

The Covering

Kevin Kay

Text: 1 Cor. 11:1-16

Introduction:

- I. Paul's instructions concerning "the covering" have been the subject of much discussion, disagreement, and debate among Christians for many years
- II. As we study this passage together, it is my hope and prayer that we all want nothing more or less than the truth, and that we will "reason together" (Isa. 1:18) in the "meekness and gentleness of Christ" (2 Cor. 10:1; cf. 2 Tim. 2:24)
- III. I'm sure that I will not answer every question or solve every problem, but I hope that our study together will be helpful to all
- IV. Before we exegete the text and examine the major interpretations of the passage, there are several **preliminary observations** that I want to make for your consideration:
 - A. This is a **controversial subject**
 1. Men of proven honesty, knowledge, wisdom, ability, and conviction differ on the teaching of this passage
 2. This fact behooves us to **proceed with caution** and **reject dogmatism**
 - B. This issue is essentially **doctrinal**
 1. It is not a matter of opinion, but of understanding 1 Cor. 11:1-16
 - C. We will almost certainly not come to the **same understanding** of this passage at the **same time**
 1. Some Christians are babes who must drink the milk of the word and others are mature who can digest the meat (Heb. 5:12 – 6:3)
 2. In my opinion, the clarity of God's revelation on this issue is not as obvious as it is on other subjects
 - a. **Jim McGuiggan:** "'To every complex question of life there is a simple answer. And it's always wrong!' Who said that? There is a tendency in us to want everything neat and packaged. Those of us who are committed to the view that the Bible is all-sufficient and authoritative are, I think, especially afflicted with that tendency. When we oppose a false teaching we want a verse that plainly knocks it dead. And it is often the case that there are plain, unvarnished statements of scripture which do just that. But it isn't always so. There are times when we have to weave verses together to get the biblical picture and when we do that, we have less than an explicit statement of the case.
"Our zeal in promoting what we believe to be the truth must be governed by the clarity of the evidence in its favor. The mark of a truth-seeker, says John Locke, is that he will not affirm a proposition with more fervor than the evidence for it warrants. On a scale of 1 to 10 the Bible student can affirm 10 out of 10 that Jesus is the living Son of the living God. But we can't have that degree of certainty *or* certitude about *every* doctrine we say we derive from the Bible. Do you think it is for nothing that Peter says of Paul's epistles that they have *some* things in them *hard* (not impossible) to understand (2 Peter 3:16)? There are some views I hold which I think are correct but I'm not at all sure they are

correct to the degree that I can affirm them with a 10 out of 10 conviction. You're the same way. Let's stop giving people the impression that we believe the Bible presents all its truth with the same amount of clear evidence – we don't!" (*The Book Of 1 Corinthians, Looking Into The Bible Series, 1984, 87-88*)

3. Some have seriously studied this issue and others have not
 4. We need to be patient with one another as we study this subject
- D. It behooves all of us to approach this subject with **open minds** and **open Bibles**
1. **James Needham**: "It should not matter to us what God wants, and we should be anxious to do whatever He requires." ("The Woman's Covering," 14)
- E. Christians are subject to **prejudice, bitterness, self-interest**, etc. just like others
1. We must all search our hearts to see if they are pure and free from prejudice
 2. We must be careful in following those we have confidence in, because they can be prejudiced too
- F. Disagreement always produces **a degree of discomfort**
1. I don't know how to avoid that
 2. But this discomfort can be managed if:
 - a. We all love God and His word and each other as we should
 - b. We will treat each other as we would want to be treated
- G. This issue involves **individual action**, not **collective congregational action**
1. If we do not come to perfect agreement on this subject, we do not need to divide; since all can follow the dictates of their conscience without condoning or endorsing sin
 2. We must have a high regard for those with whom we disagree (1 Cor. 13:4-7; Phil. 2:1-4)
- H. All of us must follow **the dictates of our conscience**
1. If a woman believes that she should wear an artificial covering, then she must do that, because she sins if she violates her conscience Rom. 14:22-23
 2. I will tell any woman that it is sinful for her to violate her conscience, and I will "defend to the death" her right to follow the dictates of her conscience
- I. There are some **troubling questions** regardless of the position one holds
1. Do these instructions apply to the worship assembly or anywhere?
 2. Do these instructions apply to "praying or prophesying" only or to worship in general?
 3. What sort of "covering" is to be worn?
 4. What does "because of the angels" mean?
 5. Etc.
- J. The fact that we may not fully understand everything that Paul teaches in this passage does not exempt us from the obligation to **accept and apply what we do understand**

Body:

I. AN EXPOSITION OF THE TEXT

A. Paul urges the Corinthians to imitate him as he imitated Christ (11:1)

1. There appears to be a poor chapter division here. This verse should probably be connected with the argument in chapter 10
 - a. Note: The chapter and verse divisions in our English translations were not a part of the original manuscripts. They were added later to facilitate the process of finding specific statements in the Bible
 - b. Several English versions [ASV, ESV, NKJV, NIV, NRSV, etc.] connect 11:1 with 10:31
2. We should imitate the apostles only so long as they imitated Christ. If any apostle ceased to imitate Jesus, then he should not be imitated
 - a. Peter (Gal. 2:11-14)

B. Paul praises the Corinthians for keeping the “traditions” that he had delivered to them (11:2)

1. The phraseology “Now I praise you, brethren...” is similar to the way Paul introduced other new topics in 1 Corinthians (cf. 7:1; 8:1; 11:17; 12:1; 16:1)
 - a. This is an indication that Paul is beginning to discuss a new subject
2. Praise for what is praiseworthy is always appropriate
 - a. “A spoonful of sugar helps the medicine go down”
 - b. Jesus commended the seven churches of Asia for the good they were doing before He condemned them for the bad (Rev. 2 & 3)
3. The unauthorized traditions of men are clearly and repeatedly condemned in the NT (cf. Mt. 15:1-9; Mk. 7:1-13; Col. 2:16-23)
4. But the “traditions” that Paul refers to here are the gospel or the doctrine of Christ 2 Th. 2:15; 3:6
 - a. Christians are to keep that which has been handed down from the Lord (cf. 1 Cor. 11:23; 15:3)
 - b. So the source of the tradition is the all-important thing

C. Paul instructs the Corinthians concerning the principle of headship (11:3)

1. Paul begins his discussion of this subject by establishing the **fundamental principle of headship** (i.e. the proper “chain of command”)
 - a. The word “**head**” is often used in the Bible to denote **authority**
 - 1) The OT (Num. 17:3; 25:15; Dt. 28:13, 44 Jud. 10:18; 11:8,11; 1 Sam. 15:17; 2 Sam. 22:44)
 - 2) The NT (Eph. 1:22; 4:15; 5:23; Col. 2:10)
 - 3) Note: See Appendix A: Definitions Of Major Terms
 - b. **God** is the head of Christ (cf. Jn. 14:28; 20:17; 1 Cor. 3:23; 15:27-28)
 - 1) **Mike Willis**: “The fact that Jesus is subject to God does not deny the deity of Christ any more than the fact that woman is subject to man denies the

humanity of woman; Jesus is equal with God in so much as both are deity, but he is, nonetheless, subject to God (cf. Phil. 2:5-11).” (“1 Corinthians,” *Truth Commentaries*, 295)

- c. **Christ** is the head of man (cf. Phil. 2:9-11)
- d. **Man** is the head of woman (cf. Gen. 3:16; 1 Tim. 2:11-14)
 - 1) **Mike Willis**: “Every man is subject to Christ, whether he is a Christian or not, and so is every woman subject to man, whether married or not. Hence, no woman can conduct herself in any fashion that implies that she disregards this relationship.” (“1 Corinthians,” *Truth Commentaries*, 295)

2. **Subjection** does not imply **inferiority**

- a. During the Incarnation, Jesus was submissive to the Father (1 Cor. 11:3; Phil. 2:5-8), but not inferior (Jn. 1:1-2, 14; 5:17-18, 22-23; 10:30; Col. 2:9)
- b. After the Second Coming, Jesus will again be submissive to the Father, but not inferior (1 Cor. 15:24-28)
- c. My role as a citizen in this country is subordinate to that of the governor of this state and the president of this country, but that does not mean that I am inferior to them in worth and value in any way
- d. Likewise, the subordinate role that God has given women does not make them inferior to men
- e. In fact, **submission is a responsibility for all** who would follow Christ
 - 1) **Children** are to submit to **parents** (Eph. 6:1-3)
 - 2) **Wives** are to submit to **husbands** (Eph. 5:22-24; Col. 3:18; 1 Pet. 3:1-6)
 - 3) **Slaves** are to submit to **masters** (Eph. 6:5-6)
 - 4) **Citizens** are to submit to **civil government** (Rom. 13:1)
 - 5) **Christians** are to submit to **elders** (Heb. 13:17)
 - 6) The **younger** are to submit to the **older** (1 Pet. 5:5)
 - 7) **Christians** are to submit to **one another** (Eph. 5:21; 1 Pet. 5:5b)
 - 8) **Christians** are to submit to **special workers** (1 Cor. 16:15-16)
 - 9) **Women** are to submit to **men** (1 Cor. 11:3; 1 Tim. 2:11-12)
 - 10) The **strong** are to consider the **weak** (Rom. 14:1; 15:1-3)
 - 11) **All** are to follow after things that make for peace (Rom. 14:19)
- f. Yet we are **not inferior** to one another but **equal in Christ** (Gal. 3:26-29)
 - 1) **Jim McGuiggan**: “And what is submission but the placing of ourselves, for Christ’s sake, at one another’s disposal so that we can supply what it is that the other needs?” (“The Book Of 1 Corinthians,” *Looking Into The Bible Series*, 222)

D. **Paul instructs the Corinthians concerning the head covering for both men and women (11:4-6)**

- 1. These instructions about the **head covering** grow out of what Paul has just said about **headship**

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2. If a **man** prays or prophesies with his head **covered**, he dishonors his head (11:4)
 - a. This restriction is required when a man is praying or prophesying
 - 1) There is nothing in these instructions that would forbid a man being covered except when praying or prophesying
 - 2) **“Praying”** simply refers to man talking to God
 - a) It is a child pouring out the desires of his heart to his Father (Psa. 62:8; Rom. 10:1; Phil. 4:6-7)
 - 3) **“Prophesying”** is inspired teaching (cf. Lk. 1:67; Acts 19:6; 2 Pet. 1:20-21)
 - b. He dishonors **his head**
 - 1) In light of verse 3, Paul is almost certainly saying that if a man prays or prophesies with his **physical head** covered, he dishonors his **spiritual head** [i.e. Christ]
 3. If a **woman** prays or prophesies with her head **uncovered**, she dishonors her head (11:5)
 - a. Note: There were **women prophetesses** in the early church (cf. Acts 2:16-18; 21:8-9)
 - b. Again this restriction is required when a woman is praying or prophesying
 - 1) A woman must be in subjection to man all the time, but she is required to be covered only when praying or prophesying
 - a) There is nothing in these instructions that would forbid a woman being uncovered except when praying or prophesying
 - b) There is no indication in this passage that a woman must be covered while **singing**, observing the **Lord’s Supper**, **giving**, **listening** to a sermon, or **teaching**
 - 1] **Thomas G. O’Neal**: “‘Praying’ does not include these unless it is included by metonymy and then it would have to be proved and not just assumed.” (“The Holy Spirit’s Veil,” A Sermon presented Feb. 4, 1979 in Bessemer, Alabama, p. 4)
 - 2) The praying under consideration in this context would appear to be public rather than private
 - a) It is not clear how a woman could bring shame on herself by praying privately with her head uncovered
 - c. She dishonors her head
 - 1) In light of verse 3, Paul is almost certainly saying that if a woman prays or prophesies with her **physical head** uncovered, she dishonors her **spiritual head** [i.e. man]
 4. If a woman prayed or prophesied **uncovered** that would be **as shameful** as if she **shaved** her head (11:5b-6)
 - a. Note: Paul does not say that prophesying or praying uncovered **“was the same as”** shaving the head. He said that it was **“one and the same as if”** her head were shaved
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- 1) Being **“uncovered”** was one thing and being **“shaved”** was another
 - b. Paul is not questioning whether or not it is shameful for a woman to be shorn or shaved (cf. 11:5, 15); that is taken for granted. In effect, Paul is saying since it is a shame for a woman to be shorn or shaved and to be uncovered is just as shameful, let her be covered when she prays or prophesies
 - 1) In other words, if a woman will not cover her head, she might as well get her hair cut off, for to be uncovered is just as much a shame as to be shorn
 - 2) **H.A.W. Meyer**: “As the long tresses of the head were counted a womanly adornment among Jews and Gentiles, so the hair shorn off was a sign either of mourning (Deut. 21:12; Homer, *Od.* iv. 198, xxiv.46; Eurip. *Or.* 458, Hermann, *Privatalterth.* xxxix.28) or of shamelessness (Eisner, *Obs.* p. 113), and was even the penalty of an adulteress (Wetstein *in loc.*). What Paul means to say then is: a woman praying with uncovered head stands in the eye of public opinion, guided as it is by appearances, on just the same level with her who has the shorn hair of a courtesan.” (*Corinthians* 105, via *1 Corinthians*, *Truth Commentaries*, 299)
 - 3) **Hiram Hutto**: “Paul is not actually urging these women to get their hair cut off. He is saying that *logically* they might as well do that. He knew that they would not think of doing the latter (cutting off their hair), so they ought not to think of doing the former (being uncovered), Why? Because one is as much a shame as the other.” (“Command Or Custom,” 4-5)
 - 4) Note: **“Shorn”** means short hair. **“Shaved”** means no hair
 5. Note: The injunctions of this passage include both men and women
 - a. Whatever **“praying or prophesying”** was for men, it was for women
 - 1) **Bill Cavender**: “On the very surface of our study it is suggested that what the man was doing, the woman was doing; what the woman was doing, the man was doing. This is the basis of the problem that existed. Had the woman been ‘praying or prophesying’ under different circumstances, conditions and times, there would have been no problem. But they were both doing the same thing in the same way under the same circumstances. Thus the solution to the problem was that the woman praying or prophesying do so veiled; the man praying or prophesying do so unveiled.” (“The Woman And Her Covering,” 10)
 - b. Whatever the man is **not to “cover”**, the woman is to **“cover”**
- E. Paul explains why he has given these instructions to the Corinthians concerning the head covering for both men and women (11:7-11)**
1. Man shouldn’t pray or prophesy with his head covered, because he is **the image and glory of God**, but woman is **the glory of man**, which implies in this context that she should be covered (11:7)
 - a. This reason is based upon **creation, not custom**
 - b. Note: Paul is not saying or implying that woman is not made in the image of God (Gen. 1:26-27; 5:1-2)
 2. Then Paul explains **why the woman is the glory of man**
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- a. **Mike Willis:** “The conjunction **for** (*gar*) in this verse relates it to the preceding verse as an explanation of why the woman is the glory of man.” (“1 Corinthians,” *Truth Commentaries*, 302)
 - b. First, because **woman is from man** (11:8)
 - 1) Paul is alluding to the fact that the first woman, **Eve**, was made from Adam’s rib (Gen. 2:21-23)
 - 2) She was created **after man** (1 Tim. 2:12-14)
 - c. Second, because the **woman was created for the man** (11:9)
 - 1) Paul is alluding to the fact that in the beginning when God saw that it was not good for man to be alone, He made woman to be **man’s companion** (Gen. 2:18)
 - 2) Again, this reason is based upon **creation, not custom**
3. In contrast to the man, the woman ought to have **a symbol of authority on her head** because of the angels (11:10)
 - a. The phrase **“For this reason”** connects what Paul is about to say with what he has just said about creation
 - b. The word **“ought”** speaks of necessity and obligation (cf. Heb. 5:12; 1 Jn. 4:11; Eph. 5:28)
 - c. The expression [lit.] **“authority on the head”** has been interpreted to mean:
 - 1) A **sign of subjection** to man
 - a) **Goodspeed:** “That is why she ought to wear upon her head **something to symbolize her subjection**, on account of the angels, if of nobody else.”
 - b) **Moffatt:** “Therefore, in view of the angels, woman has to wear a **symbol of subjection** on her head.”
 - c) **Williams:** “This is why woman ought to wear upon her head a **symbol of man’s authority**, especially out of respect to the angels.”
 - d) **S. Lewis Johnson:** “**Power**, or authority, means, by an unusual metonymy, sign of authority. The veil is the sign of the man’s authority.” (“1 Corinthians,” *The Wycliffe Bible Commentary*, 1962, 1247)
 - 2) A **sign of authority** to speak (i.e. pray and prophesy)
 - a) **Mike Willis:** “What we should expect Paul to have said is that woman should have a sign of her *hupotage* (subjection) upon her head. When most commentators have finished their exposition of this verse, that is virtually what they have concluded that it teaches. *Exousia* is understood to be a symbol of man’s authority over the woman which, in essence, is a symbol of her subjection to man. But, that is not what Paul wrote. Ramsay’s frequently quoted comment is worth repeating; he said, ‘Most of the ancient and modern commentators say that the “authority” which the woman wears on her head is the authority to which she is subject -- a preposterous idea which a Greek scholar would laugh at anywhere except in the New Testament, where (as they seem to think) Greek words may mean anything that commentators

choose. Authority or power that belongs to the wearer, such power as the magistrate possesses in virtue of his office, was meant by the Greek word *exousia* (*The Cities of St. Paul* 203). There is no evidence in secular or biblical Greek that *exousia* can mean a symbol of subjection. Hence, the explanation which results in a meaning that perverts *exousia* into *hupotage* must be rejected.

“Let us consider another alternative. Remember that Paul is discussing the praying or prophesying woman – the woman who, to some degree at least, worked in a public capacity in the church (the strength of the view that the prayers offered by these women were inspired is in limiting the application of a woman publicly praying to the time of spiritual gifts, bringing this into harmony with other teaching about woman’s role in the church). That woman was required to recognize her subordination to man as much as the woman who did not discharge public responsibilities. The roles that these women were playing were normally withheld from women; however, if the women would continue to recognize their subordination to man by the wearing of the veil, then they could go ahead and take their public part. The veil, then, gave them the authority to pray or prophesy. By recognizing their God-given place in the order of divine creation, the woman could do that which she was ordinarily forbidden to do. The veil became the symbol of her authority to act in the capacity of praying or prophesying. This is the only explanation with which I am acquainted that does justice to the word *exousia*.” (“1 Corinthians,” *Truth Commentaries*, 303-304)

- 3) A **magical authority** against evil angels
 - 4) An Aramaic **colloquialism for “veil”**
- d. The expression **“because of the angels”** has been interpreted in various ways:
- 1) Some suggest that this is an allusion to the **evil angels who lusted after the “daughters of men”** (Gen. 6:1-4)
 - 2) Some suggest that Paul is alluding to **the angels who sinned** when they did not keep their proper domain (Jude 6; 2 Pet. 2:4)
 - a) **Mike Willis**: “The idea, according to this view, would be that Paul was reminding the Corinthian women of what happened to the angels who refused to recognize and accept the place God assigned to them in order to encourage them not to commit the same kind of sin. Hence, the woman should wear the veil to show that she accepts the place which God has assigned to her.” (“1 Corinthians,” *Truth Commentaries*, 305)
 - 3) Some suggest that it refers to **good angels** [either invisibly present in worship assemblies or otherwise ministering to Christians (Heb. 1:14)] **who would be offended** at any breach of these instructions
 - a) The NT teaches that angels are witnesses to what transpires on earth (cf. Lk. 15:7, 10; 1 Cor. 4:9; Eph. 3:10; 1 Tim. 5:21)
 - b) The angels would recognize a violation of God’s revealed order when the woman refused to be covered while praying or prophesying

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- c) **Norman Hillyer**: “At Qumran men with physical blemishes were excluded from ‘the assembly of God’, for ‘the holy angels are present’; *i.e.* nothing unseemly must come before them (G. Vermes, *The Dead Sea Scrolls in English*, 1962).” (“1 Corinthians.” *The New Bible Commentary: Revised*, 1066)
- 4) Some suggest that this means that since **angels submit to and recognize authority**, women should as well
- a) **Bill Cavender**: “Paul reasons from the greater to the lesser, the superior to the inferior. Angels are superior beings to men and women, yet submit to and recognize authority. Therefore, it was proper that the inferior, the woman, submit to and recognize the authority of man by wearing the veil upon her head.” (“The Woman And Her Covering,” 31-32)
- 5) Some suggest that this means that since **the angels reverently veil their faces before God** (Isa. 6:2), women should as well
- e. Although we may not know for sure what this means (Dt. 29:29), it is obviously given as an inducement for a woman to cover her head while praying or prophesying
- f. Note: Paul did not give these reasons to **establish the principle of headship** and subjection. He gave these reasons to **prompt an action** and that action was the covering and the uncovering of the head
- F. **Paul then offers a parenthetical explanation to help men and women keep these instructions in proper perspective (11:11-12)**
1. Paul points out that men and women are **mutually dependent** upon one another because:
- a. **“The woman was from the man”**
- 1) The first woman, **Eve**, was created from Adam’s rib (Gen. 2:21-23)
- b. **“Even so the man also is through the woman”**
- 1) With the single exception of Adam, **all men** are born into the world through women (Gen. 3:20; Job 14:1)
- c. **“All things are from God”**
- 1) Man and woman were **both created by God** (Gen. 1:26-27)
- 2) **Frank Jamerson**: “Both the order of creation and the proper relationship of man and woman is of God and we should respect it.” (“A Brief Study Of The Veil,” 6)
- 3) **Albert Barnes**: “All things were created and arranged by him. This expression seems designed to suppress any spirit of complaint or dissatisfaction with this arrangement; to make the woman contented in her subordinate station, and to make the man humble by the consideration that it is all owing to the appointment of God. The woman should therefore be contented, and the man should not assume any improper superiority, since the whole arrangement and appointment is of God.” (*Barnes’ Notes*, 207)
2. Note: Verse 8 is balanced by verse 12, and verse 9 is balanced by verse 11
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G. Paul now appeals to the Corinthians to corroborate what he has just taught with their own judgment (11:13-15)

1. Paul asks the Corinthians to **give their judgment** about the matter
 - a. Paul's rhetorical question anticipates a negative answer (11:13)
 - 1) Note: Paul talks about a woman **praying** without any reference to prophesying
2. Paul appeals to **"nature"** to help the Corinthians with their judgment (11:14)
 - a. I believe that the word **"even"** indicates that Paul is making a secondary and corroborative argument here
 - 1) He argues from the **lesser** to the **greater**
 - 2) If even **"nature"** teaches a covering, how much more **divine revelation**
 - b. The word **"nature"** [*phusis*] can refer to:
 - 1) That which is **innate** or **inborn** (cf. Rom. 1:26; 11:24; Gal. 4:8)
 - 2) That which is **established by custom** or **long practice** (cf. Eph. 2:3)
 - c. Please note that Paul says: "Does not even nature itself **teach** you...."; he does not say: "Does not even nature itself **give** you...."
 - 1) He does not say that nature **gives men short hair**
 - 2) He does not say that nature **gives women long hair**
 - 3) He does not say that nature **gives anyone anything**
 - d. Paul is not talking here about **"inborn nature,"** for woman's hair will not naturally grow longer than men's. Paul is talking about what becomes "natural" by **long practice** (Eph. 2:3)
 - 1) Would men and women, instinctively know, without any kind of instruction from anyone, that men should have short hair and women long hair? I don't think so
 - 2) **Paul Williams**: "'Nature' here means that which is so deeply ingrained and habitual as to be accepted without further thought. It was the normal thing for a man to have short hair and woman to have long hair. Except under unusual circumstances, such as when a man took the Nazarite vow (Num. 6:1-5), a man would be considered effeminate if he wore long hair, and if a woman cut her hair short like a man she would be acting shamelessly."
(Email Post, 3/16/95)
 - 3) **Bob Sarrett**: "It was not a '*dishonor*' to man for him to have long hair because of the way that he was physically constituted. If it were not cut, the hair of most men would grow to be as long as a woman's. Neither would it be a dishonor because of a universal law of God. If there was such a universal law, it has not been recorded for us in the Scriptures." ("The Woman's Covering," *The Pointer*, March 1986, 18:3:2)
 - 4) **James Shear**: "History denies that it has always been a shame for a man to have long hair. The American Indian, the Chinese, and many of our own ancestors did not consider long hair on men to be a shame. This is not to say there was no distinction between the male and the female in dress and

grooming, as well as with other customs, but *long* and *short hair* has not always made that distinction in every place and time.” (*An Exegesis Of 1 Cor. 11:1-16*, 68)

- 5) **Jim McGuiggan**: “Throughout history we have the testimony of nations whose men wore their hair long without anyone having the impression they were womanish for doing so. The Spartans (and we won’t accuse them of being effeminate) wore their hair longer than shoulder length. Greeks and Babylonians went for long hair.” (“The Book of 1 Corinthians,” *Looking Into The Bible Series*, 151)
 - 6) **Paul Marsh**: “Differing cultures have had differing concepts as to what is fitting, but as a generalization the statement is still true. Most men, whether eastern or western, wear their hair short in contrast to their womenfolk.” (“The First Letter To The Corinthians,” *The New Layman’s Bible Commentary*, 1444)
 - 7) **Mike Willis**: “The exact manner in which nature has distinguished between man and woman’s hair is not clear; men can grow long hair and some men can grow it in abundance. Whether by chance or something else, however, women have generally worn their hair longer than men; cases in which a man’s hair is longer than that of the woman have been the exception and not the rule. Thus, nature has distinguished between the sexes so far as the hair is concerned, whether that is learned by long established habit or by something innate.” (“1 Corinthians,” *Truth Commentaries*, 307)
- e. Nature teaches two different things
- 1) If a **man** has **long hair**, it is a **dishonor** to him (11:14)
 - a) Note: The OT speaks of some men who wore **long hair**
 - 1] God commanded those who took a **Nazarite vow** not to cut their hair (Num. 6:1-8)
 - 2] **Samson** had long hair (Jud. 13:2-7)
 - 3] **Samuel** was evidently a Nazarite (1 Sam. 1:11)
 - 4] **Absalom** had long hair (2 Sam. 14:25-26)
 - b) **Mike Willis**: “For a man to wear long hair is to obscure God’s natural distinctions between the sexes. The fact that specific societies for temporary periods of time have not abided by God’s natural arrangement does not alter what Paul said in this verse.” (“1 Corinthians,” *Truth Commentaries*, 307)
 - 2) If a **woman** has **long hair**, it is a **glory** to her (11:15)
 - a) **Jeff Belknap**: “In Rev. 9:8 John portrays strange creatures by writing: ‘And they had hair as the hair of women, and their teeth were as the teeth of lions.’ What picture do we see when we see ‘hair as the hair of women?’ Men’s hair is just as thick, thin, curly and/or straight as women’s hair; and just as brown, red, brunette, black and/or blond as women’s hair. So what is the significance of ‘hair as the hair of women?’ The vision is creatures with ‘long hair’.” (“The Covering,” 5)
 - b) “For her hair is given to her for a **covering**”
 - 1] While Paul has used some form of *katakalupto* previously (11:5, 6, 7, 13), he now uses the word *peribolaion*

- 2] Paul seems to be saying that **the natural covering** [the hair] illustrates the propriety of **the artificial covering** [the veil]
- c) **Jeff Belknap**: “Sometimes women attempt to justify their short hair by reasoning that since it is cut in a woman’s style, it distinguishes her from man, and therefore is not that which “pertains to a man.” However, if the above human reasoning is valid, a man would be equally justified in having long (hanging-down) hair, as long as it was fashioned in a man’s style. If we (rightfully) believe that a man’s long hair dishonors his head (Christ), we must agree that a woman’s short hair dishonors her head (man), as well. Length (not style) is what’s emphasized in this context.” (“The Covering,” 8)
- f. Nature is not introduced to **establish** the practice of covering the head when praying or prophesying [revelation has already done that] but to **confirm** what revelation says, namely that it is a glory for a woman to be covered and a shame for her to be uncovered
- 1) **Carrol Sutton**: “Paul doesn’t say that her hair is given her for the **only** covering, but for **a** covering. The fact that nature teaches that long hair is **a** covering given to woman ought to convince the woman that she **ought to cover her head** while praying or prophesying.” (“A Study Of 1 Corinthians 11:1-16, *The Instructor*, April, 1989, 26:4:2-3)

H. Paul concludes his instructions by addressing the man who would seem to be contentious (11:16)

1. Note: See Appendix E: Various Translations Of 1 Corinthians 11:16
2. Who is the “**anyone [who] seems to be contentious**”?
 - a. Some have argued that this is **Paul**
 - 1) Paul is defending himself against **an anticipated charge of seeming to be contentious** because he was binding on the Corinthians a custom that was not bound on other churches elsewhere
 - a) **Frank Jamerson**: “He [Paul] may have appeared to be contentious (when he was not, cp. 1 Cor. 12:22; Gal. 2:6), because he was binding these things on the Corinthian women when he did not bind them in other places.” (“A Brief Study Of The Veil,” 8)
 - b) Note: Paul doesn’t say if anyone **is** contentious but **seems** to be
 - 2) Objections:
 - a) This man “**seems to be contentious**” because he **is contentious** just as the man who “**seems to be religious**” (Jas. 1:26 KJV) **is religious** (cf. Acts 17:18; 1 Cor. 3:18; Heb. 12:11)
 - 1] **F. W. Farrar**: “‘Seem to be contentious’ is (like the Latin *videtur*) only a courteous way of saying ‘*is contentious*.’” (*The Pulpit Commentary*, 19:363)
 - b) Is it necessarily true that Paul might seem to be contentious by binding something on Corinth that he didn’t bind on others?
 - 1] Did he seem to be contentious when he circumcised **Timothy** (Acts 16:1-3) but refused to circumcise **Titus** (Gal. 2:1-5)?

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- c) The “**any man**” or “**anyone**” is distinguished from the “**we**” [the apostles] and “**the churches of God**”
- b. I believe that this man is anyone who would **raise objections** to Paul’s teaching
- 1) Who would be **contentious**? One who accepts Paul’s teaching or one who rejects it?
 - 2) The answer seems obvious to me
3. What does Paul mean when he says “**we have no such custom**”? This statement has been interpreted in at least two different ways
- a. Some argue that Paul is saying that while **the Corinthians had to respect their local custom** (i.e. that men be uncovered and women covered when they prayed or prophesied), **the apostles and other churches elsewhere did not have that particular custom**
 - b. Others argue that Paul is saying that **if a man would be contentious about the instruction that Paul has just given** (i.e. by contending for uncovered women and covered men), he needs to realize that **he is flying in the face of the accepted custom [i.e. practice] of the apostles and the churches of God** (cf. 1 Cor. 4:17; 7:17; 14:33)
 - 1) He has **no apostolic precedent** nor do any of the churches of God to condone his custom. He is alone in his contention
 - 2) It is true that Paul actually uses the word “**custom**” in this verse, rather than “**practice**”; but this does not necessarily mean that “practice” is a mistranslation. Sometimes the most **literal translation** is not the **best translation**
 - a) 2 Ki. 9:8:
 - 1] KJV: “⁸ For the whole house of Ahab shall perish: and I will cut off from Ahab **him that pisseth against the wall**, and him that is shut up and left in Israel:”
 - 2] NKJV: “⁸ For the whole house of Ahab shall perish; and I will cut off from Ahab **all the males** in Israel, both bond and free.
 - b) Phil. 2:1:
 - 1] KJV: “ If *there be* therefore any consolation in Christ, if any comfort of love, if any fellowship of the Spirit, if any **bowels** and mercies,
 - 2] NKJV: “Therefore if *there is* any consolation in Christ, if any comfort of love, if any fellowship of the Spirit, if any **affection** and mercy,
 - c) Phile. 7:
 - 1] KJV: “For we have great joy and consolation in thy love, because the **bowels** of the saints are refreshed by thee, brother.”
 - 2] NKJV: “For we have great joy and consolation in your love, because the **hearts** of the saints have been refreshed by you, brother.”

- 3) After establishing what Paul actually **said**, we still have to determine what he **meant**
 - a) If one were to take 1 Cor. 15:29 at “face value,” he might conclude, as the Mormons do, that Paul was teaching vicarious baptism for the dead, but we know from other passages that Paul cannot be teaching that (cf. Ezek. 18:20; Mt. 16:27; Rom. 2:6-9; 2 Cor. 5:10)
- 4) This is the interpretation favored by the vast majority of commentaries that I consulted
 - a) Note: See Appendix B: The Commentators On 1 Corinthians 11:16

II. INTERPRETATIONS OF THE PASSAGE

- A. There are **two basic positions** with respect to the covering:
 1. An artificial covering is **required today**
 - a. It is a **universal command**
 2. An artificial covering is **not required today**
 - a. It was a **local custom**
 - b. **(Long) hair** is the only required covering
 - c. These instructions applied only to those with **miraculous spiritual gifts**
 - d. It is the **“spiritual head”** that must be “covered,” not the **“physical head”**
- B. There are **six important questions** that we need to try to answer as we try to properly interpret and apply this passage
 1. **What?** (Veil or Hair)
 2. **Why?** (Custom or Command)
 3. **Who?** (Inspired or Uninspired)
 4. **Where?** (Assembly or Anywhere)
 5. **How?** (Spoken prayer or Silent prayer)
 6. **When?** (Praying or Prophesying Only, while Worshipping God)
- C. **Interpretation #1: The “Covering” Is A Universal Command**
 1. Explanation:
 - a. Paul’s instructions concerning the covering, for both men and women, are just as true and applicable today as they were in the first century
 2. Affirmative Arguments:
 - a. **Paul’s instructions concerning headship (11:3) are universal and not subject to custom or culture**
 - 1) **Hiram Hutto**: “The relationships here described are as unchangeable as God himself. They are not based on ‘custom’ nor upon anything else except the word of God Almighty. Christ is not man’s head because *custom* made it so, but because *God* made it so. Man is not woman’s head because *custom* so ordered, but because *God* so ordered. This is the divine order and has nothing to do with custom. Custom did not make these relationships, and

custom cannot change them with God. Yet it is upon the high doctrine here asserted that the rest of the argument is based. This is the very *foundation* of the apostle's argument and without it the rest is meaningless. Since then the very foundation *transcends* custom, would it not be passing strange if all the rest is *completely* custom?" ("Command Or Custom," 2)

b. **Paul's instructions concerning the head covering (11:4-5) grow out his instructions concerning headship (11:3)**

- 1) Since **the rule** about headship is not a matter of custom, neither are **the regulations** about the head covering
- 2) As long as man remains the "head" of woman just that long will woman dishonor man when she prays with her head uncovered
- 3) In dishonoring her head [man], she dishonors herself and God who made man the head of woman
 - a) Response: While the principle of headship is a universal principle, the head covering could be a cultural expression of respect for that principle
 - 1] In Oriental cultures, wives walk behind their husbands as an expression of respect and submission
 - 2] In Arab cultures, women's faces are veiled as an expression of respect and submission

c. **Paul bases his argument on things that transcend culture and custom**

- 1) The **nature of man**
 - a) Man was created in the "**image and glory of God**"
 - b) Woman is the "**glory of man**" (11:7)
- 2) The **order and purpose of creation**
 - a) Woman was created **from man** (11:8)
 - b) Woman was created **for man** (11:9)
- 3) **The angels** (11:9)
 - a) Angels still exist today
 - 1] They are subject to Christ (1 Pet. 3:22)
 - 2] They cannot die (Lk. 20:34-36)
 - 3] The angels of the "little ones" behold the Father's face in heaven (Mt. 18:10)
 - 4] They observe the saints (1 Tim. 5:21)
 - 5] They minister to the saints in some way (Heb. 1:14)
 - 6] They protect believers (Psa. 34:7; 91:9-11)
 - 7] They rejoice when a sinner repents (Lk. 15:10)
 - 8] Etc.
 - b) Angels have nothing to do with culture and custom

d. **Paul's appeal to the Corinthians' personal judgment and nature are secondary arguments designed to corroborate what he has already taught (11:13-15)**

- 1) **Carrol Sutton:** "Paul was not saying that it is simply a matter of your own personal judgment. He was not saying that whatever you may think about the matter will be God's will. This rhetorical question is asked after Paul has set forth the principles of headship, creation and the angels. His question was not to be answered out of religious ignorance or personal preference. Obviously Paul expected an enlightened negative answer." (*A Study Of 1 Corinthians 11:1-16, 12*)

e. **Paul's appeal to apostolic precedent indicates that this was not just a local custom at Corinth (11:16)**

- 1) Paul would not base his argument on **creation** (1 Cor. 11:7-9) and then dismiss it as just a matter of local **custom**
 - a) Response: Paul gives several reasons why it was better not to marry under "**the present distress**" (1 Cor. 7:26) but concludes by saying: "But even if you do marry, you have not sinned; and if a virgin marries, she has not sinned. Nevertheless such will have trouble in the flesh, but I would spare you." (1 Cor. 7:28)

f. **There is historical evidence that Christian women wore a head covering**

- 1) **Quotations** from some of the early "Church Fathers"
 - a) Note: See Appendix C: The "Church Fathers" On The Veil
- 2) The **pictures** in the catacombs
 - a) **Marvin R. Vincent:** "The testimonies of Tertullian and Chrysostom show that these injunctions of Paul prevailed in the churches. In the sculptures of the catacombs **the women have a close-fitting head-dress, while the men have the hair short.**" (Emphasis Added, *Word Studies In The New Testament*, 3:248)

g. **If there is any doubt at all, shouldn't we take the safe course?**

- 1) Response: "This is not a Scriptural way of establishing authority. When the Corinthians had a problem with eating meats offered to idols, Paul did not say 'take the safe course, do not eat it' (1 Cor. 8). It is 'safe' for a woman never to cut her hair (and some believe that 1 Cor. 11 so teaches). It would be 'safe' to salute with a holy kiss, but is that what God's word binds on us? The 'safe' course is for those who cannot eat meats with good consciences, or cut their hair, or pray without something on their heads to act with a good conscience, but that is not a Scriptural reason to urge these things on others." (Frank Jamerson, "A Brief Study Of The Veil," 12)

3. Rebuttal Arguments:

- a. Note: For the most part, the rebuttal arguments to this interpretation are the affirmative arguments for the other interpretations of the passage
- b. **Women who wear the head covering today do not wear the same kind of covering that was worn in the first century**
 - 1) Explanation:

- a) The word for “**cover**” (*katakalupto*) in 1 Cor. 11 requires a **specific type of head-covering**, namely, a **veil**. It must **cover the entire head**, including the face, and it must **hang down from the head**

1] **R. L. Whiteside**: “We are told that there were two styles--namely an indoor veil and an outdoor veil. The indoor veil extended to the waste, the outdoor veil, to the heels, or nearly so. The head part in both styles was a sort of hood that **completely covered the head, extending down over the forehead, but not usually over the face**. A hat is about as poor a substitute for either style as sprinkling is for baptism. But custom now decrees that women wear hats instead of veils; and so in the case of sprinkling for baptism, it is argued that the hat serves as well as the veil”

(Emphasis Added, *Reflections*, pgs. 113-114, via Bob Buchanon, “The Covering Question,” *What The Bible Says*, March, 1979, 2:3:3)

2] **Bill Cavender**: “The covering was the veil, that which **hanged down from the head and covered the head**. The modern hat, shawl, scarf, bonnet, doily or mantilla will not do. I have **NEVER** yet seen a woman in the assembly meet the demands of I Cor. 11:2-16. One cannot substitute a hat, net, ribbon, scarf, etc., for the veil, the covering of I Cor. 11:2-16. One might as well substitute sprinkling for immersion, cornbread for unleavened bread or Coca-Cola for the fruit of the vine in the Lord’s Supper, or buttermilk for water in baptism, as to substitute a hat for the veil of I Cor. 11:2-16.” (Emphasis Added, “The Woman And Her Covering,” 5-6)

3] **Bill Cavender**: “Paul could have used ‘pilos’ if a hat or cap were sufficient as a covering, but he did not. He used ‘kata’ and ‘kalupto,’ clearly distinguishing **that covering which must hang down from the head. The covering was specific – the veil**. No scholar would permit a hat, cap, shawl, mantilla, turban, etc., as a substitute for the **kalumma** demanded.” (Emphasis Added, “The Woman And Her Covering,” 29)

4] Just as surely as *baptizo* requires the body to be covered fully, *katakalupto* requires that the head be covered fully

- a] Some may question whether the idea of “**hanging down**” inheres in the word(s), but none acquainted with the original will question that the idea of “**fully covered**” inheres in the word(s)
- b] That which does not **fully cover** does not meet the demands of *katakalupto*
- c] Moses wore a **veil** (*kalumma*) over **his face** (2 Cor. 3:13-14; Ex. 34:33-35)

2) Evaluation:

- a) **This argument is a “red herring”**

1] At best it shows that head covering advocates **do not obey** the requirements of this passage; it does not show that the requirements of this passage **need not be obeyed**

2] To prove that one is **inconsistent** is not to prove that his position is **false**

b) **The passage does not specify a particular “covering”**

1] The NT does not specify the size, the shape, the composition, or the color of the head covering

a] **Jim McGuigan**: “**Veils came in all shapes and sizes.**

There were those which were suspended so as to cover the face. Some were on the head and flowed backward down over the shoulders. Some completely hid the woman’s head and shoulders. Some hid the whole woman from head to foot. Many were like shawls which were placed on the head and wrapped around the shoulders (like the *tallith* worn by Jewish men). There were veils designed for different times of the day and for different occasions. The one thing on which all the authorities unite is this: *Veils were ‘an essential article of female attire.’*” (Emphasis Added, “The Book of 1 Corinthians,” *Looking Into The Bible Series*, 143)

b] **Marvin R. Vincent**: “The head-dress of Greek women consisted of nets, hair-bags, or kerchiefs, **sometimes covering the whole head.** A shawl which enveloped the body was also often thrown over the head, especially at marriages or funerals.” (Emphasis Added, *Word Studies In The New Testament*, 3:247)

2] The **meaning** of a word is determined by **usage**, not **etymology**

a] **D. A. Carson**: “One of the most enduring of errors, the root fallacy presupposes that every word actually *has* a meaning bound up with its shape or its components. In this view, meaning is determined by etymology; that is, by the root or roots of a word.” (*Exegetical Fallacies*, 26)

1} The English word “**nice**” comes from the Latin word **nescius**, which means “**ignorant**,” but today when we describe someone as “nice,” we certainly do not mean that he is “ignorant”

2} Our “**good-bye**” is a contraction for the Anglo-Saxon “**God be with you**,” but that’s not what we mean when we say “good-bye” today (See D. A. Carson, *Exegetical Fallacies*, 26-27)

b] **D. A. Carson**: “Even so, I am not suggesting that words are infinitely plastic. I am simply saying that the meaning of a word cannot be reliably determined by etymology, or that a root, once discovered, always projects a certain semantic load onto any word that incorporates that root.” (*Exegetical Fallacies*, 31)

c] **D. A. Carson**: “[T]he meaning of a word *may* reflect the meanings of its component parts. Even so, my point is that we cannot responsibly *assume* that etymology is related

to meaning. We can only test the point by discovering the meaning of a word inductively.” (*Exegetical Fallacies*, 31)

- 3] The way *katakalupto* is used in the LXX (at least 22x) demonstrates that **current meaning** cannot always be determined by **etymology**
- a] In Num. 22:5, Balak sent for Balaam to curse the Israelites and said, “they **cover** the face of the earth”
- 1} Did they “**hang down from**” it? And did they **completely cover** it so that none of it could be seen?
- b] In Ezek. 26:10, it is said of Tyre, “by reason of the abundance of his horses their dust shall **cover** thee.”
- 1} Did dust literally “**hang down from**” the city of Tyre?
- c] In Ezek. 38:9, Gog would come “like a storm, **covering** the land like a cloud
- 1} Did it “**hang down from**” it?
- d] In Ezek. 38:16, Gog would come up against Israel “like a cloud, to **cover** the land”
- 1} Here the word is *kalupto* without the *kata* prefix. If it be argued that the preposition *kata* requires the meaning “hang down from,” how can it be explained that the two words (*kalupto* and *katakalupto*) are used interchangeably? (Ezek. 38:9, 16)
- 2} *Kalupto* does not mean “hang down from.” But if it can be used interchangeably with *katakalupto*, why would *katakalupto* have to mean “hang down from”?
- 3} The word *kata* possibly intensifies the word *kalupto*, but it does not necessarily cause it to mean “hang down from”
- e] In Jer. 51:42 [28:42 LXX], Babylon is said to be “**covered** with the multitude of waves.”
- 1} Do waves of water usually “**hang down from**” a city when they “**cover**” it?
- 4] If one is going to insist upon the etymological definition of *katakalupto*, to be consistent, he should insist upon the etymological definition of *peribolaion* [*peri* = around + *ballo* = throw or cast] (11:15)
- a] Does this mean that a woman must **wrap her hair around her head**?
- 5] If Paul is requiring a specific headdress that “hangs down,” would it be permissible for a man to pray or prophesy while wearing a hat or a fez that does not “hang down”?
- c) **Paul specifies that a woman cover her “head,” and there is a difference between the face and the head (cf. Lev. 14:9; Mt. 6:17)**

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- 1] Paul says that a woman's hair is given her for a covering (1 Cor. 11:15), but this does not cover her face
 - 2] The passage says nothing about the face being covered
 - a] Objection: The face is a part of the head just as surely as the toes are a part of the foot (Dan. 2:41-42)
 - 1} Response: If a woman shaved her head (1 Cor. 11:5), did that require that she shave her face as well?
4. Note: If this interpretation is correct, I believe that there are **some difficulties for many "covering advocates"**
- a. **Restricting [?] the head covering to the assembly (as opposed to anywhere praying or prophesying occurs)**
 - 1) Some do not do this, but many do
 - 2) I don't know how anyone can conclusively prove that Paul's instructions should be applied only in a **worship assembly**
 - a) There are no clear indications that this is an "**assembly passage**" as is the case elsewhere (cf. 11:17-18, 20, 33-34; 14:23, 26, 34-35)
 - b) Furthermore, Paul's instructions that women **keep silent in the assembly** (14:34-35) would seem to indicate that women could not have prophesied in the assembly with God's approval
 - 1] Unless of course the "covered" woman was an exception, but how can that be conclusively proven?
 - 3) **Requiring [?] a head covering while engaged in other activities than praying or prophesying**
 - a) Some may wear a head covering during other worship activities, merely as a **matter of convenience** [i.e. so they won't have to be taking it on and off]
 - b) Others argue that the expression "**praying or prophesying**" is **synecdoche** for **worship** in general
 - 1] I don't believe this can be proven conclusively
 - a] There are examples of synecdoche [where a part is put for the whole] in the NT (cf. Mt. 21:13; Acts 20:7; 1 Cor. 13:8-10); but this is indicated by context
 - b] Merely citing examples of synecdoche in other passages does not prove that synecdoche is being used in this passage
 - c] What is there in this context that would indicate that Paul is using synecdoche when he talks about "praying or prophesying"?

D. Interpretation #2: The Covering Was A Local Custom

1. Explanation:

- a. Paul is teaching the Corinthians (and every Christian) to respect **local customs** of propriety

- b. But the local custom in Corinth was **not the custom of the churches** in general
- c. Therefore these other churches were not obligated to follow Paul's specific instructions to the Corinthians
 - 1) **James Shear:** "The church specifically (Corinth) did have to abide by this custom but **the churches generally had 'no such custom.'**" (Emphasis Added, "Is It Law Today Or Was It Custom Then?" 398)
 - 2) **Frank Jamerson:** "In a country where women wear a covering as a sign of subjection, or walk behind their husbands to show respect, women should respect those customs, but in many countries such customs do not exist. **When 'we have no such custom' we should not bind such practices.**" (Emphasis Added, "A Brief Study Of The Veil," 10)
 - 3) **James Needham:** "Paul was saying to the Corinthians that **neither 'we (probably the Apostles JPN) nor the churches of God' have any 'such custom' concerning the veil as obtained at Corinth.** There is an obvious point of contrast in this verse. It is axiomatic that Corinth had a 'custom' that 'we' (the Apostles) and 'the churches of God' did not have. What custom is he talking about? The wording in the context...demands that it is the woman's veil at Corinth. Nothing else is consistent with the train of thought in process in the text." (Emphasis Added, "The Woman's Covering," 24)

2. Affirmative Arguments:

- a. **Paul's statement that prophesying or praying uncovered was "one and the same as if her head were shaved" (11:5-6) is an indication that he is appealing to a local custom in Corinth**
 - 1) **Frank Jamerson:** "Here we have the first indication of an appeal to custom. Is there a revelation that it is shameful for a woman to shave her head? If so, where? The appeal here is to their custom." ("A Brief Study Of The Veil," 3)
 - 2) **Mike Willis:** "There are no Old Testament or New Testament laws forbidding a woman to shave her head. *The significance of the shaven head must be learned from custom; similarly custom tells us the significance of the unveiled woman in New Testament times.*" ("1 Corinthians," *Truth Commentaries*, 299)
- b. **Paul's instruction to the Corinthians to "judge among yourselves" (11:13) is an indication that he is appealing to a local custom in Corinth**
 - 1) **Ken Green:** "We are not advised to judge in ourselves about matters of sin. Where in all Scripture is man told to judge in himself as to whether murder, adultery, drunkenness, or any such act is sinful? Where in all the Bible is one told to judge whether baptism, prayer, or communion is right or wrong? The fact that these Corinthians were told to judge in themselves demonstrates the customary nature of the subject.
 "But again, they were not to judge whether the matter was right or wrong, but was it *comely*? The word means 'to be becoming.' The passage speaks of what is in poor taste, not of what is sinful." ("Hair And Christmas Trees," *Vanguard*, n.d., 679)
 - 2) **James Needham:** "Where God has spoken we have no right to 'judge in ourselves.' 'If thou judge the law, thou art not a doer of the law, but a judge' (James 4:12). Paul told them to 'judge in themselves' concerning the

wearing of the veil. We are not to judge the law, therefore the veil is not the law. The law is **headship**. The veil was only a customary expression of its recognition. . . . Paul is asking them to judge the wearing of the veil in view of God’s law of headship as it related to the veil’s significance **in their society**.” (“The Woman’s Covering,” 22-23)

- c. **Paul’s question to the Corinthians “Is it proper for a woman to pray to God with her head uncovered?” (11:13) is an indication that he is appealing to a local custom in Corinth**
- d. **Paul’s allusion to what “nature itself teach[es] you” (11:14-15) is an indication that he is appealing to a local custom in Corinth**
- 1) **A.T. Robertson:** “He reinforces the appeal to custom by the appeal to nature in a question that expects the affirmative answer. PHUSIS, from old verb PHUO, to produce, like our word nature, is difficult to define. Here it means native sense of propriety (cf. Rom. 2:14) in addition to mere custom, but one that rests on the objective difference in the constitution of things” (*Word Pictures in the New Testament*, 4:162-163)
- e. **Paul’s statement “we have no such custom...” (11:16) is an indication that he is appealing to a local custom in Corinth**
- 1) The word [*sunetheia*] that Paul uses here means “**practice or customary usage**” (cf. Jn. 18:39)
- 2) Another word [*ethos*] means “**a custom, usage, prescribed by law**” (Acts 6:14; 15:1; 25:16). If Paul had meant a practice prescribed by law, he would have used this word
- a) Objections:
- 1] The word translated “**custom**” in 1 Cor. 11:16 [*sunetheia*] is basically the word *ethos* with the prepositional prefix *sun* added to it
- 2] These two words are used to describe the same thing
- a] Pilate was “**accustomed**” [*etho* – the verb form of *ethos*] to release a prisoner during the Passover (Mt. 27:15)
- b] The Jews had a “**custom**” [*sunetheia*] that Pilate release a prisoner during the Passover (Jn. 18:39)
- 3] Josephus uses the word “**custom**” [*sunetheia*] to refer to the Passover and its customs (*Antiquities*, 10:4:5) (Hiram Hutto, *A Study Of 1 Corinthians 11:1-16*, 25)
- f. **The “covering” had a meaning then in that society that it doesn’t have today in our society**
- g. **The covering is just like the customs of foot-washing (Jn. 13:2-17; 1 Tim. 5:9-10) and the holy kiss (Rom. 16:16; 1 Cor. 16:20; 2 Cor. 13:12; 1 Th. 5:26; 1 Pet. 5:14)**
- 1) The kiss was a custom to show cordiality, foot-washing, was a custom to show hospitality, and the head covering was a custom to show subjection
- 2) **Frank Jamerson:** “We could argue that if Jesus is still our Lord, we ‘ought’ to wash one another’s feet, but it would be assuming something.

Showing hospitality was not a custom, but the method of showing it was. Likewise, with the veil. For a man, or woman, in Corinth to have violated the custom concerning head covering would have been a reflection upon his or her place. Headship, and subjection, was not a custom but the method of showing it was, just as with washing feet [Jn. 13:14] or greeting with a holy kiss [Rom. 16:16].” (“A Brief Study Of The Veil,” 4-5)

- 3) These passages, concerning foot-washing and the holy kiss, are **commands**
 - a) Not one word is said in any of these passages about the holy kiss being a custom, and yet, the vast majority of Bible students understand it to have been so
 - 4) It is quite inconsistent to call the **holy kiss** a custom when it has the force of a command (and is not one time said to be a custom), and bind **the covering** as law when it is said to be a custom
- h. **The fact that God has always required women to be in subjection to men (Gen. 3:16; 1 Cor. 11:3; Eph. 5:22-24, 33; 1 Tim. 2:11-15; Tit. 2:3-5; 1 Pet. 3:1-6), but He has not always required them to demonstrate this subjection by wearing a covering is an indication that Paul’s instructions applied to a local custom in Corinth**
 - 1) It has not always been wrong for **a man to prophesy with a veil** covering his head
 - a) **Moses** prophesied with a **veil** covering his face (2 Cor. 3:13; cf. Ex. 34:33-35)
 - b) The **priests** wore a turban while ministering before Jehovah in the tabernacle or the temple (Ex. 28:2-4; 39:27-29; Lev. 16:4)
 - c) When **David** fled Jerusalem, he prayed while his head was covered (2 Sam. 15:30-31)
 - 2) It has not always been wrong for **a woman to prophesy without a veil** covering her head
 - a) There were **prophetesses** under the OT that were not required to have their heads covered
 - 1] **Miriam** (Ex. 15:20-21)
 - a] She was a public teacher of both men and women
 - 1} She answered “them” [i.e. Moses and the children of Israel] (Ex. 15:1)
 - b] As a prophetess, she was inspired (Num. 12:2)
 - 2] **Deborah** (Jud. 4:4-5)
 - a] She commanded men (Jud. 4:6-10)
 - 3] **Huldah** (2 Ki. 22:14-20; 2 Chr. 34:20-28)
 - a] She revealed God’s will to the high priest of Judah, three scribes, and a servant of the king
 - 4] **Anna** (Lk. 2:36-38)

- a] She prayed and prophesied in the presence of men
- i. **Scholars affirm that Paul’s instructions concerning the head covering reflect the actual customs of the day**
- 1) Note: See Appendix D: Paul’s Instructions And Ancient Custom
- j. **The problem at Corinth was that some women with spiritual gifts were not respecting the customary symbol of subjection and were removing them during times of prayer and prophesying**
- 1) The point is not that these women should **put on** a veil while praying or prophesying, but that they should **keep on** the veil women customarily wore
- a) **F. W. Grosheide**: “Paul is not formulating a rule that a woman, when praying or prophesying, must cover her head. His point is that a woman, who ordinarily has her head covered when appearing in public, must also have it covered when she prays or prophesies.” (*First Corinthians*, 253, via Mike Willis, “1 Corinthians,” *Truth Commentaries*, 300)
- 2) The veil was **no special headwear** for inspired women, but was the **common headwear** of all Corinthian women who recognized their proper place
- a) Inspiration was not the reason for them to put on a veil, but the Corinthian’s women had used it as an excuse to take it off
- b) Those who would bind 1 Cor. 11 today have reversed its regulations
- 1] The Corinthian women were **removing** their veils to “pray or prophesy,” while advocates of the head covering would have today’s women to **put on** a veil to “pray or prophesy”
3. Rebuttal Arguments:
- a. **The fact that Paul calls upon the Corinthians to “judge among yourselves” does not prove that what was under discussion was merely a matter of local custom**
- 1) Christians are to make judgments about what is **right and wrong**
- a) **Hiram Hutto**: “When Jesus said, ‘Why, even of yourselves judge ye not what is right?’ [Lk. 12:57] did he mean that people are to judge of themselves what is right separate and apart from divine revelation? Of course not. Peter and John did not **leave** things to the judgment of the council just because they said, ‘Whether it be right in the sight of God to harken [sic] unto you more than unto God, **judge ye**’ (Acts 4:19). Neither did Paul **leave** it to the Corinthians’ judgment when he said in I Cor. 10:15, ‘**Judge ye** what I say. The cup of blessing which we bless, is it not the communion of the blood of Christ.’ In all of these instances ‘judgment’ was to be controlled by God’s instruction rather than custom and so it should be in I Corinthians 11. Their judgment was to be governed by God’s instructions.” (“The Woman’s Covering,” 37)
- 2) By the time that Paul tells the Corinthians to “judge among yourselves,” he had already given them plenty of information to base their judgment upon
- 3) Based on what had already been said, they should have been able to judge that it was not seemly for a woman to pray to God uncovered

- b. **The fact that Paul asks “Is it proper...?” does not prove that what was under discussion was merely a matter of local custom**
- 1) **Hiram Hutto:** “The word that is here translated comely appears seven times in the New Testament (Mt. 3:15; 1 Cor. 11:13; Eph. 5:3; 1 Tim. 2:10; Tit. 2:1; Heb. 2:10; 7:26), but it *NEVER* means custom or good taste in any of them. It deals with what is appropriate or fitting based upon the nature and character of the person or thing involved.” (“Command Or Custom,” 25)
 - a) It was **fitting** for Jesus to be baptized to fulfill all righteousness (Mt. 3:15)
 - b) Fornication, uncleanness, and covetousness are not **fitting** for saints (Eph. 5:3)
 - c) Women are to adorn themselves in that which is **proper** for women professing godliness (1 Tim. 2:9-10)
 - d) Titus was instructed to speak the things that were **proper** to sound doctrine (Tit. 2:1)
 - e) It was **fitting** for God to make Christ perfect through sufferings (Heb. 2:10)
 - f) Jesus is a High Priest that is **fitting** for us (Heb. 7:26)
 - g) Is it **proper** for a woman to pray to God with her head uncovered? (1 Cor. 11:13)
 - 2) **Hiram Hutto:** “Comeliness has to do with what is appropriate based upon the nature and character of the person or thing involved. Since woman is created for man, is the glory of man, and man is her head, the covering of her head in prayer is an expression of her relationship to man, her very womanhood, and it is not comely for one of *that* nature and character to pray otherwise. To do so is to reject her very womanhood, and not just a custom.” (“Command Or Custom,” 26)
- c. **If Paul’s appeal to “nature” is an appeal to culture and custom, that does not prove that his instructions are not applicable today, because this is not the only reason Paul gives for wearing a covering**
- d. **It’s not logical to conclude that Paul would dismiss all of his arguments “with a wave of the hand” by saying in essence: “If any man seems to be contentious it’s not important anyway because it’s just a local custom”**
- 1) To place an interpretation on verse 16 that nullifies the teaching of verses 2-15 is not sound exegesis
 - 2) Response: In 1 Cor. 7, Paul discusses many reasons why under “**the present distress**” (7:26) it was better not to marry, but concludes by saying, “but and if thou marry, thou hast not sinned...” (7:28)
 - 3) Response: Paul devotes chapters 12-14 to a discussion of spiritual gifts which are not binding today
 - a) Objection: Yes, but Paul specifically talks about the cessation of these spiritual gifts (13:8-13)

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- 4) Response: We should be very careful about expressing what method(s) we think the Spirit should or should not employ in revealing the mind of God
- e. **Paul taught the same thing in all the churches (1 Cor. 4:17; 7:17; 14:33b-35)**
- 1) Response: Did he teach every church that it was better for men not to marry, or was that instruction for the church at Corinth in light of the “present distress”? (1 Cor. 7:1, 26)
- f. **Could God have enjoined as a command that which was already a custom at Corinth?**
- 1) If yes, and the covering was a **custom** at Corinth, how do we know that 1 Cor. 11:1-16 is not also a **command** of God?
- g. **Paul based his argument on things that transcend culture and custom**
- h. **To argue that the “covering” had a meaning then in that society that it doesn’t have today in our society is a “slippery slope”**
- 1) One might argue that while **unleavened bread** and **fruit of the vine** had meaning then, **hamburgers** and **Coke** have meaning today. Are we ready to change what Christ has stipulated for the Lord’s Supper?
- 2) One might argue that **one man** for **one woman** for **one lifetime** with **one exception** had meaning then but it doesn’t have meaning in our society today. Are we ready to change what Christ has stipulated about marriage?
- i. **Who said that covering the head was a custom, just like foot-washing and the holy kiss?**
- 1) **Kissing** was a form of greeting practiced for thousands of years before NT times (Gen. 27:26-27; 33:4; 45:15; Ex. 4:27; 18:7; 2 Sam. 14:33; 20:9; Lk. 7:45; 15:20)
- 2) **Foot-washing** was an act of hospitality practiced for thousands of years before NT times (Gen. 18:4; 19:2; 24:32; Jud. 19:21; 1 Sam. 25:41; 2 Sam. 11:8; Lk. 7:36-44)
- 3) But where can one show that **covering the head** was a custom **while praying or prophesying** before Paul wrote 1 Cor. 11:1-16?
- j. **The fact that God has always required women to be in subjection to men, but He has not always required them to demonstrate this subjection by wearing a covering does not prove that Paul’s instructions applied only to a local custom in Corinth**
- 1) **Christ’s will for all men in the NT** is not necessarily the same as **God’s will for the Jews in the OT**
- a) **Eating certain meat** was forbidden under the old covenant (Lev. 11:1ff); it is not forbidden under the new (1 Tim. 4:3)
- b) **God’s original intent for marriage** was not enforced under the old covenant, but it is under the new (Mt. 19:3-9)
- c) **Circumcision** was required of the Jews under the old covenant (Gen. 17:9-14; Lev. 12:1-3), but it is not required under the new (1 Cor. 7:19; Gal. 5:6; 6:15)
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- 2) Just as God **permits** some things today under the new covenant that He did not permit under the old law, He may **require** some things today under the new covenant that He did not require under the old law
 - a) **Baptism** for the remission of sins (Acts 2:38; 22:16)
 - b) The **Lord's Supper** (1 Cor. 11:23-26)
 - c) Worship on the **first day of the week** (Acts 20:7; 1 Cor. 16:1-2)
 - d) A **woman covering her head** while praying or prophesying (1 Cor. 11:5)
 - e) Etc.
 - k. **Other scholars affirm that Paul's instructions concerning the head covering do not reflect the actual customs of the day**
 - 1) Note: The church in Corinth was made up of both **Jews** (Acts 18:8; 1 Cor. 10:1) and **Gentiles** (Rom. 15:26-27)
 - 2) Note: See Appendix D: "Paul's Instructions And Ancient Custom"
 - 3) **Frank Jamerson**: "Secular history can be quoted on both sides of this issue....The problem is that historians do not always indicate exactly what period or place they are discussing. Some have indicated that the tallith that Jewish men wear 'came into practice in the fourth century A.D. and not the first' (via *Commentary on First Corinthians*, Mike Willis, p. 357). Probably, there were different customs in different places in the first century, just as there are today." ("A Brief Study Of The Veil," 10)
 - l. **The idea that the inspired women were taking off their veils when they were under the influence of the Spirit is pure assumption**
 - 1) This explanation is too limited because it fails to take into account the fact that Paul's discussion is not limited to women but it also **includes men** (11:4)
 - a) One could just as cogently argue that the situation at Corinth was such that **men had started putting veils on**
- E. **Interpretation #3: (Long) Hair Is The Only Required Covering**
1. Explanation:
 - a. Long hair is the **only covering mentioned** and required in this passage
 - b. A woman's hair may be "**long**" (11:15), "**shorn**" (11:6), or "**shaved**" (11:5); when her hair is long, it is a **covering** (11:15); when it is shorn or shaved, it is a **shame** (11:5-6)
 - 1) Paul says for a woman to be **uncovered** is the same as for her to be **shorn** or **shaved**
 - c. A man with short hair does not have a "**hanging down from the head**" covering
 - d. Note: See Appendix E: Jeff Belknap's Paraphrase
 2. Affirmative Arguments:
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- a. **The word “veil” [kaluma] is not used in this passage (cf. 2 Cor. 3:13-16)**
- b. **The terms in this passage that allude to a “covering” do not necessarily demand a veil**
- 1) **“Covered” [kata] (11:4):**
 - a) 480x in NT
 - b) cf. Mt. 8:32; Mk. 5:13; Lk. 8:33
 - 2) **“Uncovered” [akatakaluptos] (11:5, 13):**
 - a) 2x in NT
 - 3) **“Covered” [katakalupto] (11:6-7) does not necessarily refer to a veil**
 - a) 2x in NT
 - b) *Kalupto* refers to:
 - 1] A ship covered by the waves (Mt. 8:24)
 - 2] Nothing covered that will not be revealed (Mt. 10:26)
 - 3] Covering a candle with a vessel (Lk. 8:16)
 - 4] Hills covering people (Lk. 23:30)
 - 5] Gospel being hid (2 Cor. 4:3)
 - 6] Hiding a multitude of sins (Jas. 5:20)
 - 7] Love covering a multitude of sins (1 Pet. 4:8)
- c. **Paul asks the question: “Is it proper for a woman to pray to God with her head uncovered?” (11:13) Then he proceeds to talk about hair, not a veil**
- d. **The “hair” is the only covering specified in this passage (11:15)**
- 1) If the hair is not the covering that is required, why did Paul say that her hair was a **covering**?
- e. **The two different Greek words that Paul uses in this passage [katakalupto (11:6-7) & peribolaion (11:13)] may be used interchangeably**
- 1) Gen. 38:14-15: ¹⁴ And removing the garments of the widowhood from herself, **she put around** [*periebaletō*] a lightweight covering, and bedecked *herself*, and sat by the gates of Enaim, which is in *the* byway of Timnath. For she knew [3older 2had become 1Shelah], but he *did* not give her to him as wife. ¹⁵ And [2beholding 3her 1Judah], assumed her to be a harlot. **For she covered up** [*katekalupsato gar*] her face, and [3not 1he recognized 2her].” (Online LXX Interlinear)
- f. **A woman’s hair is given to her “for” [anti = “instead of”] a covering (11:15), so if a woman has long hair, it is the only covering she needs**
- 1) **Berry’s Interlinear:** “But if a woman have long hair, glory to her it is: for the long hair instead of a covering is given her.”
 - 2) **Nestle’s:** “But a woman if she wears her hair long it is a glory to her because the long hair instead of a veil has been given her.”
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- 3) **YLT**: “and a woman, if she have long hair, a glory it is to her, because the hair instead of a covering hath been given to her;”
 - 4) **ISV**: “nor that hair is a woman’s glory, for hair is given as a substitute for coverings.”
 - 5) **Jesse Jenkins**: “Thus, we have Paul saying that a woman’s long hair is given her instead of an artificial covering.” (“The Woman’s Covering,” 2)
 - a) **W. Harold Mare**: “...(anti) here is to be taken to mean ‘as’ or ‘for’ in the sense that the Christian woman’s hair is to be considered a *proper* substitute for a head covering for worship. This is perhaps preferable to the tr. ‘instead of,’ which might lead to the conclusion that the apostle is suggesting that the hair is a replacement for any kind of head covering, even that worn by the pagan women.” (“1 Corinthians, *The Expositor’s Bible Commentary*, 10:257, n. 15)
- g. **Every verse in this passage that refers to a woman being “covered” also mentions or alludes to the hair (1 Cor. 11:5, 6, 13, 15)**
3. Rebuttal Arguments:
 - a. **If the hair is the only covering under consideration in this passage, why doesn’t Paul state that clearly?**
 - 1) When Paul clearly means “hair,” he says “hair” (11:14-15)
 - b. **If long hair is the only covering, why is it specified for specific activities [i.e. praying or prophesying] (11:4-5, 13)?**
 - 1) This fact necessarily implies that Paul is talking about a temporary and removable “covering”
 - 2) It is possible to pray or prophesy with ones head **covered** or **uncovered**; therefore this covering is “**put-on-able**” and “**take-off-able.**” Thus it cannot be **(long) hair**
 - 3) If (long) hair is the only covering in this passage, it would be a **permanent covering**, and there would have been no need for Paul to specify a covering while “**praying or prophesying**”
 - 4) If (long) hair is the only covering in this passage, then Paul’s references to “**praying or prophesying**” (1 Cor. 11:4, 5, 13) are superfluous
 - a) Response: To be covered at this time was and is to be covered at all times (cf. 1 Th. 5:17; Acts 5:42)
 - 1] Objection: If Paul intended for women to have (long) hair all the time, why didn’t he just clearly say that?
 - 2] Objection: Praying and prophesying are not done constantly
 - a] In the garden of Gethsemane, Jesus prayed (and stopped praying) three times (Mt. 26:36-46)
 - b] Prophesying is an activity that begins and ends (1 Sam. 10:5-6, 10-13; 1 Cor. 14:29-31)

- c. **The context indicates that Paul is talking about two different “coverings”**
- 1) Paul speaks of **two different times**
 - a) Praying or Propheying (11:4-5)
 - b) All the Time (11:15)
 - 2) Paul uses **two different Greek words**
 - a) *Katakalupto* (11:6, 7) or *akatakaluptos* (11:5, 13)
 - b) *Peribolaion* (11:15)
 - 3) Paul makes **two different arguments**
 - a) Creation (11:7-10)
 - b) Nature (11:14)
- d. **If the “covering” refers to long hair, then Paul’s argument becomes nonsensical**
- 1) 1 Cor. 11:5-6: ⁵But every woman who prays or prophesies with *her* head uncovered [short hair] dishonors her head, for that is **one and the same as if her head were shaved** [no hair]. ⁶For if a woman is not covered [short hair], let her **also** be shorn [short hair]. But if it is shameful for a woman to be shorn [short hair] or shaved [no hair], let her be covered [long hair].
 - 2) **David Lipscomb**: “The word ‘also’ in this verse plainly shows that the two veils – the natural hair and the veil with which the head was covered – are under consideration.” (*A Commentary On The New Testament Epistles*, “First Corinthians,” 2:164, via Carrol Sutton, *A Study Of 1 Corinthians 11:1-16*, 9)
 - 3) **Carrol Sutton**: “If the hair were the covering mentioned here, the woman would **already** be shorn, if not covered; therefore it would be impossible for her **also** to be shorn, like Paul suggests.” (“A Study Of 1 Corinthians 11:1-16, *The Instructor*, March 1989, 26:3:2)
 - 4) **Dick Ward**: “Can you really believe that Paul would say, ‘if the woman has SHORT HAIR let her ALSO be shorn’? There is no REASON nor PURPOSE for Paul to instruct the woman with SHORT HAIR (uncovered?) to ALSO shave her head because by this position, ANY LENGTH of hair other than LONG is shameful – whether it be shaven, shorn, or this SHORT HAIR.” (*A Study Of 1 Corinthians 11:1-16*, 52)
- e. **While *anti* (11:15) often means “instead of,” it doesn’t always mean that**
- 1) Note: See Appendix A: Definitions of Major Terms
 - 2) Mt. 5:38: “You have heard that it was said, ‘*An eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth.*’
 - 3) Mt. 17:27: Nevertheless, lest we offend them, go to the sea, cast in a hook, and take the fish that comes up first. And when you have opened its mouth, you will find a piece of money; take that and give it to them **for** Me and you.”
 - 4) Mt. 20:28: just as the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give His life a ransom **for** many.”
 - 5) Jn. 1:16: And of His fullness we have all received, and grace **for** grace.

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- f. Even if “for” [*anti*] means “instead of” an artificial covering (11:15), it would just mean that her hair is given instead of a **permanent** artificial covering (*peribolaion*). But the “covering” while praying or prophesying (11:5) is a **temporary** artificial covering (*katakalupto*)
- g. The fact that *katakalupto* and *peribolaion* may be used interchangeably in some contexts does not prove that they are used interchangeably in this context
- 1) “Disciples” [*mathetes*] and “apostles” [*apostolos*] are sometimes used interchangeably (Mt. 26:17-19; Lk. 22:14-15), but not always (Acts 19:1)
 - 2) “Speaking” [*apolaleo* or *laleo*] and “singing” [*ado*] are used interchangeably (Eph. 5:19), but not always (1 Cor. 14:34-35)
 - 3) “Prophesying” [*propheteuo*] and “teaching” [*katecheo*] are sometimes used interchangeably (1 Cor. 14:1-5, 18-19, 22-24), but not always (1 Cor. 13:8-10)
 - 4) “Soul” [*psuche*] and “spirit” [*pneuma*] are sometimes used interchangeably (Mt. 10:28; Acts 7:59; 1 Cor. 5:5), but not always (1 Th. 5:23; Heb. 4:12)
 - 5) Why did Paul **change Greek words** if he is still talking about the same thing?
 - 6) In Gen. 38:14-15, both of these words refer to an **artificial covering**
- h. The original words translated “cover” [*katakalupto*] and “uncover” [*akatakaluptos*] (1 Cor. 11:5-7, 13) are not used elsewhere to refer to the hair
- i. The original words translated “cover” [*katakalupto*] and “uncover” [*akatakaluptos*] (1 Cor. 11:5-7, 13) are used elsewhere to refer to an artificial covering
- 1) The word “cover” [*katakalupto*] (11:6-7) is used of an **artificial covering** (Gen. 38:15, LXX; cf. Est. 6:12 [3 MSS])
 - 2) The word “uncovered” [*akatakaluptos*] (11:5, 13) is used of **uncovering the head** (Lev. 13:45 [1 MSS])
 - a) *Katakalupsis* (*The Shepherd of Hermas* 4:2:1)
 - b) *Katakalumma* (Isa. 47:2)
- j. There is no question that a woman’s hair is a covering (11:15), but is the hair the only covering?
- 1) Paul uses a different word when he describes the hair as a “covering” (*peribolaion*) than he did before [some form of *katakalupto*] (11:5, 6, 7, 13)
 - a) The words are not from the same root word; thus, they are from a different family of words
 - b) This suggests that there are **two coverings**
 - 1] The **artificial covering** [the veil] is to be “worn” when praying or prophesying
 - 2] The **natural covering** [the hair] is to be “worn” all the time
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k. **The early “Church Fathers” believed that Paul is referring to some kind of an artificial covering or veil in this context**

- 1) **Marvin R. Vincent:** “The testimonies of Tertullian and Chrysostom show that these injunctions of Paul prevailed in the churches. In the sculptures of the catacombs the women have a **close-fitting head-dress**, while the men have the hair short.” (*Word Studies In The New Testament*, 3:248)
- 2) Note: See Appendix C: The “Church Fathers” On The Veil

l. **Many scholars believe that Paul is referring to some kind of an artificial covering or veil in this context**

- 1) Note: See Appendix A: Definitions Of Major Terms

F. **Interpretation #4: The Covering Was For Those With Spiritual Gifts**

1. Explanation:

- a. These instructions were given to those with **miraculous spiritual gifts**
- b. Miraculous spiritual gifts are **no longer available** to Christians today
- c. Therefore, these instructions are **no longer applicable** today

2. Affirmative Arguments:

a. **These restrictions were given to those with miraculous spiritual gifts**

1) **Prophecy refers to speaking God’s word by inspiration**

- a) Many passages indicate this (cf. Num. 11:25-26; 1 Sam. 10:6, 10; 19:20, 23; Joel 2:28-29; Lk. 1:67; Acts 2:17-18; 19:6; 1 Cor. 12:4-11; 1 Pet. 1:10-12; 2 Pet. 1:20-21)
- b) Prophecy was one of the nine **spiritual gifts** (1 Cor. 12:10)
- c) Prophecy was not just “**preaching**” or “**teaching**” God’s word
 - 1] Paul makes a distinction between “**prophets**” and “**pastors and teachers**” (1 Cor. 12:28; Eph. 4:11)
 - 2] **Bill Cavender:** “Uninspired, ordinary preachers and teachers were **NEVER** called prophets or prophetesses. **Prophecy was done by a prophet or prophetess, NEVER** by ordinary, uninspired teachers and preachers.” (“The Woman And Her Covering,” 14)

2) **Prophecy and praying are linked together**

- a) **Bill Cavender:** “Since the ‘praying’ of I Cor. 11:4-5 is joined to the ‘prophesying’ and prophesying is **ALWAYS** inspired teaching, and since both the **praying** and **prophesying** are adjectives (participles) modifying the same man and the same woman, there is here strong presumptive evidence that the **praying** is inspired praying and not ordinary prayers of uninspired people.” (“The Woman And Her Covering,” 17)
- 3) **In the early church, prayer was normally an uninspired activity, but it could also be an inspired activity (1 Cor. 14:13-17)**
- 4) **Since prophesying was “inspired teaching” that involved “taking the lead,” and prayer is linked to prophesying, that is suggestive evidence**

that Paul is talking about “inspired prayer” that involved “taking the lead”

- a) A distinction is made between those who **lead prayer** and those who do not Neh. 11:17; 1 Cor. 14:16-17
- 5) **It was inspired prophesying and praying that would have caused a problem with woman’s subjection and the sign of it**
 - a) **Frank Jamerson:** “The question is: which kind of prayer would have caused a problem with woman’s subjection and the sign of it? (Listening to a man lead a prayer would not have produced a question about subjection. Praying ‘with the Spirit’ would.)” (“A Brief Study Of The Veil,” 3)
 - b. **Miraculous spiritual gifts are no longer available to Christians today**
 - 1) **Paul prophesied that miraculous spiritual gifts would cease (1 Cor. 13:8-13)**
 - 2) **The means for obtaining miraculous spiritual gifts are not available today**
 - a) In the first century, **miraculous power was imparted** in one of two ways
 - 1] **Holy Spirit baptism**
 - 2] Laying on of **apostolic hands**
 - b) Miraculous power is no longer imparted through **Holy Spirit baptism**
 - 1] There are only **two cases** of Holy Spirit baptism in the NT:
 - a] The **apostles** (Acts 2:1-4)
 - b] **Cornelius** and his household (Acts 10:44-48; 11:15-17; 15:7-9)
 - 2] When Paul wrote Ephesians [AD 61-63], he said there was “**one baptism**” (Eph. 4:5)
 - a] Note: This “one baptism” must be water baptism, since Paul alludes to it in this letter (Eph. 5:26)
 - 3] Therefore, the impartation of spiritual gifts through **Holy Spirit baptism** is impossible today
 - c) Miraculous power is no longer imparted through the **laying on of apostolic hands**
 - 1] Only **the apostles** could impart spiritual gifts through the laying on of hands (Acts 8:14-19; 19:6)
 - 2] When **the last apostle died**, spiritual gifts could no longer be imparted through the laying on of hands
 - 3] When **the last person with spiritual gifts died**, spiritual gifts ceased to exist
 - c. **So these restrictions are no longer applicable today**

3. Rebuttal Arguments:

a. Can we be sure that “prophesying” **always** referred to inspired speech?

- 1) What about “**false prophets**” (1 Ki. 18:19, 29; Isa. 30:9-10; Mt. 7:15; 2 Pet. 2:1), were they inspired?
- 2) Was the Cretan “**prophet**” [Epimenides] that Paul alluded to inspired (Tit. 1:12-13)?
- 3) Not everyone defines the word “**prophesy**” so as to limit it to “**inspired speech**”

a) **R.C.H. Lenski**: “‘Prophesy’ is used to designate the gift or office of a prophet. In Romans 12:16 it is mentioned together with two other gifts. This term is used in a double sense: broadly to indicate **any and all ability to communicate the saving will of God to others** so that **every true teacher and preacher may be called a prophet**; and more narrowly to designate the receiving and the communicating of direct and special messages from God.” (Emphasis Added, Comment on 1 Cor. 12:10, via Hiram Hutto, “The Woman’s Covering,” 43)

b) **Willis J. Beecher**: “First, any adherent of the true religion may be said to prophesy when the Spirit of God gives him a special message for the edification of others. No miracle is needed for this, but only that illumination which devout persons sometimes enjoy, and which God offers to all

“...And, within limits, prophesying still abounds among earnestly religious people. One who speaks for God in some special and marked message, in a Christian meeting, exercises so far forth the gift of prophesy.” (*The Prophets and the Promise*, 103, via Hiram Hutto, “The Woman’s Covering,” 43)

c) **Robertson and Plummer**: “**The ‘prophesying’ means public teaching**, admonishing, or comforting; delivering God’s message to the congregation (I Cor. 13:9, 14:1,3,24,31,39).” (Emphasis Added, *International Critical Commentary* on I Cor. 11, via Hiram Hutto, “The Woman’s Covering,” 43)

d) **R. Tuck**: “The term ‘prophesying’ is variously employed in the Scriptures. Sometimes it seems to stand, in a very general way, for **sharing in religious worship**. At other times the idea of instructing people in the will of God, as it had been immediately revealed to the speaker, is prominent. And at yet other times there is reference to the fore-announcing of coming events.” (Emphasis Added, *Pulpit Commentary*, 6:399)

e) Response:

- 1] The context clearly indicates that sometimes the word “**prophet(s)**” refers to **false prophets**, just as the word “**god**” refers to **false gods** [i.e. idols] (1 Cor. 8:4-6)
 - a] The false prophets did not “proclaim a divine revelation” or “speak for God” but they claimed to do so (Jer. 23:21-22, 25-26, 31-32)
 - b] Hence, even in such cases, the word still retains its basic meaning
- 2] One must define his “terms” in light of the **immediate context**. Because a word may mean (or refer to) one thing in one context

does not mean that it means (or refers to) the same thing in another context

- a] *Pneuma* almost always means “**Spirit**” or “**spirit**,” but at least once it means “**wind**” (Jn. 3:8)
 - b] “**Leaven**” is normally used in the Bible to symbolize something bad, but not always (cf. Mt. 13:33; Lk. 13:20-21)
 - c] Sometimes “**prophecy**” refers to the activities of **false prophets** who did not speak by the inspiration of God (Jer. 14:14-15; Ezek. 22:28), but normally it refers to the proclamations of **inspired men**
 - d] True prophets of God were **always inspired** (2 Pet. 1:20-21), and that’s what Paul is talking about in this context
- 3] Despite how some might define and describe “**prophecy**,” the biblical evidence conclusively demonstrates that normally it refers to “**inspired teaching**”
- a] If “**prophesying**” refers to something other than “inspired teaching” in this passage, we need **compelling evidence** to prove it. What would that evidence be?
- b. **If we reject Paul’s instructions concerning the head covering, because miraculous “spiritual gifts” are no longer available to Christians today, we will logically have to reject other instructions as well (cf. 1 Cor. 14:26, 27-28, 29-31, 33, 34-35, 40)**
- c. **Can/Should we apply the principles in passages that describe situations that are not exactly like our situation today? (cf. Mt. 5:23-24; 13:57)**
- d. **If Paul is discussing spiritual gifts (i.e. praying or prophesying as inspired acts), why does he later say “Now concerning spiritual gifts” (1 Cor. 12:1), apparently introducing that subject for the first time?**
- 1) Response: Paul alludes to the Lord’s Supper (1 Cor. 10:16-22) before he addresses the subject of the Lord’s Supper (1 Cor. 11:17-34)
- e. **One cannot conclusively prove that because “prophesying” is an inspired activity that the “praying” is also inspired**
- 1) While prayer could be **inspired** (1 Cor. 14:13-17), it usually was **uninspired**
 - a) Prayer is not one of the **nine spiritual gifts** listed in 1 Cor. 12:4-10
 - b) In 1 Cor. 14:14, **the tongue was the gift**, not the prayer
 - 2) Paul said “praying or prophesying” not “praying and prophesying”
 - a) **Mike Willis**: “This exegesis fails to take into consideration the distributive usage of *pas* [every], which in this verse refers to each individual in a class. A comparable English construction would be as follows: ‘Every child having chickenpox or having measles...’ No one would consider that both participial phrases in this sentence applied to the same child; rather, we would recognize this distributive usage of ‘every.’ There is no grammatical reason for believing that *proseuchomai* is limited in meaning to inspired prayer or for believing

that the one prophesying is the same person as the one who is praying. One might ask those who take the position of inspired prayer: ‘Could a man with his head covered lead an uninspired prayer in the assemblies of the first century?’” (“1 Corinthians,” *Truth Commentaries*, 296-297)

- b) A person could certainly pray without being inspired
- 3) Prophesying is sometimes “linked” with **uninspired activities** (Rom. 12:6-8; cf. Amos 7:12)
- f. **One cannot conclusively prove that because “prophesying” involved “taking the lead” that “praying” also involved “taking the lead”**

G. **Interpretation #5: The Covering Is Of One’s Spiritual Head**

1. Explanation:

- a. Paul not only explains the “**hierarchy**” of headship, but he **defines his terms** (11:3)
 - 1) In this context, Paul is talking about the **spiritual head**, not the **physical head**
 - a) Christ’s spiritual head is **God**
 - b) Man’s spiritual head is **Christ**
 - c) Woman’s spiritual head is **Man**
 - 1] **Jimmy Winsted**: “While Christ is called ‘head’ of man, he is not called the ‘head’ of woman. This clearly shows the man-woman relationship to be physical, not spiritual.
“Christ is both head and mediator for man, but he is only woman’s mediator. Her head is man.” (“We Have No Such Custom,” 7)
 - 2) After Paul has **defined his terms**, we must not “**change horses in the middle of the stream**”
- b. So Paul’s instructions concerning “covering” and “uncovering” the head (11:4-5) refer to the **spiritual head**, not the **physical head**
 - 1) “Every man praying or prophesying having his [spiritual] head [Christ] covered [i.e. veiled, hidden, obscured, ignored, disregarded, etc. (cf. 2 Cor. 4:3-4)] dishonors his [spiritual] head [Christ].”
 - a) In other words, man must pray and prophesy with full awareness that Jesus is his Head and Mediator
 - 2) “But every woman who prays or prophesies with her [spiritual] head [man] uncovered [i.e. unveiled, in view, regarded, etc.] dishonors her [spiritual] head [man]...”
 - a) In other words, woman must pray and prophesy with full awareness that while man is her head, he is not her Mediator. She must pray and prophesy without man in view. She must not allow man to come between her and God
 - b) **Jimmy Winsted**: “It is my conclusion that Paul destroys the idea that the woman is so subjected to man that even her prayers must be channeled through him as though he was her mediator or that her

speech relative to teaching God's word must likewise be channeled in the same way through him." ("We Have No Such Custom," 4)

- c) **Jimmy Winsted:** "In spiritual service, which is summarized in praying and prophesying, woman is given authority to serve God without the intervention of man, her head. He is not her mediator." ("We Have No Such Custom," 11)

2. Affirmative Arguments:

- a. **It is the "spiritual head," as defined by Paul (11:3), that is under consideration in this passage, not the "physical head"**

3. Rebuttal Arguments:

- a. **On its face, this interpretation appears "strained"**

- 1) This interpretation would certainly not be obvious to **the average reader**
- 2) One needs a great deal of "**help**" to arrive at this conclusion

- b. **This is not the way this passage has been interpreted historically by:**

- 1) The "**Church Fathers**"

- a) See Appendix C: The "Church Fathers" On The Veil

- 2) **Lexicographers**

- a) See Appendix A: Definitions Of Major Terms

- 3) The vast majority of **scholars** and **commentators**

- a) See Appendix B: The Commentators On 1 Corinthians 11:16

- c. **It is not impossible for the same term to mean different things in the same context (cf. Jn. 3:8; Rom. 8:9)**

- d. **While Paul certainly refers to the "spiritual head" (11:3) in this context, there can be no reasonable doubt that he also refers to the "physical head"**

- 1) 1 Cor. 11:5: "But every woman who prays or prophesies with *her* head uncovered dishonors her [**spiritual**] head, for that is one and the same as if her [**physical**] head were shaved.
- 2) 1 Cor. 11:10: "For this reason the woman ought to have *a symbol of* authority on *her* [**physical**] head, because of the angels."
- 3) If Paul can transition from the "**spiritual head**" to the "**physical head**" (11:5b), he can just as easily transition from the "**physical head**" to the "**spiritual head**" (11:5a)

- e. **The context indicates that when a woman's head is covered (11:5), the woman herself is covered (11:6, 13), not her spiritual head**

- 1) Note: In 11:13, the word "**head**" [cf. NKJV, NASB, ESV, ISV, NIV, NRSV] is not found in the original MSS [cf. YLT, KJV, ASV]
 - a) **Marshall's Interlinear:** "Among you [your]selves judge: fitting is it [for] a **woman unveiled** -- to God to pray?"
 - b) **Berry's Interlinear:** "In yourselves judge: becoming is it for a **woman uncovered** to God to pray?"

Conclusion:

- I. In this study, we have offered an **exposition** of the text, and we have examined the **major interpretations** of the passage
- II. My **personal conclusions** at this time are as follows:
 - A. I believe that a strong case can be made that a woman should wear **an artificial covering** while praying or prophesying
 1. I don't believe that Paul's instructions can be **limited to a worship assembly**
 2. I don't believe that Paul's instructions apply to **worship in general**
 3. I think this interpretation would probably be the **easiest to defend** in a debate
 4. If I were a woman, I might very well wear an artificial covering, not because I'm 100% sure that it is required today, but because **I'm not 100% sure that it isn't**
 - B. My evaluation of the other arguments, categorized from **weakest to strongest**, are as follows:
 1. I believe that the **"Spiritual Head" Position** is completely untenable
 2. I believe that the **(Long) Hair Position** is highly unlikely
 3. I believe that the **Local Custom Position** is unlikely
 4. I believe that the **Spiritual Gifts Position** is certainly **possible**, perhaps even **probable**, but is it **certain**?

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Appendix A: Definitions Of Major Terms

I. “Head” (*kephale*)

- A. **BAGD**: “*head* -- 1. lit. --a. actually of the head of man or beast.... b. metaph....Christ the *k.* of the *ekklesia* thought of as a *soma*.... 2. fig. --a. in the case of living beings, to denote superior rank....of the husband in relation to his wife 1 Cor 11:3b; Eph 5:23a. Of Christ in relation to the church Eph 4:15; 5:23b. But Christ is the head not only of the church, but of the universe as a whole...and of every cosmic power....God the *k.* of Christ, Christ the *k.* of man, the man the *k.* of the woman 1 Cor 11:3c.... b. of things *the uppermost part, extremity, end, point*....” (430)
- B. **Thayer**: “*the head*, both of men...and of animals....Metaph. anything *supreme, chief, prominent*; of persons, *master, lord*...of a husband in relation to his wife, 1 Co. xi. 3; Eph. v. 23; of Christ, the lord of the husband, 1 Co. xi. 3...of the church, Eph. iv. 15; v. 23; Col. ii. 19....of things...*the corner-stone*....” (#2776, 345)
- C. **Vine**: “besides its natural significance, is used (a) figuratively.... (b) metaphorically, of the authority or direction of God in relation to Christ, of Christ in relation to believing men, of the husband in relation to the wife...of Christ in relation to the Church...of Christ in relation to principalities and powers....As to 1 Cor. 11:10, taken in connection with the context, the word “authority” probably stands, by metonymy, for a sign of authority (R.V.), the angels being witnesses of the pre-eminent relationship as established by God in the creation of man as just mentioned, with the spiritual significance regarding the position of Christ in relation to the Church...it is used of Christ as the foundation of the spiritual building set forth by the Temple, with its ‘corner stone,’ ...symbolically also of the Imperial rulers of the Roman power, as seen in the Apocalyptic visions....” (#2776, 532-533)

II. “Praying” (*proseuchomai*)

- A. **BAGD**: “...mid. dep. pray.... pray to God.... pray in a tongue, in the spirit, with the understanding 1 Cor 14:14a, 15....” (714)
- B. **Thayer**: “...*to offer prayers, to pray* (everywhere of prayers to the gods, or to God...)....” (#43336, 545-546)
- C. **Vine**: “to pray, is always used of prayer to God, and is the most frequent word in this respect, especially in the Synoptists and Acts....” (#4336, 871)

III. “Prophecy” (*propheteuo*)

- A. **BAGD**: “...prophecy. **1.** proclaim a divine revelation abs.... **2.** prophetically reveal what is hidden.... **3.** foretell the future, prophecy....” (723)
- B. **Thayer**: “...*to prophesy, i.e. to be a prophet, speak forth by divine inspiration; to predict*.... a. univ.: Mt. vii. 22. b. with the idea of foretelling future events pertaining esp. to the kingdom of God.... c. to utter forth, declare, a thing which can only be known by divine revelation.... d. to break forth under sudden impulse in lofty discourse or in praise of the divine counsels...; -- or, under the like prompting, to teach, refute, reprove, admonish, comfort others...1 Co. xi. 4, 5.... e. to act as a prophet, discharge the prophetic office....” (#4395, 552-553)
- C. **Vine**: “to be a prophet, to prophesy, is used (a) with the primary meaning of telling forth the Divine counsels.... (b) of foretelling the future....” (#4395, 894)

IV. “Prophet” (*prophetes*)

- A. **BAGD**: “...*prophet* as proclaimer and interpreter of the divine revelation....” (723)

B. **Thayer**: "...prop. i.q. interpreter, Ex. vii. 1, cf. iv. 16; hence an interpreter or spokesman for god; one through whom God speaks..., one who speaks forth by divine inspiration; I. In Grk. writ. fr. Aeschyl., Hdt., and Pind. down 1. an interpreter of oracles (whether uttered by the gods or the manteis), or of other hidden things. 2. a foreteller, soothsayer, seer. II. In the N.T. 1. one who, moved by the Spirit of God and hence his organ or spokesman, solemnly declares to men what he has received by inspiration esp. future events, and in particular such as relate to the cause and kingdom of God and to human salvation. 2. a poet (because poets were believed to sing under divine inspiration): so of Epimenides, Tit. i. 12." (#4396, 553-554)

C. **Vine**: "one who speaks forth or openly...a proclaimer of a divine message, denoted among the Greeks an interpreter of the oracles of the gods.

"In the Sept. it is the translation of the word *roeh*, a seer; I Sam. 9:9, indicating that the prophet was one who had immediate intercourse with God. It also translates the word *nabhi*, meaning either one in whom the message from God springs forth or one to whom anything is secretly communicated. Hence, in general, the prophet was one upon whom the Spirit of God rested, Numb. 11:17-29, one, to whom and through whom God speaks, Numb. 12:2; Amos 3:7, 8. In the case of the O.T. prophets their messages were very largely the proclamation of the Divine purposes of salvation and glory to be accomplished in the future; the prophesying of the N.T. prophets was both a preaching of the Divine counsels of grace already accomplished and the fore-telling of the purposes of God in the future." (#4396, 894)

V. "Covered" (*kata*)

A. **BAGD**: "I. with the gen. (so 73 times in NT) -- 1. of place -- a. *down from someth.* (Hom. +; LXX)...*k. kephales echein have someth. on one's head* (lit. hanging down fr. the head, as a veil....) 1 Cor 11:4." (405)

B. **Thayer**: "a preposition denoting motion or diffusion or direction from the higher to the lower; as in class. Grk., joined with the gen. and the acc. I. With the GENITIVE.... 1. prop. a. *down from, down*...hence *kata kephales* (a veil hanging down from his head) *echon*, 1 Co. xi. 4 ([A.V. *having his head covered*]...." (#2596, 326-329)

C. **Vine**: "In 1 Cor. 11:4, 'having his head covered' is lit., 'having (something) down the head.'" (#2619, 244)

D. **Enhanced Strong's Lexicon**: "480 occurrences; AV translates as 'according to' 107 times, 'after' 61 times, 'against' 58 times, 'in' 36 times, 'by' 27 times, 'daily + 2250' 15 times, 'as' 11 times, and translated miscellaneously 165 times. 1 down from, through out. 2 according to, toward, along." (#2596, Elec. Ed., n.p.)

E. **Marvin R. Vincent**: "Lit., *having something hanging down from his head*. Referring to the *tallith*, a four-cornered shawl having fringes consisting of eight threads, each knotted five times, and worn over the head in prayer. It was placed upon the worshipper's head at his entrance into the synagogue." (*Word Studies In The New Testament*, 3:246)

F. **Robertson**: "Literally, having a veil (*kalumma*, understood) down from the head...." (WPNT, 4:159)

G. **G.G. Findley**: "*kata kephales echon*, 'wearing down from the head (a veil: *kalumma* understood)...." (*Expositor's Greek New Testament*, 2:872)

VI. "Dishonors" (*kataischuno*)

A. **BAGD**: "1. *dishonor; disgrace, disfigure*.... 1 Cor 11:4f. 2. *put to shame*.... Pass. *be put to shame, be humiliated*... also *be ashamed*.... -*Humiliate*.... 3. of the shame and

disappointment that come to one whose faith or hope is shown to be vain **-a.** act. causative.... **b.** pass. *be disappointed*....” (410)

- B. **Thayer**: “...as in Grk. writ. fr. Hom. down; 1. to dishonor, disgrace...1 Co. xi. 4 sq.... 2. to put to shame, make ashamed...; pass. to be ashamed, blush with shame...; by a Hebr. usage one is said to be put to shame who suffers a repulse, or whom some hope has deceived....” (#2617, 331)
- C. **Vine**: “another strengthened form (*kata*, down, intensive), is used (a) in the Active Voice, to put to shame, e.g., Rom. 5:5; 1 Cor. 1:27 (A.V., ‘confound’); 11:4, 5 (‘dishonoureth’), and ver. 22; (b) in the Passive Voice....” (#2617, 69)

VII. **“Uncovered”** (*akatakaluptos*)

- A. **BAGD**: “*uncovered...with unc. head* (of praying women....) 1 Cor 11:5, In short *gunaika a. a woman without head-covering* vs. 13.” (29)
- B. **Thayer**: “*not covered, unveiled*: 1 Co. xi. 5, 13.” (#177, 21)
- C. **Vine**: “uncovered (*a*, negative, *katakalupto*, to cover), is used in 1 Cor. 11:5, 13, R.V., ‘unveiled,’ with reference to the injunction forbidding women to be unveiled in a church gathering. Whatever the character of the covering, it is to be on her head as ‘a sign of authority’ (ver. 10), R.V., the meaning of which is indicated in ver. 3 in the matter of headships, and the reasons for which are given in vv. 7-9, and in the phrase ‘because of the angels,’ intimating their witness of and interest in, that which betokens the headship of Christ. The injunctions were neither Jewish, which required men to be veiled in prayer, nor Greek, by which men and women were alike unveiled. The Apostle’s instructions were ‘the commandment of the Lord’ (14:37) and were for all the churches (vv. 33, 34).” (#177, 1187-1188)

VIII. **“Shaved”** (*xurao*)

- A. **BAGD**: “...mid. *have oneself shaved... have one’s head shaved...Ac 21:24.... Abs. 1 Cor 11:6. Pass. ... a woman whose head is shaved* vs. 5. M-M.” (549)
- B. **Thayer**: “...*to shear, shave*: pass. 1 Co. xi. 5; mid. *to get one’s self shaved*, *ibid.* vs. 6; 1 Co. xi. 6....” (#3587, 432)
- C. **Vine**: “a late form of *xureo*, or *xuro*, from *xuron*, ‘a razor....1 Cor. 11:5, 6 (2nd part in each).” (#3587, 1030-1031)

IX. **“Covered”** (*katakalupto*)

- A. **BAGD**: “...*cover, veil. 1. act.* (Is 6:2) and pass. (Sus 32 Theod.) of a young woman... *covered or veiled to the forehead* Hv 4, 2, 1. But here the form could also be **2. mid. cover oneself** w. a veil, abs. (s. Jos., Ant. 7, 254)1 Cor 11:6a, b....” (411)
- B. **Thayer**: “fr. Hom. Down; *to cover up* [see *kata*, III.3]; Mid. Pres. *katakaluptomai, to veil or cover one’s self*: 1 Cor. xi. 6; *ten kephalen, one’s head, ib. 7.*” (#2619, 331)
- C. **Vine**: “to cover up (*kata*, intensive), in the Middle Voice, to cover oneself, is used in 1 Cor. 11:6, 7 (R.V., ‘veiled’).” (#2619, 244)
- D. **Enhanced Strong’s Lexicon**: “Three occurrences; AV translates as ‘cover’ three times. **1** to cover up. **2** to veil or cover one’s self.” (#2619, Elec. Ed., n.p.)

X. **“Cover”** (*kalupto*) [Not used in 1 Cor. 11]

- A. **BAGD**: “Prob. passed into the Koine fr. Ionic [Nägeli 27]) *cover, hide, conceal. 1. lit. tina cover someone (up)* Lk 23:30, perh. in the special sense *bury.... ti tini cover someth. w.*

some. (Num 4:12)... *a lamp with a vessel* 8:16 (cf. Num 4:9). Of a boat... *be covered by the waves* Mt 8:24 (Achilles Tat. 3, 2, 6; Ps 77:53; Ex 15:10). **2.** fig. -- **a.** *cover (up), remove from sight*... 1 Pt 4:8; Js 5:20; 1 Cl 49:5; 2 Cl 16:4 (for the last 4 cf. also Prov 10:12)... **b.** *hide* (Hos 10:8) pf. pass. *be hidden* (=unknown) of the gospel... 2 Cor 4:3; cf. Mt 10:26... **c.** *veil of the kardia* (q.v. 1b β) of uncomprehending disciples: *was our heart not veiled?* Lk 24:32....” (401)

- B. **Thayer**: “...often in Hom., Tragg. and other poets, more rarely in prose; *to cover, cover up*.... trop. *to hide, veil*, i.e. *to hinder the knowledge of a thing*....” (#2572, 323)
- C. **Vine**: “signifies to cover...; to veil, in 2 Cor. 4:3 (R.V.; A.V., ‘hid’).” (#2572, 244)
- D. **Enhanced Strong’s Lexicon**: “Eight occurrences; AV translates as ‘cover’ five times, and ‘hide’ three times. **1** to hide, veil. **1A** to hinder the knowledge of a thing.” (#2572, Elec. Ed., n.p.)

XI. “Shorn” (*keiro*)

- A. **BAGD**: “...*shear* a sheep.... Mid. *cut one’s hair* or *have one’s hair cut*.... *have one’s hair cut* (as the result of a vow...) Ac 18:18. Abs. ... 1 Cor 11:6a, b.” (427)
- B. **Thayer**: “...fr. Hom. Down; *to shear*: a sheep, Acts viii. 32.... Mid. *To get or let be shorn*.... absol. Of shearing or cutting short the hair of the head, 1 Co. xi. 6....” (#2751, 343)
- C. **Vine**: “is used (a) of shearing sheep.... (b) in the Middle Voice, to have one’s hair cut off, be shorn, Acts 18:18; 1 Cor. 11:6 (twice....).” (#2751, 1031)

XII. “Authority” (*exousia*)

- A. **BAGD**: “**1.** *freedom of choice, right* to act, decide, or dispose of one’s property as one wishes... legal t.t., esp. in wills.... **2.** *ability* to do some., *capability, might, power*.... Esp. of God’s power.... Also of Satan’s power Ac 26:18.... **3.** *authority, absolute power, warrant*.... Of apostolic authority.... Of Jesus’ absolute authority Mt 28:18.... **4.** the power exercised by rulers or others in high position by virtue of their office. **a.** *ruling power, official power*....--The power of a particular office.... **b.** the *domain* in which the power is exercised.... **c.** the bearers of the authority -- **a.** human *authorities, officials, government*... **β** . of rulers and functionaries of the spirit world.... **5.** Various opinions are held concerning the mng. of 1 Cor 11:10.... Many now understand it as ‘*a means of exercising power*’... It is abstract for concrete.... that is to say, the *veil*... by which women at prayer (when they draw near to the heavenly realm) protect themselves fr. the amorous glances of certain angels. But the veil may also have been simply a symbol of womanly dignity, esp. befitting a Christian woman, esp. in the presence of holy angels....” (278)
- B. **Thayer**: “...power. **1.** power of choice, liberty of doing as one pleases; leave or permission.... **2.** physical and mental power; the ability or strength with which one is endued, which he either possesses or exercises.... **3.** the power of authority (influence) and of right...; delegated authority.... **4.** the power of rule or government (the power of him whose will and commands must be submitted to by others and obeyed, [generally translated authority]); **a.** univ.... **b.** specifically, α Of the power of judicial decision.... **β** . Of authority to manage domestic affairs.... **c.** metonymically, α A thing subject to authority or rule...; jurisdiction.... **β** . One who possesses authority... [so the Eng. Authorities, dignities, etc.] in reference to persons); $\alpha\alpha$ A ruler, human magistrate.... **$\beta\beta$** . the leading and more powerful among created beings superior to man, spiritual potentates; used in the plur. Of a certain class of angels...; used also of demons.... **d.** a sign of the husband’s authority over his wife, i.e. the veil with which propriety required a woman to cover herself, 1 Co. xi. 10....” (#1849, 225)

- C. **Vine**: “denotes authority (from the impersonal verb *exesti*, ‘it is lawful’). From the meaning of leave or permission, or liberty of doing as one pleases, it passed to that of the ability or strength with which one is endued, then to that of the power of authority, the right to exercise power...; or the power of rule or government, the power of one whose will and commands must be obeyed by others, e.g. Matt. 28:18.... By metonymy, or name-change (the substitution of a suggestive word for the name of the thing meant), it stands for that which is subject to authority or rule...; or, as with the English ‘authority,’ one who possesses authority, a ruler, magistrate....

“In I Cor. 11:10 it is used of the veil with which a woman is required to cover herself in an assembly or church, as a sign of the Lord’s authority over the Church.” (#1849, 81)

- D. **Marvin R. Vincent**: “Not in the primary sense of *liberty* or *permission*, but *authority*. Used here of *the symbol* of power, *i.e.*, the covering upon the head as a sign of her husband’s authority. So Rev., *a sign of authority*.” (*Word Studies In The New Testament*, 3:248)

XIII. “Judge” (*krino*)

- A. **BAGD**: “...1. separate, distinguish, then select, prefer.... 2. judge, think, consider, look upon.... 3. reach a decision, decide, propose, inten.... 4. as a legal t.t. judge, decide, hale before a court, condemn, also hand over for judicial punishment (in a forensic sense Hom.+; inscr., pap., LXX). a. of a human court.... b. of the divine tribunal.... 5. see to it that justice is done (LXX) τινί to someone 1 Cl 8:4 (Is 1:17). 6. of the judgment which people customarily pass upon (and thereby seek to influence) the lives and actions of their fellowmen. a. judge, pass judgment upon, express an opinion about.... b. esp. in an unfavorable sense pass an unfavorable judgment upon, criticise, find fault with, condemn.... -- Also of a human judgment directed against God....” (451-452)

- B. **Thayer**: “...1. to separate, put asunder; to pick out, select, choose.... 2. to approve, esteem....to prefer.... 3. to be of opinion, deem, think....foll. by a direct quest. 1 Co. xi. 13...to be of opinion.... 4. to determine, resolve, decree.... 5. to judge; a. to pronounce an opinion concerning right and wrong; α In a forensic sense [(differing from dikazein, the official term, in giving prominence to the intellectual process, the sifting and weighing of evidence)], of a human judge.... pass. To be judged, i.e. summoned to trial that one’s case may be examined and judgment passed upon it.... β . of the judgment of God or of Jesus the Messiah, deciding between the righteousness and the unrighteousness of men.... Contextually, used specifically of the act of condemning and decreeing (or inflicting) penalty on one.... γ. of Christians as hereafter to sit with Christ at the judgment.... b. to pronounce judgment; to subject to censure; of those who act the part of judges or arbiters in the matters of common life, or pass judgment on the deeds and words of others.... 6. Hebraistically i.q. to rule, govern; to preside over with the power of giving judicial decisions, because it was the prerogative of kings and rulers to pass judgment.... 7. Pass. and mid. to contend together, of warriors and combatants (Hom., Diod., al.); to dispute...; in a forensic sense, to go to law, have a suit at law....” (#2919, 360-361)

- C. **Vine**: “primarily denotes to separate, select, choose; hence, to determine, and so to judge, pronounce judgment. ‘The uses of this verb in the N.T. may be analysed as follows: (a) to assume the office of a judge.... (b) to undergo process of trial.... (c) to give sentence.... (d) to condemn.... (e) to execute judgment upon.... (f) to be involved in a lawsuit, whether as plaintiff...or as defendant.... (g) to administer affairs, to govern.... (h) to form an opinion.... (i) to make a resolve....’” (#2919, 610)

XIV. “Proper” (*prepo*)

- A. **BAGD**: “...be fitting, be seemly or suitable....” (699)

- B. **Thayer**: “1. *to stand out, to be conspicuous, to be eminent*, so fr. Hom. Il. 12, 104 down. 2. *to be becoming, fit*, (fr. Pind., Aeschyl., Hdt. down)....” (#4241, 535)
- C. **Vine**: “means to be conspicuous among a number; to be eminent, distinguished by a thing, hence, to be becoming, seemly, fit. In the impersonal sense, it signifies it is fitting, it becometh...1 Cor. 11:13....” (#4241, 98)

XV. “**Nature**” (*phusis*)

- A. **BAGD**: nature. **1.** natural endowment or condition, inherited fr. one’s ancestors.... we were, in our natural condition (as descendants of Adam), children of wrath Eph 2:3... **2.** natural characteristics or disposition....human nature, unless the sense should be mankind (s. 4 below) Js 3:7b.... **3.** nature as the regular natural order.... 1 Cor 11:14.... **4.** natural being, product of nature, creature....” (869)
- B. **Thayer**: “fr. Hom. Od. 10, 303 down; *nature*, i.e. a. *the nature of things, the force, laws, order, of nature*; as opp. to what is monstrous, abnormal, perverse...*nature*, i.e. *natural sense, native conviction or knowledge*, as opp. to what is learned by instruction and accomplished by training or prescribed by law...(i.e. *the native sense of propriety*)...1 Cor. xi. 14.... b. *birth, physical origin*.... c. *a mode of feeling and acting which by long habit has become nature*...Eph. ii. 3.... d. *the sum of innate properties and powers by which one person differs from others*, distinctive native peculiarities, natural characteristics....” (#5449, 660-661)
- C. **Vine**: “from *phuo*, to bring forth, produce, signifies (a) the nature (i.e., the natural powers or constitution) of a person or thing.... (b) origin, birth.... (c) the regular law or order of nature...1 Cor. 11:14....” (#5449, 775)
- D. **Edward Robinson**: “*phusis, nature*, pr. *vis genitrix*, generative and productive power; like Lat. *natura* from *nascor*. Hence, 1. *nature*, i.e. natural source or origin, *generation, birth, descent*.... 2. *a nature*, as generated, produced, naturally existing, *a being, genus, kind*.... 3. *the nature* of any person or thing, the natural constitution, the innate disposition and qualities. a) Of persons, in a moral sense, the native mode of thinking, feeling, acting, as unenlightened by the influence of divine truth; Eph. 2, 3...Rom. 2, 14.... –Spec. *a natural feeling* of decorum, *a native sense* of propriety, e.g. in respect to national customs in which one is born and brought up; 1 Cor. 11, 14...; *doth not your own natural feeling teach you?* It was the national custom among both the Hebrews and Greeks, for men to wear the hair short, and women to wear it long.... b) Genr. *the nature of things*, the order and constitution of nature; e.g. *kata phusin, according to nature, natural*....” (*A Greek And English Lexicon Of the New Testament*, 771)
- E. **Marvin R. Vincent**: “The recognized constitution of things. In this case the natural distinction of the woman’s long hair.” (*Word Studies In The New Testament*, 3:248)
1. **Marvin R. Vincent**: “I prefer this objective sense to the subjective meaning, *the inborn sense and perception of what is seemly*. Of course, such subjective sense is assumed; but, as Edwards remarks, ‘No sentiment of men would be adduced by the apostle unless it were grounded on an objective difference in the constitution of things.’” (*Word Studies In The New Testament*, 3:248, note)

XVI. “**Have long hair**” (*komao*)

- A. **BAGD**: “...*wear long hair, let one’s hair grow long* (Diod. S. 20, 63, 3) 1 Cor 11:14, 15 (Greek men do not do this: Hdt. 1, 82, 7; Plut., Mor. 267B; Ps.-Phoc. 212...)” (442)
- B. **Thayer**: “*to let the hair grow, have long hair*...1 Cor xi. 14 sq. (In Grk. Writ. Fr. Hom. Down.)” (#2863, 354)

- C. **Vine**: “signifies to let the hair grow long, to wear long hair, a glory to a woman, a dishonour to a man (as taught by nature), 1 Cor. 11:14, 15.” (#2863, 519)
- XVII. **“Dishonor”** (*atimia*)
- A. **BAGD**: “...dishonor, disgrace, shame....” (120)
- B. **Thayer**: “*dishonor, ignominy, disgrace*, [fr. Hom. Down]: 1 Co. xi. 14; opp. to *doxa*....” (#819, 83)
- C. **Vine**: “from *a*, negative, *time*, honour, denotes dishonour, ignominy, disgrace.... In 1 Cor. 11:14, said of long hair, if worn by men, R.V., ‘dishonour,’ for A.V., ‘shame,’ in contrast to *doxa*, glory, ver. 15....” (#819, 310)
- XVIII. **“Glory”** (*doxa*)
- A. **BAGD**: “**1. brightness, splendor, radiance** -- **a.** lit. --The concept has been widened to denote the *glory, majesty, sublimity* of God in general.... **b.** The state of being in the next life is thus described as participation in the radiance or glory --**a.** w. ref. to Christ... Also of Christ’s preexistence: J 17:5, 22, 24. **β.** w. ref. to his disciples.... **c. reflection...** *the man is the image and reflection of God* 1 Cor 11:7.... **2. magnificence, splendor**, anything that catches the eye.... of royal *splendor* gener.... Gener. of human splendor of any sort 1 Pt 1:24 (Is 40:6). **3. fame, renown, honor**.... **4.** ... offices and honors, also those who held them) of angelic being... *glorious angelic beings*.... However, the mng. *majesties, illustrious persons*, is also poss.” (203-204)
- B. **Thayer**: “I. *opinion, judgment, view*: in this sense very often in prof. writ.; but in the Bible only in 4 Macc. v. 17 (18). II. *opinion, estimate*, whether good or bad, concerning some one; but... in prof. writ. generally, in the sacred writ. always, *good opinion* concerning one, and as resulting from that, *praise, honor, glory*.... III. As a translation of the Hebr...., in a use foreign to Grk. writ. [W. 32], *splendor, brightness*; 1. properly... of the sun, moon, stars...; used of the heavenly brightness, by which God was conceived of as surrounded... and by which heavenly beings were surrounded when they appeared on earth.... 2. *magnificence, excellence, preeminence, dignity, grace*.... univ. *preeminence, excellence*.... 3. *majesty*; a. that which belongs to God; and α the kingly majesty which belongs to him as the supreme ruler.... 1 Co. xi. 7... because in her the preeminence and authority of her husband are conspicuous, *ibid.* β . *majesty* in the sense of the absolute perfection of the deity.... b. *majesty* which belongs to Christ; and α the kingly majesty of the Messiah, to which belongs his kingly state, the splendor of his external appearance, the retinue of angels, and the like.... β . *the absolutely perfect inward or personal excellence of Christ*.... γ. *the majesty (glory) of angels*, as apparent in their exterior brightness.... 4. *a most glorious condition, most exalted state*; a. of that condition with God the Father in heaven to which Christ was raised after he had achieved his work on earth.... b. *the glorious condition of blessedness into which it is appointed and promised that true Christians shall enter after their Saviour’s return from heaven*....” (#1391, 155-156)
- C. **Vine**: “glory (from *dokeo*, to seem), primarily signifies an opinion, estimate, and hence, the honour resulting from a good opinion. It is used (I)(a) of the nature and acts of God in self-manifestation, i.e., what He essentially is and does, as exhibited in whatever way he reveals Himself in these respects, and particularly in the Person of Christ, in whom essentially His glory has ever shone forth and ever will do, John 17:5, 24; Heb. 1:3.... (b) of the character and ways of God as exhibited through Christ to and through believers, 2 Cor. 3:18 and 4:6; (c) of the state of blessedness into which believers are to enter hereafter through being brought into the likeness of Christ, e.g., Rom. 8:18, 21.... (d) brightness or splendour, (1) supernatural, emanating from God (as in the Shekinah glory, in the pillar of cloud and in the

Holy of Holies, e.g., Ex. 16:10; 25:22)... in Tit. 2:13 it is used of Christ's return, 'the appearing of the glory of our great God and Saviour Jesus Christ' (R.V.)... (2) natural, as of the heavenly bodies, 1 Cor. 15:40, 41; (II) of good reputation, praise, honour... in 1 Cor. 11:7, of man as representing the authority of God, and of woman as rendering conspicuous the authority of man...The word is used in ascriptions of praise to God...." (#1391, 483-484)

XIX. "Covering" (*peribalaion*)

- A. **BAGD**: "covering, wrap, cloak, robe of an article of clothing.... someth. like a *cloak* or *mantle*...her (the woman's) *hair is given to her as a covering* 1 Cor 11:15...." (646)
- B. **Thayer**: "prop. A covering *thrown around, a wrapper*; in the N.T. 1. *a mantle*: Heb. i. 12.... 2. *a veil* [A.V. *a covering*]: 1 Co. xi. 15." (#4018, 502)
- C. **Vine**: "lit. denotes something thrown around (*peri*, around, *ballo*, to throw); hence, a veil, covering, I Cor. 11:15 (marg.), or a mantle around the body, a vesture, Heb. 1:12." (#4018, 244)
- D. **Robertson**: "Old word from *periballo* to fling around, as a mantle (Heb. 1:12) or a covering or veil as here." (WPNT, 4:162)

XX. "Seems" (*dokeo*)

- A. **BAGD**: "1. trans. *think, believe, suppose, consider* of subjective opinion (Hom.+; pap.; rare LXX). 2. intr. *seem* (Hom.+; so mostly LXX)—a. *have the appearance*.... b. *be influential, be recognized as being someth., have a reputation*.... 3. impers. ... *it seems to me*.... a. *I think, believe* (cf. 1 above).... b. *it seems best to me, I decide*...." (202)
- B. **Thayer**: "...[fr. Hom. Down]; 1. to be of opinion, think, suppose.... 2. intrans. to seem, be accounted, reputed.... 3. impers. *dokei moi, it seems to me*; i.e. a. *I think, judge*.... b. ...it seemed good to, pleased, me; I determined...." (#1380, 154)
- C. **Vine**: "denotes (a) to be of opinion (akin to *doxa*, opinion).... (b) to seem, to be reputed... 1 Cor. 11:16.... (c) impersonally (1) to think.... (2) to seem good...." (#1380, 1012-1013)

XXI. "Contentious" (*philoneikos*)

- A. **BAGD**: "1. *quarrelsome, contentious*...1 Cor 11:16. 2. in a good sense...*emulous, (in) eager (rivalry)*...." (860)
- B. **Thayer**: "*fond of strife, contentious*: 1 Co. xi. 16." (#5380, 654)
- C. **Vine**: "akin to A, No. 3 [*philoneikia*, 'lit. love of strife (*phileo*, to love, *neikos*, strife), signifies eagerness to contend; hence, a contention....'], is used in I Cor. 11:16. In the Sept., Ezek. 3:7, 'stubborn.'" (#5380, 226)

XXII. "Custom" (*sunetheia*)

- A. **BAGD**: "1. *friendship, fellowship, intimacy* (Isocr., Aeschin. et al.; inscr., pap.).... 2. *habit, custom, being or becoming accustomed* (Hom. Hymns; Pla.; inscr., pap., 4 Macc; Philo, Spec. Leg. 3, 35 al.; Joseph.; so as loanw. in rabb.). a. *subjectively being or becoming accustomed*....*through being accustomed to idols in former times* 1 Cor 8:7. b. *objectively custom, habit, usage* (Jos., Ant. 10, 72) Dg 2:1. ... 1 Cor 11:16...." (789)
- B. **Thayer**: "fr. Isocr., Xen., Plat. Down, at. *Consuetude*, i.e. 1. *intercourse* (with one), *intimacy*: 4 Macc. xiii. 21. 2. *custom*: Jn. xviii. 39...; 1 Co. xi. 16. 3. *a being used to*: with a gen. Of the object to which one is accustomed, 1 Cor. viii. 7...." (#4914, 604)
- C. **Vine**: "*sun*, with, *ethos* (see No. 1), denotes (a) an intercourse, intimacy, a meaning not found in the N.T.; (b) a custom, customary usage, John 18:39; 1 Cor. 11:16; or force of habit,

1 Cor. 8:7, R.V., ‘being used to’ (some mss. Here have *suneidesis*, conscience; whence A.V., ‘with conscience of’).” (#4914, 255)

XXIII. “For” (*anti*):

- A. **BAGD**: “orig. mng. local, *opposite*. Figurative **1.** in order to indicate that one person or thing is, or is to be, replaced by another *instead of in place of*.... **2.** in order to indicate that one thing is equiv. to another *for, as, in place of*.... *hair as a covering* 1 Cor 11:15....” (73)
- B. **Thayer**: “1. prop. it seems to have signified *over against, opposite to, before*, in a local sense.... Hence, 2. indicating exchange, succession, *for, instead of, in place of* (something). a. univ. *instead of*...to serve as a covering, 1 Cor. xi:15....” (#473, 49)
- C. **Kittel**: “In its basic meaning of ‘over against’ it does not occur in the NT, but is mostly used in the sense of a. ‘in the place of,In this respect it makes little difference whether the word denotes an actual replacement, an intended replacement, or a mere equivalent in estimation, or similarity (I Cor. 11:15...)’” (*The Theological Dictionary of The New Testament*, 1:372)

Appendix B: The Commentators On 1 Corinthians 11:16

- I. **F. W. Farrar:** “*Such custom.* Not referring to ‘contentiousness,’ but to the women appearing with uncovered heads. **Neither the churches of God.** If you Corinthians prefer these abnormal practices in spite of reason, common sense, and my arguments, you must stand alone in your innovations upon universal Christian practice. But catholic custom is against your, ‘self-opinionated particularism’.” (“1 Corinthians,” *The Pulpit Commentary*, 19:363)
- II. **Jamieson, Fausset, & Brown:** : “...**no such custom** – as that of women praying uncovered....” (283-284)
- III. **Wycliffe Bible Commentary:** “No such custom, i.e., no custom of women worshipping without coverings....” (624)
- IV. **Albert Barnes:** “The sense of this passage is probably this: ‘If any man, any teacher, or others, is disposed to be strenuous about this, or to make it a matter of difficulty; if he is disposed to call in question my reasoning, and to dispute my premises and the considerations which I have advanced, and to maintain still that it is proper for women to appear unveiled in public, I would add, that in Judea we have no such custom, neither does it prevail among any of the churches. This, therefore, would be a sufficient reason why it should not be done in Corinth, even if the abstract reasoning should not convince them of the impropriety. It would be singular; would be contrary to the usual custom; would offend the prejudices of many; and should, therefore, be avoided.’
“We have no such custom. We the apostles in the churches which we have elsewhere founded; or we have no such custom in Judea. The sense is, that it is contrary to custom there for women to appear in public unveiled. This custom, the apostle argues, ought to be allowed to have some influence on the church of Corinth, even though they should not be convinced by his reasoning.
“Neither the churches of God. The churches elsewhere. It is customary there for the woman to appear veiled. If at Corinth this custom is not observed, it will be a departure from what has elsewhere been regarded as proper; and will offend these churches. Even, therefore, if the reasoning is not sufficient to silence all cavils and doubts, yet the propriety of uniformity in the habits of the churches, the fear of giving offence, should lead you to discountenance and disapprove the custom of your females appearing in public without their veil.” (*Barnes’ Notes*, 208-209)
- V. **James Macknight:** “Now, if the false teacher resolves to be contentious, and maintains that it is allowable for women to pray and teach publicly in the church unveiled, we in Judea have no such custom, neither any of the churches of God.” (*Macknight On The Epistles*, 1:177)
- VI. **David Lipscomb:** “The custom referred to must be women wearing short hair and approaching God in prayer with uncovered heads. He reasoned on the subject to show the impropriety, but adds in an authoritative manner, if any are disposed to be contentious over it, neither we nor the churches of God have any such custom....” (*A Commentary On The New Testament Epistles*, 2:169)
- VII. **Adam Clarke:** If any person *sets himself up* as a wrangler – *puts himself forward* as a defender of such points, that *a woman may pray or teach with her head uncovered*, and that *a man may, without reproach, have long hair*; let him know that we have no such custom as either, nor are they sanctioned by any of the churches of God, whether among the Jews or the Gentiles.” (*Clarke’s Commentary*, 6:253-254)
- VIII. **Jim McGuiggan:** “If anyone (tis) wants to haggle over it, here is Paul’s last word on it: ‘That is not how it is done in the Church of God! Women don’t pray or prophesy unveiled.’” (“The Book of 1 Corinthians,” *Looking Into The Bible Series*, 154)
- IX. **Leon Morris:** “But Paul has no intention of arguing the matter with any who is given to wordy battles (*contentious, philoneikos*, is one who lives strife). Such are capable of prolonging an argument indefinitely. In the face of such an attitude Paul points to universal custom. *We have*

no such custom, i.e. such as women praying or prophesying with head uncovered. Exactly who he means by *we* is not clear, but he addition, *neither the churches of God*, shows that what he has just outlined is the habit throughout the Christian churches.” (“The First Epistle Of Paul To The Corinthians,” *Tyndale New Testament Commentaries*, 7:156)

- X. **Paul Marsh:** “Any deviation from the apostle’s ruling could only be interpreted as an exhibition of brazen disregard for the accepted codes of conduct by the women of his day.” (“The First Letter To The Corinthians,” *The New Layman’s Bible Commentary*, 1445)
- XI. **James Macknight:** “*Now if the false teacher resolves to be contentious*, and maintains that it is allowable for women to pray and teach publicly in the church, *we in Judea have no such custom, neither any of the churches of God.*” (*Macknight On The Epistles*, 180)
- XII. **David K. Lowery:** “Paul concludes that if any want to contend this apostolic tradition, they need to take note that neither Paul nor the churches of God have any other practice.” (*The New Bible Commentary*. Elec. Ed., n.p.)
- XIII. **S. Lewis Johnson:** “**No such custom**, i.e., no custom of women worshipping without coverings. Some say that the custom was peculiar to Corinth, but Paul’s words, **neither the churches of God**, argue against this view. Still others insist that the custom is not to be applied today (cf. Morris, *op. cit.*, p. 158; Barclay, *op. cit.*, p. 110). It should be noted, however, that each of the reasons given for the wearing of a veil is taken from permanent facts, lasting as long as the present earthly economy (cf. Godet, *op. cit.*, II, 133). Paul did carry his point, for early church history bears witness that in Rome, Antioch, and Africa the custom became the norm.” (“1 Corinthians.” *The Wycliffe Bible Commentary*, 1248)
- XIV. **Marvin R. Vincent:** “Not the custom of contentiousness, but that of women speaking unveiled. The testimonies of Tertullian and Chrysostom show that these injunctions of Paul prevailed in the churches. In the sculptures of the catacombs the women have a close-fitting head-dress while the men have the hair short” (*Word Studies In The New Testament*, 3:248)

Appendix C: The “Church Fathers” On The Veil

- I. **Irenaeus** [120-202]: “Again, the coming of the Saviour with His attendants to Achamoth is declared in like manner by him in the same Epistle, when he says, ‘A woman ought to have a veil upon her head, because of the angels.’”⁹⁹ (Emphasis Added, *Against Heresies*, 1:8:2)
 - A. ⁹⁹1 Cor. xi. 10. Irenaeus here reads *kalumma*, veil, instead of *exousian*, power, as in the received text. [An interesting fact, as it betokens an old gloss, which may have slipped into the text of some ancient mss.]
- II. **Tertullian** [150-225]: “Having already undergone the trouble peculiar to my opinion, I will show in Latin also that **it behoves our virgins to be veiled** from the time that they have passed the turning-point of their age: that **this observance is exacted by truth, on which no one can impose prescription-no space of times, no influence of persons, no privilege of regions**. For these, for the most part, are the sources whence, from some ignorance or simplicity, custom finds its beginning; and then it is successionaly confirmed into an usage, and thus is maintained in opposition to truth. But **our Lord Christ has surnamed Himself Truth, not Custom**. If Christ is always, and prior to all, equally truth is a thing sempiternal and ancient. Let those therefore look to themselves, to whom that is new which is intrinsically old. It is not so much novelty as truth which convicts heresies. **Whatever savours of opposition to truth, this will be heresy, even (if it be an) ancient custom.**” (Emphasis Added, *On The Veiling Of Virgins*, Ch. I)
- III. **Tertullian** [150-225]: “**Throughout Greece, and certain of its barbaric provinces, the majority of Churches keep their virgins covered. There are places, too, beneath this (African) sky, where this practice obtains; lest any ascribe the custom to Greek or barbarian Gentilehood.** But I have proposed (as models) those Churches which were founded by apostles or apostolic men; and antecedently, I think, to certain (founders, who shall be nameless).” (Emphasis Added, *On The Veiling Of Virgins*, Ch. II)
- IV. **Tertullian** [150-225]: “Behold two diverse names, Man and woman- ‘every one’ in each case: **two laws, mutually distinctive**; on the one hand (**a law**) of **veiling**, on the other (**a law**) of **baring**.” (Emphasis Added, *On The Veiling Of Virgins*, Ch. VIII)
- V. **Tertullian** [150-225]: “Herein consists the defence of our opinion, in accordance with Scripture, in accordance with Nature, in accordance with Discipline. Scripture founds the law; Nature joins to attest it; Discipline exacts it. **Which of these (three) does a custom rounded on (mere) opinion appear in behalf of?** or what is the colour of the opposite view? God’s is Scripture; God’s is Nature; God’s is Discipline. Whatever is contrary to these is not God’s. If Scripture is uncertain, Nature is manifest; and concerning Nature’s testimony Scripture cannot be uncertain. If there is a doubt about Nature, Discipline points out what is more sanctioned by God.” (Emphasis Added, *On The Veiling Of Virgins*, Ch. XVI)
- VI. **Clement of Alexandria** [153-217]: “Woman and man are to go to church decently attired, with natural step, embracing silence, possessing unfeigned love, pure in body, pure in heart, fit to pray to God. 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**.” (Emphasis Added, *The Instructor*, 3:11)
- VII. **Hippolytus** [170-236]: “**All the women should cover their heads with a pallium**, and not simply with a piece of linen, which is not a proper veil.” (Emphasis Added, *Apostolic Tradition*, 18:5)

Appendix D: Paul's Instructions And Ancient Custom

- I. Some scholars affirm that Paul's instructions concerning the head covering **reflect the actual customs** of the day
- A. **J. R. Dummelow**: "In Greek, as well as in Eastern cities, it was customary for women, except those of bad character, to cover their heads in public." (*The One Volume Bible Commentary*, on 1 Cor. 11, quoted in Jere Frost, "The Covering Of 1 Corinthians 11," *Gospel Truths*, Sept. 1997)
- B. **T. W. Davies**: "No respectable woman in an eastern village or city goes out without it, and, if she does, she is in danger of being misjudged." (*Hastings' Dictionary of the Bible*, quoted in William Barclay, "The Letters to the Corinthians," *The Daily Study Bible Series*, 97)
- C. **Burton Scott Easton**: "The use of the face veil as a regular article of dress was unknown to the Heb women, and if 'veil' is to be understood in Cant 4 1, etc, it was worn as an ornament only. The modern oriental custom of veiling is due to Mohammedan influence and has not been universally adopted by Jewesses in the Orient. In NT times, however, among both Greeks and Romans, reputable women wore a veil in public (Plutarch *Quaest. Rom.* xiv) and to appear without it was an act of bravado (or worse); Tarsus, St. Paul's home city, was especially noted for strictness in this regard (Dio of Prusa, *Tarsica prior*, #48). Hence St. Paul's indignant directions in 1 Cor 11 2-16, which have their basis in the social proprieties of the time. The bearing of these directions, however, on the compulsory use of the *hat* by modern women in public worship would appear to be very remote." (*ISBE*, 1939, 4:3047)
- D. **Ralph Gower**: "Respectable women went out with their heads covered and wore veils. Only prostitutes displayed their faces and showed off their hair in order to attract men. Paul therefore tells the Christians that if a woman in the church will not wear a veil then she should be shorn; but it is best that her head be covered. Even when Christians have liberty in the practice of their faith they are not to shock propriety." (*The New Manners and Customs of Bible Times*, p. 20)
1. **James G. McCarthy**: "First, Paul is not talking about women covering their heads in public, but 'while praying or prophesying.' He says nothing about their dress while walking the streets of Corinth.
"Second, a bare head was not the mark of a woman of ill repute. Bareheaded women were a common sight on the streets of Corinth. Roman and Greek women did not wear veils in public. On the contrary, they were known for their elaborate hairstyles. Married Jewish women did wear veils in public. If a Jewish woman wore no veil, it was assumed she was a virgin, not a prostitute." ("Biblical Head Covering," 17)
 2. **R.C.H. Lenski**: "As far as prostitutes are concerned, all the evidence that has been discovered proves that **only a few of the very lowest types had shorn or shaven heads**. As a class these women endeavored to make themselves as attractive as possible and did their utmost to beautify their hair. We cannot, therefore, accept the idea that is advanced by not a few of the best commentators that in our passage Paul refers to the practice of the prostitutes and intends to tell the Corinthian women that, if they pray or prophesy with uncovered heads, they act the part of a lewd woman." (Emphasis added, p. 439)
- E. **David K. Lowery**: "It cannot be unequivocally asserted but the preponderance of evidence points toward the public head covering of women as a universal custom in the first century in both Jewish culture ([apocryphal] 3 Maccabees 4:6; Mishnah, *Ketuboth* 7. 6; Babylonian Talmud, *Ketuboth* 72a-b) and Greco-Roman culture (Plutarch *Moralia* 3. 232c; 4. 267b; Apuleius *The Golden Ass* 11. 10). The nature of the covering varied considerably (Ovid *The Art of Love* 3:135-65), but it was commonly a portion of the outer garment drawn up over the head like a hood." (*The Bible Knowledge Commentary*, Elec. Ed., n.p.)

- F. **William Barclay:** “We must remember the place of the veil in the East. To this day the Eastern women wear the *yashmak* which is a long veil leaving the forehead and the eyes open but reaching down almost to the feet. In Paul’s time the Eastern veil was even more concealing. It came right over the head with only an opening for the eyes and reached right down to the feet. A respectable eastern woman would never have dreamed of appearing without it.” (“The Letters to the Corinthians,” The Daily Study Bible Series, 97)
- G. “In biblical times, women covered their heads with veils or scarfs, as a sign of chastity and modesty The unveiling of a woman’s hair was considered a humiliation and punishment (Isa 3:17, cf Num 5:18 on the loosening of the hair of a woman suspected of adultery III Macc 4:6, and Sus 32) In talmudic times, too, women always covered their hair (e g, Ned 30b, Num. R 9:16)
 “Some aggadic sources interpret this custom as a sign of woman’s shame and feeling of guilt for Eve’s sin (Gen. R. 17:8; Er. 100b and Rashi ad loc.; cf also, the opinion of Paul in 1 Cor 11:1-16). If a woman walked bareheaded in the street, her husband could divorce her without repaying her dowry (Ket. 7:6)...Some rabbis compared the exposure of a married woman’s hair to the exposure of her privy parts (Ber. 24a), and forbid the recital of any blessing in the presence of a bareheaded woman (*ibid.*)....The general custom was to appear in public, and in the presence of strange men, with covered hair. It gradually became the accepted traditional custom for all Jewish women to cover their hair (see Sh. Ar., EH 21:2)” (“The Covering of the Head” [1971] 8:6).” (*Encyclopedia Judaica*, via Mike Willis, “1 Corinthians,” *Truth Commentaries*, 291)
- H. **Mike Willis:** “The custom of the Graeco-Roman world, as well as of the Jewish and Eastern world, demanded that the woman wear a veil in public as a symbol of her subjection to man. Failure to wear such a veil was an offense against social etiquette of the first century inasmuch as it meant that one was morally loose and not in subjection to her husband. Too, the custom of Jews and Greeks alike was for men not to wear a covering when praying, although they frequently wore one when working to protect themselves from the hot sun (this covering apparently symbolized nothing; it had only utilitarian value).” (“1 Corinthians,” *Truth Commentaries*, 292)
- II. Other scholars affirm that Paul’s instructions concerning the head covering **do not reflect the actual customs** of the day
- A. **G. G. Findlay:** “Paul’s directions do not agree precisely with current practice. Jewish men covered their heads at prayers with the Tallith...this custom, retained probably by some Jews at Christian meetings....Amongst the Greeks, both sexes worshipped with *uncovered* head, although women covered their heads at other times...while Roman men and women alike *covered* their heads during religious rites....The usage here prescribed seems to be an adaptation of Gr. custom to Christian conceptions.” (*The Expositor’s Greek Testament*, 2:872-873)
- B. “Note the remarkable fact that the practice that is here enjoined is neither Jewish, which required men to be veiled in prayer, nor Greek, which required both men and women to be unveiled, but particularly to Christians.” (*Cambridge Greek Testament*)
- C. **Marvin R. Vincent:** “The Romans, like the Jews, prayed with the head veiled. So Aeneas: ‘And our heads are shrouded before the altar with a Phrygian vestment’ (Virgil, ‘Aeneid,’ iii., 545). The Greeks remained bareheaded during prayer or sacrifice, as indeed they did in their ordinary outdoor life.” (*Word Studies In The New Testament*, 3:246)
1. **Mike Willis:** “J.W. Roberts writes: ‘Lanski quotes Maimonides to prove that Jewish men of N.T. times wore the prayer cloth. But Maimonides lived in the 12-13th century (1135-1204). Strack and Billerbeck have amassed the evidence to prove that the tallith custom arose out of the Old Testament references to mourning and ostracism and

came into practice in the fourth century A.D. and not in the first. The question may be considered as settled.” (“1 Corinthians,” *Truth Commentaries*, 291-292)

- D. **Leon Morris:** “Jewish men always prayed with heads covered (as they still do). Greek women, as well as menfolk, prayed with head uncovered. Christians adopted a distinctive practice of their own.” (“The First Epistle Of Paul To The Corinthians,” *Tyndale New Testament Commentaries*, 7:152)
- E. **W. E. Vine:** “The injunctions were neither Jewish, which required men to be veiled in prayer, nor Greek, by which men and women were alike unveiled. The Apostle’s instructions were ‘the commandment of the Lord’ (14:37) and were for all the churches (vv. 33, 34).” (*The Expanded Vines Expository Dictionary Of New Testament Words*, #177, 1188)
- F. **Norman Hillyer:** “When praying, Jewish men and women both used veils (*cf.* 2 Cor. 3:14). So did Romans. Greeks, without the same awe of God, sacrificed bareheaded. With differing traditions represented in the Corinthian church, the Christian attitude needed defining in the interests of orderly worship (14:40).” (“1 Corinthians.” *The New Bible Commentary: Revised*, 1065)
- G. **F. W. Farrar:** “The Jewish worshipper in praying always covers his head with his *tallith*. . . . On the other hand, the Greek custom was to pray with the head uncovered.” (*The Pulpit Commentary*, 19:361)
- H. **A. T. Robertson:** “It is not certain whether the Jews at this time used the *tallith*, ‘a four-corned shawl having fringes consisting of eight threads, each knotted five times’ (Vincent) as they did later. . . . The Greeks (both men and women) remained bareheaded in public prayer. . . .” (*Word Pictures in the New Testament*, 4:159)
- I. **G. Kittel:** “It used to be asserted by theologians that Paul was simply endorsing the unwritten law of Hellenic and Hellenistic feeling for what was proper. But this view is untenable. To be sure, the veil was not unknown in Greece. It was worn partly as adornment and partly on such special occasions as match-making and marriage. . . , mourning, and the worship of chthonic deities (in the form of a garment drawn over the head). But it is quite wrong that Greek women were under some kind of compulsion to wear a veil in public. . . . At the time of Tertullian Jewesses were prominent on the streets of North Africa because they wore veils (De Corona, 4, ed. F. Oehler, I [1853], 424 ff.; De Oratione, 22 [CSEL, 20, 193]). Hence veiling was not a general custom: it was Jewish. If the veiling of Jewish women was common in the West, we may presume that it was an accepted rule in the East. The Jew regarded it as typical of Gentile women that they should go about unveiled (Nu. r., 9 on 5:18, Str.-B., III, 429). . . . Yet, though the custom was applied with particular stringency by the Jews, it was oriental rather than distinctively Jewish.” (*Theological Dictionary Of The New Testament*)
- J. **Jamieson, Fausset, & Brown:** “It was the Greek custom (and so that at Corinth) for men in worship to be uncovered; whereas the Jews wore the *Talith*, or veil, to show reverence before God, and their unworthiness to look on Him (Is 6:2); however, MAIMONIDES [*Mishna*] excepts cases where (as in Greece) the custom of the place was different.” (*Commentary On The Whole Bible*, 1211)
- K. **Adam Clarke:** “This decision of the apostle was **in point blank hostility to the canons of the Jews**; for they would not suffer a man to pray unless he was veiled, for which they gave this reason. ‘He should veil himself to show that he is ashamed before God, and unworthy with open face to behold him.’” (Comment on 1 Cor. 11:4)
- L. **James G. McCarthy:** “The members of the church were primarily Gentiles whose culture was Greco-Roman (1 Corinthians 12:2). There were also many believing Jews (Acts 18:7-8). Each group had its own traditions for head covering while praying or prophesying. Jewish

law did not require the men or women to cover their heads while praying or prophesying. However, Jewish custom did require the women to veil themselves in public. If the praying or prophesying were in a public setting, the women would have their heads covered. Roman men and women covered their heads during religious acts. Greek men and women did not. The cultural practices of the first century were not homogeneous. There was no norm for the various groups which made up the early church.” (“Biblical Head Covering,” 16)

Appendix E: Various Translations Of 1 Corinthians 11:16

- I. **KJV:** “But if any man seem to be contentious, we have no such **custom**, neither the churches of God.”
- II. **ASV:** “But if any man seemeth to be contentious, we have no such **custom**, neither the churches of God.”
- III. **RSV:** “If anyone is disposed to be contentious, we recognize no other **practice**, nor do the churches of God.”
- IV. **NASB:** “But if one is inclined to be contentious, we have no other **practice**, nor have the churches of God.”
- V. **NIV:** “If anyone wants to be contentious about this, we have no other **practice** -- nor do the churches of God.”
- VI. **NEB:** “However, if you insist on arguing, let me tell you, there is no such **custom** among us, or in any of the congregations of God’s people.”
- VII. **ESV:** “If anyone is inclined to be contentious, we have no such **practice**, nor do the churches of God.”
- VIII. **Goodspeed:** “But if anyone is disposed to be contentious about it, I for my part recognize no other **practice** in worship than this, and neither do the churches of God”
- IX. **Moffatt:** “If anyone presumes to raise objection on this point – well, I acknowledge no other **mode** of worship, and neither do the churches of God.”
- X. **Williams:** “But if anyone is inclined to be contentious about it, I for my part prescribe no other **practice** than this, and neither do the churches of God”
- XI. **Phillips:** “But if anyone wants to be argumentative about it, I can only say that we and the churches of God generally **hold this ruling** on the matter.”
- XII. **ISV:** “But if anyone wants to argue about this, we do not have any **custom** like this, nor do any of God’s churches.”
- XIII. **NLT:** “But if anyone wants to argue about this, all I can say is that we have no other **custom** than this, and all the churches of God feel the same way about it.”
- XIV. **GNB:** “But if anyone wants to argue about it, all I have to say is that neither we nor the churches of God have any other **custom** in worship.”
- XV. **Wuest:** “If, as is the case, anyone presumes to be cantankerous [about the moral obligation of a woman to wear a head covering when engaged in public prayer in the assembly], as for us, we do not have such a **custom** [namely, that of a woman praying with uncovered head], neither do the assemblies of God.”

Appendix F: Jeff Belknap's Paraphrase

1 Corinthians 11:2-15: “²Now I praise you, brethren, that ye remember me in all things, and keep the ordinances, as I delivered them to you. 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. ⁴ Every man praying or prophesying, **having long hair**, dishonoureth his head. ⁵ But every woman that prayeth or prophesieth **without long hair** dishonoureth her head: for that is even all one as if she were shaven. ⁶ For if the woman **have not long hair**, let her also be shorn: but if it be a shame for a woman to be shorn or shaven, let her **have long hair**. ⁷ For a man indeed ought not to **have long hair**, forasmuch as he is the image and glory of God: but the woman is the glory of the man. ⁸ For the man is not of the woman: but the woman of the man. ⁹ Neither was the man created for the woman; but the woman for the man. ¹⁰ For this cause ought the woman to **have long hair** on her head because of the angels. ¹¹ Nevertheless neither is the man without the woman, neither the woman without the man, in the Lord. ¹² For as the woman is of the man, even so is the man also by the woman; but all things of God. ¹³ Judge in yourselves: is it comely that a woman pray unto God **without long hair**? ¹⁴ Doth not even nature itself teach you, that, if a man **have long hair**, it is a shame unto him? ¹⁵ But if a woman **have long hair**, it is a glory to her: for her hair is given her for [instead of, in the place of] a covering [a veil; an artificial covering].” (“The Covering,” 10)