

## Women and the Veil

First Corinthians 11.2–16

Don Ruhl • Savage Street, Grants Pass, Oregon • September 27, In the year of our Lord, 2015  
Scripture Reader and Reading: Dan Calvert – Genesis 2.18–22

### **Prelude:**

#### **I. Should Christian women wear a veil?**

A. Does First Corinthians 11.2–16 teach that women should wear a veil?

B. Interpret this passage as we do others:

1. How do you interpret chapters 12–14 on tongue-speaking?
2. How do you interpret chapters 8 and 10 on meat sacrificed to idols?
3. How do you interpret 16.20,

**20 All the brethren greet you. Greet one another with a holy kiss (1Co 16.20).**

C. You recognize guiding truths.

1. Even if you cannot speak in other languages miraculously,
  - a) you know that 12–14 still addresses orderly worship services.
2. Even if none of our meat sold in the store was sacrificed to an idol,
  - a) you know that 8 and 10 still address issues about eating meat.
3. You know that the Corinthians greeted one another before converting.
  - a) Now they were to make it a holy greeting.

#### **II. Is there a guiding truth in First Corinthians 11?**

### **Persuasion:**

#### **I. First Corinthians 11.2 – Apostolic Traditions**

**2 Now I praise you, brethren, that you remember me in all things and keep the traditions just as I delivered them to you (1Co 11.2).**

A. Traditions:

1. Some we should avoid.
2. Others we should embrace.
  - a) Jesus rebelled against traditions
  - b) that violated the commandments of God.
    - (1) Jesus did not speak against them
    - (2) just to be against something traditional.

B. As an apostle, an ambassador, the traditions Paul delivered came from Christ.

## **II. First Corinthians 11.3 – The Order of Authority**

**3 But I want you to know that the head of every man is Christ, the head of woman is man, and the head of Christ is God (1Co 11.3).**

A. An uncompromisable, everlasting, transcendent, tradition:

1. God is the head of Christ.
2. Christ is the head of man.
3. Man is the head of woman.

B. This is the point of Paul's discussion on the veil,

1. that when a society has customs and traditions
2. that reflect this biblical order,
  - a) Christians should embrace them, and
  - b) not think that their liberty allows them to disregard these things.

## **III. First Corinthians 11.4–6 – Head Covering While Praying or Prophesying**

**4 Every man praying or prophesying, having his head covered, dishonors his head. 5 But every woman who prays or prophesies with her head uncovered dishonors her head, for that is one and the same as if her head were shaved. 6 For if a woman is not covered, let her also be shorn. But if it is shameful for a woman to be shorn or shaved, let her be covered (1Co 11.4–6).**

A. During what actions is the head covering considered here?

1. When either gender is praying or prophesying.
  2. Think of these two activities:
    - a) Prayer: A creature speaking to the Creator.
    - b) Prophesying: A creature speaking for the Creator.
- B. A man praying or prophesying:
1. If he covers his head,
  2. he dishonors his head.
    - a) The first use of “head,” probably refers to his own head, but
    - b) the second use of “head,” refers to Christ who is man’s head.
- C. A woman praying or prophesying:
1. Just the opposite of a man.
  2. If she uncovers her head during praying or prophesying,
    - a) she dishonors her head,
    - b) who is man, because
      - (1) God is greater than man,
      - (2) as will be shown in verse 7.
- D. If a woman did not wish to be covered,
1. she was to be shorn, but
  2. if that was shameful,
    - a) she should be covered.
    - b) Why did Paul place this option here?

#### **IV. First Corinthians 11.7–10 – The Reason for the Veil**

**7 For a man indeed ought not to cover his head, since he is the image and glory of God; but woman is the glory of man. 8 For man is not from woman, but woman from man. 9 Nor was man created for the woman, but woman for the man. 10 For this reason the woman ought to have a symbol of authority on her head, because of the angels (1Co 11.7–10).**

A. Heads covered or uncovered reflected either God's or man's glory.

1. A man was not to cover his head, because
  - a) he reflected the image and glory of God.
  - b) God made man from the dust of the Earth,
    - (1) making Him from that dust into God's image.
2. A woman was to cover her head, because
  - a) she reflects man's glory, for
  - b) she was made from man,
    - (1) which Paul will explain in verses 8 and following.

B. Remember as we go through this text

1. that verse 3 drives Paul's discussion.
2. Whatever he taught in First Corinthians 11 reflects:
  - a) That God is the head of Christ,
  - b) That Christ is the head of man or males,
  - c) That man is the head of woman, and
    - (1) from other passages of the New Testament,
    - (2) woman is the head
      - (a) of children and
      - (b) of the household.
3. I say these things, because
  - a) the versification of the Bible
  - b) chops up our thinking, but
    - (1) we cannot let it do that, because
    - (2) it is all one argument or message that Paul taught.

C. Verses 8 and 9 show the source and purpose of creation,

1. that man did not come from the woman, but

- a) woman came from man,
2. that the man was not created for the woman, but
  - a) woman was created for man,
3. even as our Scripture reading showed,

**18 And the Lord God said, "It is not good that man should be alone; I will make him a helper comparable to him." 19 Out of the ground the Lord God formed every beast of the field and every bird of the air, and brought them to Adam to see what he would call them. And whatever Adam called each living creature, that was its name. 20 So Adam gave names to all cattle, to the birds of the air, and to every beast of the field. But for Adam there was not found a helper comparable to him. 21 And the Lord God caused a deep sleep to fall on Adam, and he slept; and He took one of his ribs, and closed up the flesh in its place. 22 Then the rib which the Lord God had taken from man He made into a woman, and He brought her to the man (Gen 2.18–22).**

D. Then in First Corinthians 11.10,

1. Paul declared that it was for this reason
2. the woman is to have a sign of authority on her head.
  - a) This showed the headship of the man and
  - b) that God created the woman for the man.
    - (1) Then Paul added that this was also because of the angels.
    - (2) I have concluded that this means
      - (a) angels have an interest whenever men and women pray or prophesy.
      - (b) Angels have direct dealings with God.
        - i) Naturally when a man or a woman
          - (1) speaks to God or
          - (2) speaks for God,
        - ii) that gets the attention of the angels.

E. Get this point:

1. What did Paul establish from Genesis?
2. He did not establish
  - a) the wearing of a veil for women, but
  - b) the order and purpose of creation.
    - (1) The Bible nowhere indicates that Eve wore a veil.
    - (2) The thing that knows no cultural boundaries
      - (a) is not the wearing of the veil, but
      - (b) the man as the head of the woman.

**V. First Corinthians 11.11–12 – The Origin of Men and Women**

**11 Nevertheless, neither is man independent of woman, nor woman independent of man, in the Lord. 12 For as woman came from man, even so man also comes through woman; but all things are from God (1Co 11.11–12).**

A. In the beginning the woman came from the man,

1. now the man comes from the woman, showing
  - a) that we need one another,
  - b) that we are not independent of the opposite gender,
  - c) that one is not better than the other, and
  - d) that God is the responsible One.
2. Learn to see God in all things.

B. In the Lord, the battle of the sexes does not exist, for

1. the woman would not be without the man, and
2. the man would not be without the woman.
  - a) However, ultimately all things come from God.
  - b) Why am I a White male living in America in 2015?
    - (1) This is what God made me.

(2) I give Him the glory.

(a) I am not better than the Black female living in Africa.

(b) She should give God the glory also.

## **VI. First Corinthians 11.13–15 – The Covering of Men and Women**

**13 Judge among yourselves. Is it proper for a woman to pray to God with her head uncovered? 14 Does not even nature itself teach you that if a man has long hair, it is a dishonor to him? 15 But if a woman has long hair, it is a glory to her; for her hair is given to her for a covering (1Co 11.13–15).**

A. Paul asked us a question in verse 13:

1. Is it proper for a woman to pray to God with her head uncovered?

2. Paul expected a negative answer.

a) A negative answer is not obvious for our culture.

b) The reason:

(1) Our society does not recognize the veil as a sign of headship.

(2) We have other things that indicate the same.

B. According to verse 14,

1. long hair, typically, is a dishonor to a man.

2. There are exceptions, such as the Nazarite Vow.

C. Verse 15 says a woman's hair is a glory to her.

1. Generally the length of hair is how we distinguish the genders.

2. Nature teaches that there should be a visual distinction between the sexes.

## **VII. First Corinthians 11.16 – Contention versus Custom**

**16 But if anyone seems to be contentious, we have no such custom, nor do the churches of God (1Co 11.16).**

A. If someone wants to content over this,

1. we have no other custom from the apostles,

2. nor from the churches as a whole.
- B. This does not mean that if you do not like what Paul said,
  1. that you can disregard it, but
  2. that a man should not be contentious against prevailing customs
    - a) that uphold the truth,
    - b) such as the order of creation.
- C. The wearing of a veil by women
  1. was a practice before the existence of the church, and
  2. Paul did not originate the wearing of one.
- D. Let the church and Christians accept whatever our society does
  1. that reflects the order of creation, and
  2. other biblical truths.
    - a) Those customs will be different in the nations of the world.
    - b) In ours,
      - (1) the woman taking on the name of the man in marriage,
      - (2) the use of the masculine pronoun to picture all of humanity, and
      - (3) other things show this biblical truth.

**Exhortation:**

**I. Remember the point of this passage: The order of Divine authority**

- A. When a woman
  1. speaks to God or
  2. speaks for God,
    - a) she, and men too,
    - b) should remember God's creation of the sexes.
- B. Men and women should observe all local customs that show a biblical truth.

**II. Prophesying was a phenomenon of the first century church.**



- A. No one now prophesies in the same sense as in the first century.
- B. Prophets received direct messages from God.
  - 1. Therefore, the woman cannot actually do this part of our passage.
  - 2. She still prays, and she ought to do without ceasing.