man, or promiscuous availability and was considered shameful. "The Veil and the Voice," pp. 252-80.

<sup>99</sup> David W. J. Gill, "The Importance of Roman Portraiture for Head-coverings in 1 Corinthians 11:2-16." *Tyndale Bulletin* 41, no. 2 (1990): 245-260; Richard Oster, "Use, Misuse and Neglect of Archaeological Evidence in Some Modern Works on 1 Corinthians (1Cor 7,1-5; 8,10; 11,2-16; 12,14-26)." *Zeitschrift für die Neutestamentliche Wissenschaft* 83 (1992): 52-73; Ben Witherington III, *Conflict & Community in Corinth: A Socio-Rhetorical Commentary on 1 and 2 Corinthians* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1995); Craig S. Keener, *1-2 Corinthians* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2005).

<sup>100</sup> Interestingly, Epiphanius quotes Irenaeus extensively in his *Panarion* and preserves Irenaeus' quotation of 1 Cor. 11:10 precisely as found in Irenaeus' *Against Heresies*: δεῖ τὴν γυναῖκα κάλυμμα ἔχειν ἐπὶ τῆς κεφαλῆς διὰ τοὺς ἀγγέλους. K. Holl, *Epiphanius, Ancoratus und Panarion in Die griechischen christlichen Schriftsteller* (Leipzig: Hinrichs, 1915), vol. 1, p. 423.

<sup>101</sup> Schaff, *Ante-Nicene Fathers*, vol. 1, p. 327. Unger and Dillon confirm that Irenaeus's text reads *kalumma* at this point. They conclude that *kalumma* "must have been in the Western text that the Gnostics used, or they changed from power to veil according to the sense of the symbol to fit their purpose." Dominic J. Unger and John J. Dillon, *St. Irenaeus of Lyons: Against the Heresies*. Vol. 55, *Ancient Christian Writers* (New York: Paulist Press, 1992), 173-74.

<sup>102</sup> Just as we make marginal notes in books today, it was not unusual for early Christians to make marginal comments in their copies of New Testament manuscripts. When these manuscripts were copied later, sometimes the copyist would mistake a marginal note for a marginal correction, and insert into the text or replace the original text

---

with the marginal text. Bruce M. Metzger, *The Text of the New Testament: Its Transmission, Corruption, and Restoration*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1992), 194-95.

<sup>103</sup> Swanson, *New Testament Greek Manuscripts: 1 Corinthians*, 165. So also NA<sup>27</sup>. Swanson does note four manuscripts that have *καλυμμα* in v. 4; however, all of these mss date from 9<sup>th</sup> c. or later (e.g., (424 999 1315).

<sup>104</sup> Clarke, *The New Testament of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ*, 132. The quality of Old Latin translations was sufficiently varied that Jerome was commissioned to produce a faithful translation into Latin. Jerome's translation is known as the Vulgate.

<sup>105</sup> Aland, Barbara, et al., eds., *The Greek New Testament*, 4<sup>th</sup> rev. ed. (Westphalia: United Bible Societies, 2001), 592.

<sup>106</sup> Almost all the discussion of 1 Cor. 11:7 revolves around the significance of the man as the image and glory of God and woman as the glory of man. For example, see Chrysostom, *Homily 26* (11:2-16), under verse 7, *Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers*, series 1, vol. 12, p. 153.

<sup>107</sup> For further discussion, see Craig A. Evans, "Christianity and Judaism: Parting of the Ways," in *The Dictionary of the Later New Testament and its Developments* (Downers Grove: IVP Academic, 1997), pp. 159-170, and Philip S. Alexander, "'The Parting of the Ways' from the Perspective of Rabbinic Judaism," in *Parting of the Ways: Jews and Christians* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1999), pp. 1-26.



## Partial Bibliography

### Articles and Essays

- Allard, Robert E. “‘Freedom on Your Head’ (1 Corinthians 11:2-16): A Paradigm for the Structure of Paul's Ethics.” *Word & World* 30, no. 4 (2010): 399-407.
- Amjad-Ali, Christine. “The Equality of Women: Form or Substance (1 Corinthians 11:2-16).” In *Voices from the Margin*. Edited by R. S. Sugirtharajah. Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1991; 205-13.
- Bailey, James L. “Genre analysis.” In *Hearing the New Testament*. Edited by Joel B. Green. Eerdmans: Grand Rapids, 1995; 197-221.
- Barton, Stephen C. “Historical criticism and social-scientific perspectives in New Testament study.” In *Hearing the New Testament*. Edited by Joel B. Green. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1995; 61-89.
- BeDuhn, Jason David. “‘Because of the Angels’: Unveiling Paul’s Anthropology in 1 Corinthians 11.” *Journal of Biblical Literature* 118 (1999): 295-320.
- Belleville, Linda L. “Kephale and the Thorny Issue of Headcovering in 1 Corinthians 11:2-16.” In *Paul and the Corinthians: Studies on a Community in Conflict: Essays in Honour of Margaret Thrall*, 215–231. Leiden: Brill, 2003.
- Carson, D. A. “‘Silent in the Churches’: On the Role of Women in 1 Corinthians.” In *Recovering Biblical Manhood and Womanhood*. Edited by John Piper and Wayne Grudem. Wheaton: Crossway Books, 1991; 140-191.
- Corrington, Gail Paterson. “The ‘Headless Woman’: Paul and the Language of the Body in 1 Cor 11:2-16.” *Perspectives in Religious Studies* 18 (1991): 223-231.
- Delobel, Joel. “1 Cor 11,2-16: Towards a Coherent Interpretation.” In *L’Apotre Paul*. Leuven: University Press, 1986; 369-89.
- Dowling, Robin. “Headcoverings: An Exposition of 1 Corinthians 11:2-16.” *Evangel* 12 (1994): 37-40.
- Engberg-Pedersen, Troels. “1 Corinthians 11:16 and the Character of Pauline Exhortation.” *Journal of Biblical Literature* 110 (1991): 679-689.
- Ferguson, Everett. “Of veils and virgins: Greek, Roman, Jewish, and early Christian practice.” *Restoration Quarterly* 56, no. 4 (2014): 223-243.
- Fiddes, Paul S. “‘Woman’s Head is Man’: A Doctrinal Reflection upon a Pauline Text.” *Baptist Quarterly* 31 (1986): 370-383.
- Finney, Mark. “Honour, Head-coverings and Headship: 1 Corinthians 11.2-16 in its Social Context.” *Journal for the Study of the New Testament* 33, no. 1 (2010): 31 –58.
- Fitzmyer, Joseph A. “Another Look at ΚΕΦΑΛΗ in 1 Corinthians 11.3.” *New Testament Studies* 35 (1989): 503-511.
- Fitzmyer, Joseph A. “ΚΕΦΑΛΗ in 1 Cor. 11.3.” *Interpretation* 47 (1993): 52-59.

- Gill, David W. J. "The Importance of Roman Portraiture for Head-coverings in 1 Corinthians 11:2-16." *Tyndale Bulletin* 41 (1990): 245-260.
- Grudem, Wayne. "Does Κεφαλή ('Head') Mean 'Source' or 'Authority Over' in Greek Literature? A Survey of 2,336 Examples." *Trinity Journal* 6 (1985): 38-59.
- Grudem, Wayne. "The Meaning of Κεφαλή ('Head'): A Response to Recent Studies." *Trinity Journal* 11 (1990): 3-72.
- Grudem, Wayne. "The Meaning of Κεφαλή ('Head'): An Evaluation of New Evidence, Real and Alleged." *Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society* 44 (2001): 25-65.
- Gundry-Volf, Judith M. "Gender and Creation in 1 Corinthians 11:2-16: A Study in Paul's Theological Method." In *Evangelium, Schriftauslegung, Kirche*. Gottingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1997; 151-71.
- Holmyard, Harold R., III. "Does 1 Corinthians 11:2-16 Refer to Women Praying and Prophesying in Church." *Bibliotheca Sacra* 154 (1997): 461-472..
- Howard, J. Keir. "Neither Male nor Female: An Examination of the Status of Women in the New Testament." *The Evangelical Quarterly* 55 (1983): 31-42.
- Humann, Roger J. "1 Corinthians 11:2-16: Exegesis Case Study." *Consensus* 7 (1981): 17-30.
- Hurley, James B. "Did Paul require Veils or the Silence of Women: A Consideration of 1 Cor 11:2-16 and 14:33b-36." *Westminster Theological Journal* 35 (1973): 190-220.
- Jervis, L. Ann. "'But I Want You to Know . . .': Paul's Midrashic Intertextual Response to the Corinthian Worshipers (1 Cor 11:2-16)." *Journal of Biblical Literature* 112 (1993): 231-246.
- Leske, Adrian M. "1 Corinthians 11:2-16: Exegesis Case Study." *Consensus* 6 (1980): 11-17.
- Liefeld, Walter L. "Women, Submission and Ministry in 1 Corinthians." In *Women, Authority and the Bible*. Edited by Alvera Mickelsen. Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 1986; 134-54.
- Lowery, David K. "The Head Covering and Lord's Supper in 1 Cor 11:2-34." *Bibliotheca Sacra* 143 (1986): 155-163.
- MacDonald, Dennis Ronald. "Corinthian Veils and Gnostic Androgynes." In *Images of the Feminine in Gnosticism*. Edited by Karen L King. Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1988; 276-92.
- Martin, Troy W. "Paul's Argument from Nature for the Veil in 1 Corinthians 11:13-15: A Testicle Instead of a Head Covering." *Journal of Biblical Literature* 123, no. 1 (2004): 75-84.
- Martin, William J. "1 Corinthians 11:2-16: An Interpretation." In *Apostolic History and the Gospel*. Edited by Gasque-Martin. Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans, 1970; 231-41.
- Massey, Preston T. "The Meaning of κατακαλύπτω and κατὰ τῆς κεφαλῆς in 1 Corinthians 11.2-16w." *New Testament Studies* 53, no. 4 (2007): 502-523.
- Massey, Preston T. "Gender versus marital concerns: does 1 Corinthians 11:2-16 address the issues of male/female or husband/wife?." *Tyndale Bulletin* 64, no. 2 (2013): 239-256.

- Meier, John P. "On the Veiling of Hermeneutics (1 Cor 11:2-16)." *Catholic Biblical Quarterly* 40 (1978): 212-226.
- Mitchell, Margaret M. "Concerning ΠΕΠΙ ΔΕ in 1 Corinthians." *Novum Testamentum* 31 (1989): 229-256.
- Mount, Christopher. "1 Corinthians 11:3-16: Spirit Possession and Authority in a Non-Pauline Interpolation." *Journal of Biblical Literature* 124, no. 2 (2005): 313–340.
- Murphy-O'Connor, Jerome. "Sex and Logic in 1 Corinthians 11:2-16." *Catholic Biblical Quarterly* 42 (1980): 482-500.
- Murphy-O'Connor, Jerome. "1 Corinthians 11:2-16 Once Again." *Catholic Biblical Quarterly* 50 (1988): 265-274.
- Osborne, G. R. "Hermeneutics and Women in the Church." *Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society* 20 (1977): 337-352.
- Oster, Richard. "When Men Wore Veils to Worship: The Historical Context of 1 Corinthians 11:4." *New Testament Studies* 34 (1988): 481-505.
- Oster, Richard. "Use, Misuse and Neglect of Archaeological Evidence in Some Modern Works on 1 Corinthians (1 Cor 7,1-5; 8,10; 11,2-16; 12,14-26)." *Zeitschrift für die Neutestamentliche Wissenschaft* 83 (1992): 52-73.
- Paddock, Alisha. "First Corinthians 11 in a post-honor culture." *Stone-Campbell Journal* 16, no. 1 (2013 2013): 85-96.
- Padgett, Alan. "Paul on Women in the Church: The Contradictions of Coiffure in 1 Corinthians 11:2-16." *Journal for the Study of the New Testament* (1984): 69-86.
- Padgett, Alan. "The Significance of ANTI in 1 Corinthians 11:15." *Tyndale Bulletin* 45 (1994): 181-187.
- Payne, Philip B. "Wild Hair and Gender Equality in 1 Corinthians 11:2-16." *Priscilla Papers* 20, no. 3 (2006): 9–18.
- Perriman, A. C. "The Head of a Woman: The Meaning of ΚΕΦΑΛΗ in 1 Cor. 11:3." *Journal of Theological Studies* 45 (1994): 602-622.
- Petrovich, Christopher G. "First Corinthians 11:2-16, Calvin, and Reformed Praxis." *The Westminster Theological Journal* 77, no. 1 (2015): 111-133.
- Reynolds, Stephen A. "Colloquium." *Westminster Theological Journal* 36 (1973): 90-91.
- Rowe, Arthur. "Hermeneutics and "Hard Passages" in the NT on the Role of Women in the Church: Issues from Recent Literature." *Epworth Review* 18 (1991): 82-88.
- Scholer, David M. "Feminist Hermeneutics and Evangelical Biblical Interpretation." *Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society* 30 (1987): 407-420.
- Schreiner, Thomas R. "Head Coverings, Prophecies and the Trinity: 1 Corinthians 11:2-16." In *Recovering Biblical Manhood and Womanhood*. Edited by John Piper and Wayne Grudem. Wheaton: Crossway Books, 1991; 124-139, 485-487

- Shoemaker, Thomas P. "Unveiling of Equality: 1 Corinthians 11:2-16." *Biblical Theology Bulletin* 17 (1987): 60-63.
- Spittler, Russell P. "Scripture and the Theological Enterprise: View from a Big Canoe." In *Use of the Bible in Theology*. Edited by Robert K. Johnston. Atlanta: John Knox Press, 1985; 56-77.
- Thompson, Cynthia L. "Hairstyles, Head-coverings, and St Paul: Portraits from Roman Corinth." *Biblical Archaeologist* 51 (1988): 99-115.
- Vander Broek, Lyle. "Women and the Church: Approaching Difficult Passages." *Reformed Review* 38 (1985): 225-231.
- Walker, William O., Jr. "The Vocabulary of 1 Corinthians 11:3-16: Pauline or non-Pauline?" *Journal for the Study of the New Testament* (1989): 75-88.
- Wallace, Daniel B. "What is the Head Covering in 1 Cor 11:2-16 and Does it Apply to Us Today?" Biblical Studies Press, (1997): <http://bible.org/docs/soapbox/covering.htm>. Accessed 7/22/2003.
- Waltke, Bruce K. "1 Corinthians 11:2-16: An Interpretation." *Bibliotheca Sacra* 135 (1978): 46-57.
- Weeks, Noel. "On Silence and Head Covering." *Westminster Theological Journal* 35 (1972): 21-27.
- Wilson, Kenneth T. "Should Women Wear Headcoverings?" *Bibliotheca Sacra* 148 (1991): 442-462.

### Commentaries and Monographs

- Alford, Henry. Acts, Romans, Corinthians. In *The Expositor's Greek Testament*. Chicago: Moody Press, 1958.
- Ambrosiaster. *Commentaries on Romans and 1-2 Corinthians*. Downers Grove: IVP Academic, 2009.
- Barrett, C. K. *The First Epistle to the Corinthians*. Peabody: Hendrickson Publishers, 1968.
- Barrett, Michael. *Headcovering for Public Worship: An Exposition of 1 Corinthians 11:2-16*. Greenville, SC: Faith Free Presbyterian Church, n.d.
- Blomberg, Craig. *1 Corinthians*. Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House, 1994.
- Brown, Allan P. *The Glory of a Woman*. Cincinnati: Revivalist Press, forthcoming.
- Bruce, F. F. *1 and 2 Corinthians*. London: Marshall, Morgan and Scott, 1971.
- Cotterell, Peter and Max Turner. *Linguistics and Biblical Interpretation*. Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 1989.
- Fee, Gordon D. *The First Epistle to the Corinthians*. Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans, 1987.
- Findlay, G. G. *St. Paul's First Epistle to the Corinthians*. Peabody: Hendrickson Publishers, Inc., 2002.

- Garland, David E. *1 Corinthians*. Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2003.
- Grosheide, F. W. *The First Epistle to the Corinthians*. Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1953.
- Heil, John Paul. *The Rhetorical Role of Scripture in 1 Corinthians*. Society of Biblical Lit, 2005.
- Johnson, Alan F. *1 Corinthians*. Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 2004.
- Keener, Craig S. *1-2 Corinthians*. New York: Cambridge University Press, 2005.
- Keener, Craig S. *Paul, Women & Wives: Marriage and Women's Ministry in the Letters of Paul*. Peabody: Hendrikson Publishers, 1992.
- Knight, George W., III. *The Role Relationship of Men & Women*. Chicago: Moody Press, 1985.
- Kovacs, Judith L. *1 Corinthians: Interpreted by Early Christian Commentators*. Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans, 2005.
- Lambrecht, Jan. *Understanding What One Reads: New Testament Essays*. Dudley, MA: Peeters, 2003.
- Lenski, R. C. H. *The Interpretation of St. Paul's First and Second Epistles to the Corinthians*. Minneapolis: Augsburg Publishing House, 1937.
- Llewellyn-Jones, Lloyd. *Aphrodite's Tortoise: The Veiled Woman of Ancient Greece*. Wales: The Classical Press of Wales, 2003.
- Miller, Patricia Cox. *Women in Early Christianity: Translations from Greek Texts*. Washington, D.C.: The Catholic University of America Press, 2005.
- Morgan, G. Campbell. *The Corinthians Letters of Paul*. New York: Fleming H. Revell Company, 1946.
- Morris, Leon. *The First Epistle of Paul to the Corinthians*. London: The Tyndale Press, 1958.
- Pratt, Richard L., Jr. *I & II Corinthians*. Nashville: Broadman & Holman Publishers, 2000.
- Prior, David. *The Message of 1 Corinthians*. Downers Grove: Inter-Varsity Press, 1985.
- Seagraves, Daniel L. *Hair Length in the Bible: A Study of 1 Corinthians 11:2-16*. Hazelwood, MO: World Aflame Press, 1989.
- Soards, Marion L. ed. *1 Corinthians*. In *New International Biblical Commentary*, vol. 7. Peabody: Hendrickson Publishers, Inc., 1999.
- Swanson, Reuben J. *New Testament Greek Manuscripts: Variant Readings Arranged in Horizontal Lines against Codex Vaticanus; 1 Corinthians*. Wheaton: Tyndale House Publishers, 2003.
- Talbert, Charles H. *Reading Corinthians: A Literary and Theological Commentary on 1 and 2 Corinthians*. New York: Crossroads, 1987.
- Thiselton, Anthony C. *First Corinthians: A Shorter Exegetical and Pastoral Commentary*. Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 2006.
- Trevett, Christine. *Christian Women and the Time of the Apostolic Fathers (AD c.80-160)*. Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 2006.

Winter, Bruce W. *Roman Wives, Roman Widows: The Appearance of New Woman and the Pauline Communities*. Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 2003.

### Additional Resources

Anderson, Edward B. "Power On Her Head." *Living Orthodoxy* 14 (1992): 19-22.

Cadbury, Henry J. "A Qumran Parallel to Paul (1 Cor 11:2-16)." *Harvard Theological Review* 51 (1958): 1-2.

Cervin, Richard S. "Does Κεφαλή Mean 'Source' or 'Authority' in Greek Literature? A Rebuttal." *Trinity Journal* 10 (1989): 85-112.

Cope, Lamar. "1 Cor 11:2-16: One Step Further." *Journal of Biblical Literature* 97 (1978): 435-436.

D'Angelo, Mary Rose. "The Garden: Once and Not Again: Traditional Interpretations of Genesis 1:26-27 in 1 Corinthians 11:7-12." In *Genesis 1-3 in the History of Exegesis*. Edited by Gregory Allen Robbins. Lewiston, NY: Edwin Mellen Press, 1988; 1-41.

Devor, Richard C. "When We're Blindsided by the Gospel." *Encounter* 35 (1974): 368-381.

Greig, James C. G. "Women's Hat: 1 Corinthians 11:1-16." *Expository Times* 69 (1958): 156-157.

Hooker, Morna D. "Authority on her Head: An Examination of 1 Cor. XI.10." *New Testament Studies* 10 (1963): 410-416.

Ince, Gwen. "Judge for Yourself: Teasing Out Some Knots in 1 Corinthians 11:2-16." *Australian Biblical Review* 48 (2000): 59-71.

Isaksson, Abel. *Marriage and Ministry in the New Temple. A Study with Special Reference to Mt. 19:3-12 and 1 Cor. 11:3-16*. Lund: C.W.K. Gleerup, 1965.

Mercadante, Linda A. *From Hierarchy to Equality: A Comparison of Past and Present Interpretations of 1 Cor 11:2-16 in Relation to the Changing Status of Women in Society*. Vancouver: G-M-H Books, 1978.

Mickelsen, Berkeley & Alvera. "What Does Kephale Mean in the New Testament." In *Women, Authority and the Bible*. Edited by Alvera Mickelsen. Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 1986; 97-110.

Murphy-O'Connor, Jerome. "Non-Pauline Character of 1 Corinthians 11:2-16." *Journal of Biblical Literature* 95 (1976): 615-621.

Payne, Philip Barton. "Response." In *Women, Authority and the Bible*. Edited by Alvera Mickelsen. Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 1986; 118-32.

Radcliffe, Timothy. "Paul and Sexual Identity: 1 Corinthians 11:2-16." In *After Eve*. Basingstoke: Marshal Pickering, 1990; 62-72.

Thiselton, A. C. "Realized Eschatology at Corinth." *New Testament Studies* 24 (1978): 510-526.

- Trompf, Garry W. "On Attitudes Toward Women in Paul and Paulinist Literature: 1 Corinthians 11:3-16 and its Context." *Catholic Biblical Quarterly* 42 (1980): 196-215.
- Tucker, Ruth A. "Response." In *Women, Authority and the Bible*. Edited by Alvera Mickelsen. Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 1986; 111-17.
- Turner, Max. "Modern Linguistics and the New Testament." In *Hearing the New Testament*. Edited by Joel B. Green. Eerdmans: Grand Rapids, 1995; 146-74.
- Weber-Han, Cindy. "Sexual Equality According to Paul: An Exegetical Study of 1 Corinthians 11:1-16 and Ephesians 5:21-33." *Brethren Life and Thought* 22 (1977): 167-170.
- Williams, Ritva. "Lifting the Veil: A Social-Science Interpretation of 1 Corinthians 11:2-16." *Consensus* 23 (1997): 53-60.
- Yeo, Khiok -Khng. "Differentiation and Mutuality of Male-Female Relations in 1 Corinthians 11:2-16." *Biblical Research* 43 (1998): 7-21.