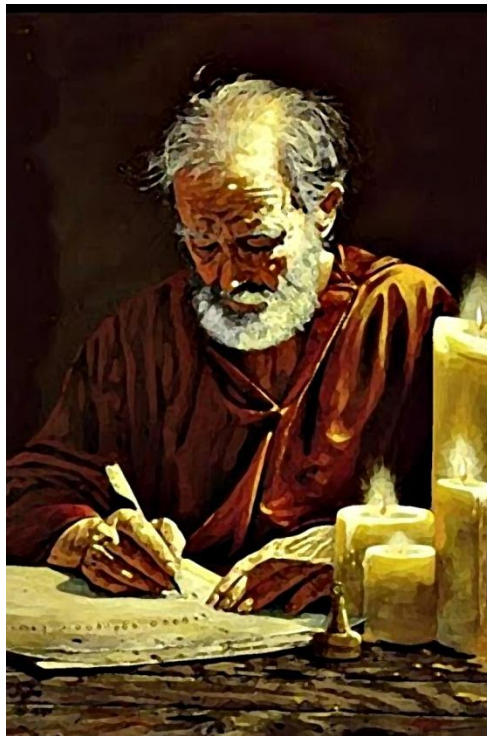


CHRISTIAN WOMEN Pt.8: HAIR, HEAD COVERINGS, ANCIENT HAIR STYLES

***Disclaimer:** There is nothing wrong with long hair on a woman. I have nothing against long hair even though the longest my hair has been is just past my shoulders. However, the passage we are going to study today has been made misunderstood regarding a woman's hair and head coverings and I hope to clear that up in this teaching.*

HAIR and HEAD COVERINGS



In the book of 1 Corinthians, Paul had been writing letters to answer questions that the Corinthian church had. So when we read these next passages we have to remember that sometimes what is being said is the church's view and some of what is being said is Paul's correction or teaching.

1 Cor.11:1-16 - Be ye followers of me, even as I also *am* (a follower) of Christ. Now I praise you, brethren, that ye remember me in all things, and keep the ordinances, as I delivered *them* to you. 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. Next is the church's view: 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 (for this is the same as shaving her head). For if the woman be not covered (does not cover her head), let her also be shorn (she might as well have her hair cut off): but if it be a shame for a woman to be shorn or shaven (to have her hair cut off or her head shaved), let her be covered (let her cover her head). 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 the man is not of the woman (man did not come from woman); but the woman of the man (the first woman came from the man). Neither was the man created for the woman; but the woman for the man. Here is Paul's view: For this cause ought the woman to have power on *her* head (to have authority over her own head) because of the angels. Nevertheless neither is the man without the woman (man is not independent of the woman), neither the woman without the man (woman is not independent of the man), in the Lord. For as the woman *is* of the man (for although the first woman came from the man), even so *is* the man also by the woman (since then, every man is born of the woman); but all things (come) of God. Judge in yourselves: is it comely (proper) that a woman pray unto God uncovered (that a woman pray in public to God with her head 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. But if any man seem to be contentious, we have no such custom, neither the churches of God.

The view of the church was to place emphasis on the man being more important because he was the origin, that is God created Adam first. That was not Paul's view. Paul explained that everyone comes from God. And even, that in order for Christ to come in the flesh, He was born of a woman, although we know He is God and has always existed.

The men in Corinth wanted to elevate themselves above the women. That is not God's way. The wife is submissive to the husband as head of the household but he does not abuse this position or lord it over her.



Now think about this, the priesthood wore head coverings. And they certainly ministered before God and prayed over the people. This does not match with what is being said by the church in Corinth about a man dishonoring his head to have it covered while praying or prophesying. The high priest had to have on the proper garments, including a head covering before he approached God.

The people of Israel would sometimes uncover their heads and throw dirt on their heads as a sign of mourning. And sometimes as a sign of mourning they would cover their heads. Right at the beginning of the priesthood, God struck down two of Aaron's sons for bringing strange fire before Him. Listen to this next passage which is right in the very moment that they died.

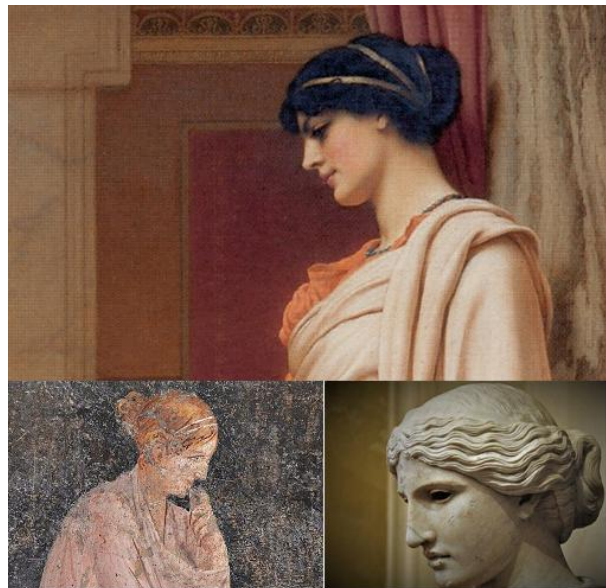
Leviticus 10:6 – And Moses said unto Aaron, and unto Eleazar and unto Ithamar, his sons, Uncover not your heads, neither rend your clothes; lest ye die, and lest wrath come upon all the people: but let your brethren, the whole house of Israel, bewail the burning which the LORD hath kindled.

God killed Aarons sons for their sin, and he nor his other sons, Eleazar and Ithamar, were allowed to mourn. If they, being the priesthood, would have

mourned in front of all the people it would show that they thought God was wrong in what He did, or that they did not agree and they could not do that. They knew and understood that God is holy. So you see the priesthood did wear head coverings.

Remember what Paul wrote to Timothy, encouraging the women to be sure they focused on their inward godly beauty rather than on the outward appearance. He mentioned their braided hair. If the women were veiled in the churches, or in public, then the braided hair would not be seen.

In verse 5 you see that the church wanted the women to conform to traditions or customs. Corinth was under Roman rule and had to abide by their laws and apparently according to research, there were certain standards in regards to how they dressed.



Usually married women had their hair pulled up or tied up or braided and up on their heads in some way. A matron and a widow wore certain type of clothing indicating their marital status. It appears that in ancient Greco-Roman times, sometimes in periods of mourning the hair was cut close and otherwise, slaves had their hair cut close as a sign of servitude. Women would let their hair down in times of mourning. However, it was less socially accepted because pagan women in certain cults let their hair down in frenzied worship.



mae·nad

/ˈmēnad/

noun

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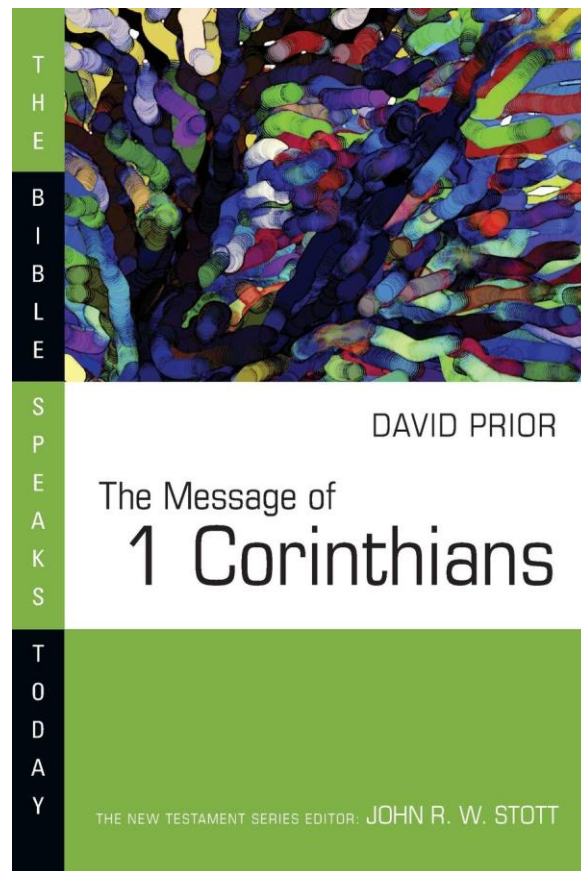
Again in this passage, we run into the underlying intention that a man present himself as a man and a woman present herself as a woman. No deception of gender is acceptable to God. Cross-dressing and transgenderism was practiced more than we have realized in worship of the fallen angels. Corinth was steeped in these practices. This harkens back to our verse from Deut.22:5 about not wearing the clothing of the opposite sex. It was all about not deceiving people about what sex you are. A woman is not to appear as a man and vice versa.

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Paul took the differences between men and women to be a given. He further believed it was common knowledge that men and women should have different hairstyles. Paul did not want the Corinthians concealing their sex with sexually ambiguous hairstyles that were socially suspect in Roman Corinth. Back then the man and the woman dressed very similarly and so the hair was a distinguishing feature between the two. Think about it, if they both basically had robes on and both had shaved heads, then one might look like a man and vice versa.

Today, we have short hair styles for women, just like I wear my hair. But when you see me, you know full well I am a woman and not a man. This is the concern. This stems from what was happening in the pagan temples with men dressing as women and presenting themselves as women. That would be men with long hair.

And women presenting themselves as men, maybe that is shaved hair or short hair but the clothing would be deceptive as well.



Let's look at a passage from this book: The Message of 1 Corinthians, a book by David Prior

2. The behaviour of the women (11:3–16)

In first-century Greece, dress for men and women was apparently very similar, except for the women's 'head-covering' (here called *kalymma*, or 'veil'). This, incidentally, was not the equivalent of the Arab veil, but a covering for her hair alone. The normal, everyday dress of all Greek women included this *kalymma*. The only women who did not wear them were the *hetairai*, who were the 'high-class' mistresses of influential Corinthians. Also, slaves had their heads shaved, and the same practice was enacted as punishment for convicted adulteresses. It has further been suggested that the sacred prostitutes from the local temple of Aphrodite did not wear veils.

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What is a head covering? Is it long hair? Or a veil? Remember at this time the churches met in homes and women were not usually veiled. There was no

command in the law of God commanding women to wear veils. To straighten all of this out, Paul states that a woman's hair is her covering. Both the veil and the hair as coverings are mentioned in the passage of scripture that we read. But at the end of the passage you get down to what is really being talked about. Verse 15 speaks of the woman's hair being a glory to her, specifically her long hair. And Paul says it is given her for a covering. So a woman's hair is her covering. Then in verse 16, Paul wraps the whole thing up saying if anyone is not in agreement with what he has said, we have no such custom, meaning the apostles and then he said, nor do the churches of God. So all along he is dealing with customs or traditions in the city of Corinth.

What does the Bible say about following different traditions?

Col.2:8 – Beware lest any man spoil you through philosophy and vain deceit, after the tradition of men, after the rudiments of the world, and not after Christ.

In 2 Cor. 11:3-4 Paul warns the Corinthians about false teachers, teaching another Jesus, and cautioned them about receiving another spirit, not the Holy Spirit, or another gospel. They were so out of order in this church and they were sort of all over the road, so much so, that Paul was telling them that if these things happened, they might just accept them. He was worried about them being deceived. They were listening to wrong teachings.

In the old testament if a man suspected his wife of cheating on him there was a ritual of jealousy that had to be performed before the LORD:

Numbers 5:17-18 – And the priest shall take holy water in an earthen vessel; and of the dust that is in the floor of the tabernacle the priest shall take, and put it into the water: And the priest shall **SET THE WOMAN BEFORE THE LORD, AND UNCOVER THE WOMAN'S HEAD**, and put the offering of memorial in her hands, which is the jealousy offering: and the priest shall have in his hand the bitter water that causeth the curse:

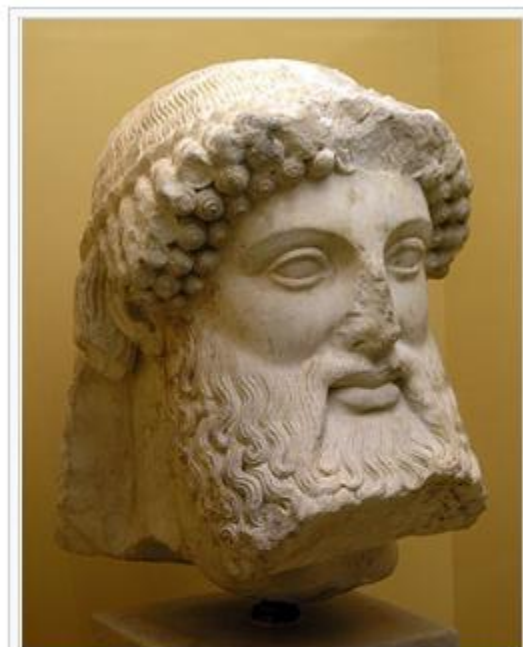
In research, the consensus is that a married woman's hair was usually tied up or put up on her head. The uncovering her head was the letting down of her hair. It isn't clear in that passage though and it could have been that she had a veil on.

Apparently in Paul's time, in Roman-Greco cultures, women with loose hair were usually the unmarried or "loose" women.

There was never anything in God's law commanding women to wear head coverings.

RESEARCH on HAIRSTYLES in PAUL'S TIME


I did some research on the hairstyles of the time period that Paul was teaching the Corinthians.



Archaic bearded head of [Hermes](#) from a herm, early 5th century BC

I pulled this which is earlier than Paul's day but I wanted you to see this as an example of what the women were doing. This is an archaic bearded head of Hermes, a fallen angel, from a herm, early 5th century BC. Notice how the hair on top of the head is flattened out and looks to be combed forward or combed flat and outward from the center all around. Then there are curls at the front around the face. Or maybe they go all the way around the head.



Portrait of a woman of the Flavian period, marble // Portrait bust of a young woman (Julia, daughter of Titus?). Marble. 80s—90s CE. Shows the extremely elaborate hair styles worn by upper-class Roman women of the time. Rome, Capitoline Museums, Palazzo Nuovo, Hall of the Emperors. 

This is a Roman woman from closer to Paul's day. Portrait of a woman of the Flavian period, marble / portrait bust of a young woman (possibly Julia, daughter of Titus). Marble. 80's – 90's a.d. Shows the extremely elaborate hair styles worn by upper-class Roman women of the time. Rome, Capitoline Museums, Palazzo Nuovo, Hall of the Emperors. Because Corinth was under Roman rule, they would probably have had hairstyles similar to this also. She is doing the same thing Hermes was doing but with more stacked up curls.



Here you can see the back and one way that they fixed it. It seems like it has lines cut into it and I'm not sure how they did that unless that is just actually tiny braids wrapped together. Some research said that they would wear false curls around their face. So that the big stack of curls was some type of wiglet.



Extreme "do," probably of Trajanic period

This is pretty elaborate. Exactly what Apostle Paul and Apostle Peter warned us not to do.

Wealth and social status could be determined from ancient Greco-Roman hairstyles. Hairstyles were tied to rites of passage, religious rituals and mimicking of the gods and goddesses or fallen angels. Pagans would cut their hair and dedicate it to their gods. This would be a religious ritual involving hair.

while Augustus himself was recalling the hair of Alexander the Great. We also have a portrait head in the exhibition, lent by the Yale University Art Gallery, of a girl wearing a style made famous by Augustus' wife, **Livia** (58 BCE-29 CE). She has a forehead roll (*nodus*) and bun, linked by a thin braid. The style would have communicated that this girl would become an ideal wife and mother, like Livia herself. This popular style's careful control of the hair was a purposeful part of its message of morality and restraint.



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CLOSING



I did reach out for Pastor Erustus' input on this passage as well. He said:

Greetings Pastor! 1Cor.11:1-6 , from my view the Apostle Paul was talking about honor and or authority. Just as Christ honors and subjects to the authority of God, man too is to honor and obey Christ's authority. In the same breath the woman should honor and be subjected to the authority of her husband. Man has been placed in the position of authority thus his wife is supposed to honor him. Christ is in position of authority over man, hence man must obey His authority. Man too, is in position of authority, thus it's expected of his wife to honor him.

During Paul's times, during worship men uncovered their heads as a sign of submission to God. Man covering his head while prophesying /praying was a sign of dishonor to Christ the head of the church.

In the case of a woman culturally during that time removing her head covering was a sign of immoral life. Shaving her hair was a sign of disgrace due to shameful acts or indicated dishonor or lack of submission to her husband. To me this was not a general rule across the board that women in church or worshipping God must cover their heads. Paul addressed it to the Corinthian women in church

based on their culture in order to reach them with the gospel of Christ. We cannot generalize this as a rule to all women to cover their heads. That's my take on this Pastor.

PRAYER

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Greco-Roman_hairstyle

<https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S0022202X15526158>

https://books.google.com/books?id=keL8DwAAQBAJ&pg=PA165&lpg=PA165&dq=convicted+adulteresses+had+shaved+heads+in+corinth&source=bl&ots=1yjXoWNn3I&sig=ACfU3U1s2UiiiR_Rf-mBJEpSYnN-MTWdA&hl=en&sa=X&ved=2ahUKEwi05YmM4aH4AhUxc98KHW5cCu0Q6AF6BAGYEAM#v=onepage&q=convicted%20adulteresses%20had%20shaved%20heads%20in%20corinth&f=false

Women's hair, braids, ancient styles etc.

<https://deeperstudy.com/link/issue010.html>

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