

Notes on the Greek New Testament
Day 229 – August 17th – 1 Corinthians 11:2-16

Works frequently referenced in these notes on 1 Corinthians

John Drane	<i>Paul</i> , Lion Publishing, Berkhamstead, 1976
Leon Morris	<i>The First Epistle of Paul to the Corinthians</i> , Tyndale New Testament Commentary, 2 nd Ed., IVP, Leicester, 1985
Anthony C Thistleton	<i>The First Epistle to the Corinthians</i> , The New International Greek Testament Commentary, Eerdmans, Grand Rapids, 2000

1 Corinthians 11:2-16

Paul is concerned that some Corinthian women are acting as if every distinction between male and female were abrogated for the Christian, and hence the cultural expressions of those distinctions were unimportant. Paul makes it clear that they are wrong. "It is no part of the life of the Christian needlessly to flout conventions." Morris

There is a continuity of concern here with the previous chapters. The issues are still those of 'rights' and the nature of the Christian life as a life lived 'for others.' Thistleton entitles the chapter (or 11:2-34 to be more precise)

Mutuality and Respect: Men and Women at Worship in Public, and Rich and Poor at the Lord's Supper.

On the complexities of the background to this section, the following extracts from Thistleton may be helpful. "Aline Rousselle's essay 'Body Politics in Ancient Rome' (1992) assumes great importance for the issue of *head coverings, veils, or 'hoods'* (cf. Κατα κεφαλῆς ἔχων, v.4; ἀκατακαλυπτῶ, v.5; κατακυλυπτεταλ v.6; cf. Latin [Jerome] by contrast, *nudo capite*). Augustus reformed family law in ways which affected the status of women some three times between 18 BC and AD 9 (*lex Julia de adulteriis; lex Julia de fundo dotali*, et al.) Horace (d. 8 BC) tells us, on one side, that certain *male* attire or hair-styles were deemed effeminate and overtly sexual, while appropriate head coverings for respectable Roman *women* served as a protection of their dignity and status as *women not to be 'propositioned.'* A Rousselle and Dale Martin both urge that in the case of respected and respectable 'one sees only the face': 'respectable women did nothing to draw attention to themselves ... A veil or hood constituted a warning: it signified that the wearer was a respectable woman and that no man dare approach without risking ... penalties. A woman who went out ... unveiled forfeited the protection of Roman law against possible attackers who were entitled to plead extenuating circumstances.'" "The laws of Augustus to which we have alluded also modified the system of guardianship (*tutela*) of women inherited from the closing years of the Republic. A guardian could authorise (cf. ἐξουσιαζω) a woman's actions, but after the laws approved by Augustus a woman had the right (ἐξουσια) to take legal action against a guardian whose refusal to give authorisation was deemed to be unreasonable. Under Claudius guardianship of freeborn women was abolished, although not for freedwomen."

"Judith Gundry-Volf ... argues that neither merely 'egalitarian' nor merely 'hierarchical' interpretations do justice to the complexity of the theological issues for Paul. Paul superimposes three 'maps' of gender relationships which *together* provide a dialectic between mutuality and 'order' or gender differentiation by placing *the whole* within the three 'frames' of the order of creation, society and culture, and gospel eschatology."

"A genuine breakthrough is offered (a) by Gundry-Volf's proposal about the need for a wholeness of understanding of Paul's dialectic in the light of three theological superimposed maps; (b) the careful dating of the conventions of what clothing generates signals of respect for Christian women as human persons, not as sexual objects, in public; (c) the interplay between multivalent meanings of κεφαλη and their interactive metaphorical applications; and (d) our own further suggestion that the theme of self-discipline, restraint, and respect for 'the other,' already prominent in 8:1-11:1, remains central to 11:2-14:40."

"Phil 2:6-11, as pre-Pauline material which Paul endorses, portrays a voluntary renunciation of 'rights' (in this context, genuinely a right). The God-Christ relation has *nothing to do with self-glory* or with affirmation of the self at the expense of the other (cf. The ethical context of Phil 2:6-11; it is *not an involuntary or imposed 'subordination,' but an example of shared love*). This shared love controls the use of freedom, and thereby brings 'glory' to the other by assuming distinctive roles for a common purpose. This is the context that gives currency to the widespread comment that 'the relationship between man and woman is thus in some sense paralleled by that between God and Christ.'"

"Murphy-O'Connor ... convincingly argues that 'men figure equally prominently in this section ... The problem ... involved both sexes.' Paul's concern is not with subordination but with gender distinction. He expresses no less disquiet (probably indeed more) about men whose style is effeminate with possible hints of a quasi-homosexual blurring of male gender than about women who likewise reject the use of signals of respectable and respected gender distinctiveness."

"C.R. Hallipike and Edmund Leach ... provide cultural data which associates long hair with undisciplined sexuality, the shaven head with celibacy or 'sexlessness,' and short hair with 'restricted sexuality'."

Verse 2

Ἐπαινῶ δὲ ὑμᾶς ὅτι πάντα μου μὲμνησθε καὶ καθὼς παρέδωκα ὑμῖν τὰς παραδόσεις κατέχετε.

ἐπαινέω commend, praise

The Western text inserts ἀδελφοί after ὑμᾶς – an obvious interpolation.

μὲμνησθε Verb, perf pass indic, 2 pl

μυμνησκομαι remember, call to mind

παραδίδωμι hand or give over, deliver up

παραδοσις, εως f tradition

κατέχω hold fast, keep, restrain

Thistleton cites the suggestion of Hayes that "In their letter to Paul the Corinthian Christians express their intention to follow Paul's instructions about the participation of women in the worship, but seek his further advice about an unexpected complication concerning dress (see introduction to 11:2-16). Paul always stands warmly alongside those who admit to perplexity or seek advice. It is when they claim no need of advice, or act unilaterally with complacency rather than consultation, that he becomes sharply polemical." Thistleton adds, "*Many commentators believe that the tradition for which Paul commends the readers is the eschatological inclusion of men and women as active participants in prayer and prophetic speech, in contrast to the issue of clothing, which Paul believes must still generate signals of gender distinctiveness on the basis of the order of creation, which still holds sway even in the gospel era.*"

Verse 3

θέλω δὲ ὑμᾶς εἰδέναι ὅτι παντὸς ἀνδρὸς ἡ κεφαλὴ ὁ Χριστὸς ἐστίν, κεφαλὴ δὲ γυναικὸς ὁ ἀνὴρ, κεφαλὴ δὲ τοῦ Χριστοῦ ὁ θεός.

θέλω wish, will

εἰδέναι Verb, perf act infin οἶδα (verb perf in form but with present meaning) know, understand

ἀνὴρ, ἀνδρὸς m man, husband

"A few commentators defend *husband*, but the overwhelming majority of writers convincingly argue that the issue concerns gender relations as a whole, not simply those within the more restricted family circle."

Thistleton

κεφαλη, ης f head

Thistleton presents a lengthy collation of the debate concerning the meaning of κεφαλη. There are three basic views:

- i) Head as source of authority;
- ii) origin – as in the 'head' of a river;
- iii) An expression of pre-eminence, being foremost.

Thistleton favours the third while recognising with Collins that "Paul deliberately uses a *polymorphous concept*, through a word that has *multiple meanings*."

Verse 4

πᾶς ἀνὴρ προσευχόμενος ἢ προφητεύων κατὰ κεφαλῆς ἔχων καταισχύνει τὴν κεφαλὴν αὐτοῦ·

προσευχομαι pray

προφητεω "denotes the public proclamation of gospel truth as applied pastorally and contextually to the hearers." Thistleton

ἢ οἱ

κατὰ κεφαλῆς – '(with something) over the head', i.e. 'with the head covered'. Is Paul speaking here of some form of head-gear or of hairstyles? On the one hand Thistleton cites Oster, "Archaeological evidence from Rome itself to the Roman East is unambiguous, Oster urges, in depicting the 'liturgical head covering' of men when they pray or use prophetic speech: 'the practice of men covering their heads in the context of prayer and prophecy was a common pattern of Roman piety and widespread during the late Republic and early Empire. Since Corinth was a Roman colony, there should be little doubt that this aspect of Roman religious practice deserves greater attention by commentators than it has received.'" However, he also gives credence to Murphy-O'Connor saying, "Murphy-O'Connor argues that κατὰ with the genitive more naturally denotes *hair which grows 'down from' the head* than that which covers it in a more *static way*, i.e. *on the head*." Thistleton comments, "We are forced to balance the Roman background forcefully urged by Oster against the ethical-cultural background proposed by Murphy-O'Connor in which he sees resonances of male sexuality or effeminacy, i.e., a homosexual semiotic of the male hair style of long, loose hair, or hair tied into a ponytail... We are forced to conclude that although Jerome Murphy-O'Connor's case is strong, we cannot regard it as conclusive, while lexicography and the Roman background cited by Oster, among others, suggests that 'with his head covered' remains in the end more probable, but not decisively so... The most important point of all, however, can too easily be overlooked. *This recent research proves conclusively that 11:4 does not present a merely hypothetical case... the first concern of 11:2-16 is about men, not about women.*"

καταισχυνω put to shame, humiliate, disgrace

"(i) The Greek refers immediately to the man's physiological 'head' both as an anatomical entity and thence as synecdoche for the whole person. In the first place such a man *devalues himself*, i.e. a head covering like that of the Romans before their gods in public devotion (or just possibly a man whose hair style indicated a loose or self-advertising sexuality) *reduced his 'self respect'* ... and *shamed his own person*. Since, however, as Moxnes rightly argues, self-respect and personal integrity reflect on other people and especially upon one to whom that person is responsible (employer, patron, slave owner, or God), (ii) this 'shames his head' *also* in the sense of appearing thereby to demean *Christ or God as his Lord and Head*... What remains common to vv. 4-7 is *that which distracts attention from God or Christ in public worship* by generating a discordant, semiotic clothing code or hairstyle code which inevitably draws attention to the self in a way which makes the person's 'head' a source of 'shame' for his or her own *self-respect, the respect of the congregation, and the honour of the Lord who in public worship should be the central focus of thought and attention*. In this *context of worship* Hays's otherwise trivial analogy of attending a formal dinner wearing a baseball cap carries more force than might at first appear: 'perceived as rude and irreverent ... a breach of etiquette...' in vv. 4-7 it constitutes attention-seeking behaviour which thereby dishonour God and shames the self." Thistleton. James Hurley follows Barrett in arguing that the 'head' refers to Christ.

Verse 5

πᾶσα δὲ γυνὴ προσευχομένη ἢ προφητεύουσα ἀκατακαλύπτω τῇ κεφαλῇ καταισχύνει τὴν κεφαλὴν αὐτῆς, ἐν γὰρ ἔστιν καὶ τὸ αὐτὸ τῇ ἐξυρημένῃ.

ἀκατακαλυπτος, ον uncovered

In a similar way, the latter reference to head in this verse would be to the man or her husband, guardian or family.

"To employ a dress code which hints at sexual availability while leading worship is unthinkable. That is not to say, however, that this was the conscious intention of women who attended prophetic speech or prayer at Corinth. It is likely that for them the issue was one of freedom and equality on the basis of the gospel axiom which finds expression in such a passage as Gal 3:28. Sociology of religion confirms the 'order' and 'tradition' often becomes overwhelmed where there is a flood of 'spiritual' or 'charismatic' vitality and dynamism. Hence J Gundry-Volf may plausibly allude to 'the Corinthian pneumatics' praying and prophesying with unfeminine or unmasculine headdress ... in the worship assembly where outsiders might be present and ... thus ... a loss of social acceptability... The pneumatic head-covering practices ignored the social boundaries between male and female and thus brought shame upon themselves and their 'heads.'" In other words, *they confused equality with sameness or lack of gender difference*. Collins writes: 'It is probable that the situation was one that resulted from the attitude 'anything goes' (see 6:12; 10:23)... [but] because God has created the human genders in different ways a distinction is to be maintained when the community assembles for worship.'" Thistleton

ἐξυρημένη Verb, perf pass ptc, f dat s

ξυραομαι shave, have oneself shaved

Don Carson argues that the covering spoken of in these verses is not a veil but the hair. A veil is not mentioned until v.15. In Hebrew and Greek society, women wore their hair uncut but bundled up. If they wore their hair hanging loose it was a sign of moral looseness. If a woman was caught in sexual sin her hair was cut off.

"Hayes paraphrases the reconstructed report sent to Paul: 'some of the women, acting in the freedom and power of the Spirit, have begun to remove their head coverings and loose their hair when they prophesy as a sign of their freedom in Christ.' In other words, they want to give socio-symbolic expression to their freedom and equality; Paul insists that a socio-symbolic expression of gender identity cannot be brushed aside in the name of gospel freedom as no longer relevant (cf. Gal 3:28) since (Paul will argue) even the eschatological freedom of the gospel does not revoke expressions of the divine will established in the order of creation, or even sensitivities of perception within a surrounding culture." Thistleton

The covering of hair (long hair bound up) is a sign of a woman's faithfulness to her husband. If a woman thinks she is free from her husband she can wear her hair down, but this is just the same as if she had her hair shorn.

"The loss of a woman's hair is taken to denote a loss of her *femininity*. By contrast, *covered* hair denotes *self-controlled sexuality*... We conclude that Paul insists on gender *difference* without any necessary inference of gender hierarchy. Fiddes sees the parallels with the order which cites God, Christ, man and woman as primarily one of function and distinctiveness entailing covenant rather than one of hierarchical status." Thistleton

Verse 6

εἰ γὰρ οὐ κατακαλύπτεται γυνή, καὶ κείρασθω· εἰ δὲ αἰσχρὸν γυναικὶ τὸ κείρασθαι ἢ ξυρᾶσθαι, κατακαλυπτέσθω.

κατακαλυπτομαι cover one's head
κείρω shear (sheep); midd. cut one's hair,
have one's hair cut
αἰσχυρος, α, ον disgraceful, shameful
ξυραομαι see v.5

Verse 7

ἀνὴρ μὲν γὰρ οὐκ ὀφείλει κατακαλύπτεσθαι τὴν κεφαλὴν, εἰκὼν καὶ δόξα θεοῦ ὑπάρχων· ἡ γυνὴ δὲ δόξα ἀνδρός ἐστίν.

ὀφείλω ought, must
εἰκων, ονος f likeness, image
δόξα, ης f glory

For this use of 'glory' cf 1 Cor 15:40,41 which has to do with God designed place in creation. "Paul probably means that the existence of the one brings honour and praise to the other. By creating man in his own image God set his own glory in man ... [Yet] man by himself is not complete ... without a companion ... one who is like him but different from him; one who is uniquely his own 'glory.' ... Man ... 'glories' in her... Paul's point ... is that in the creation narrative this did not happen the other way round." Fee

Thistleton cites Feuillet saying, "In this sense Paul provides no hint of 'inferiority.' *Because of women, man is all the more man, just as because of men woman is all the more woman, and as humankind woman and man manifest the divine attributes* (e.g., of power and love but not 'stereotypically') *as expressions of God's creative being*. Nevertheless, Feuillet also insists, *there is neither confusion nor precise symmetry*, for 'she is different from him,' as Paul uses Gen 2:18-25 to emphasise: 'that which provides the greatness (*la grandeur*) and dignity of woman is of such a nature as that by which she distinguishes herself from man, that is to say, in her own role which has been specifically assigned by the Creator.' Feuillet concludes that this has nothing whatever to do with any supposed 'antifeminism' in Paul, for this differentiation is defined in terms of greatness and glory, not inferiority."

ὑπαρχω be (equivalent to εἰμι)

Verse 8

οὐ γάρ ἐστιν ἀνὴρ ἐκ γυναικός, ἀλλὰ γυνὴ ἐξ ἀνδρός·

Reference here is to God's act of creation – Gen 2:21ff

Verse 9

καὶ γὰρ οὐκ ἐκτίσθη ἀνὴρ διὰ τὴν γυναῖκα, ἀλλὰ γυνὴ διὰ τὸν ἄνδρα.

κτιζω create, make

"Judith Gundry-Volf concludes: 'Paul's main point is that man and woman are both the *glory of one another* and therefore both have an obligation not to cause shame to their 'heads' ... since they are the glory of *diferent* persons – man is the glory of God, and the woman is the glory of man – they must use different means to avoid shaming their 'heads.' But Paul appeals to creation to show their obligation to bring glory – each to the particular one whose glory they are by creation – which they do through distinctive masculine and feminine hairstyles [or head coverings]' (her italics)." Thistleton

Verse 10

διὰ τοῦτο ὀφείλει ἡ γυνὴ ἐξουσίαν ἔχειν ἐπὶ τῆς κεφαλῆς διὰ τοὺς ἀγγέλους.

ὀφείλω see v.7

ἐξουσια, ας f authority, right, power

"A secondary gloss in certain patristic writers and VSS (but not in major uncials) inserts καλυμμα, hood, covering or veil, to explicate the meaning of ἐξουσια ... However, this is a witness to the early perceptions of the problematic meaning rather than to a genuine textual variant." Thistleton

This is a difficult verse both in regard to what is intended by ἐξουσια which seems a strange word for a mark of subjection, and regarding the reference to angels. Carson suggests that since a woman wearing her hair up signifies her subjection to the man, it signifies also her authority over the rest of the created order along with the man (Gen. 1:27,28). That created order includes the angels who serve her as well as the man (see Heb. 1:14).

Morna Hooker suggests that *authority on her head* denotes her own active authority to use prophetic utterance as an empowered woman. She writes, "The headcovering ... also serves as a sign of the ἐξουσια which is given to the woman ... – authority: in prayer and prophecy..."

Thistleton thinks that the meaning is that "a veiled or hooded woman has her own power of protection in public because of what she wears... If a woman exercises 'the control' that exemplifies respectability in Roman society, and retains the semiotic code of gender differentiation in public, 'with the veil on her head she can go anywhere in security and profound respect.' (BAGD) This extends to the act of using prophetic speech in public worship, but (against MD Hooker) is not restricted to being specifically a sign of 'authority' to use prophetic speech as such. The *form* of the semiotic code may be culturally variable, but the need to express some kind of semiotic of gender differentiation belongs to the created order."

On *angels* Thistleton writes, "In NT traditions from Paul to the Revelation of John Christian theology shares the Jewish tradition that Christians worship the transcendent God of heaven in company with the heavenly host. In such a public context of universal cosmic reverence, Paul urges, the axiom 'as in heaven, so on earth' should apply to the recognition of respect, reverence, and order which receives symbolic and semiotic expression in the ways indicated. Paul attacks the notion that individual autonomy (questions about 'my rights,' 'my freedom') genuinely remains unqualified in the presence of the otherness of the other (created gender) and the heavenly hosts who perform their due roles and tasks."

Verse 11

πλὴν οὔτε γυνὴ χωρὶς ἀνδρὸς οὔτε ἀνὴρ χωρὶς γυναικὸς ἐν κυρίῳ·

πλὴν but, yet, nevertheless, however
οὔτε not, nor (οὔτε ... οὔτε neither ... nor)

Perhaps 'neither is the woman anything apart from the man...'

χωρὶς prep with gen without, apart from

"There is a partnership between the sexes, and in the Lord neither exists without the other. The man must not vaunt his position." Morris

The ἐν κυρίῳ Thistleton believes means 'among the Lord's people.' "Paul almost certainly means to say that gender differentiation is decreed in creation, expressed in convention, and not abrogated in the order of the gospel."

Verse 12

ὡςπερ γὰρ ἡ γυνὴ ἐκ τοῦ ἀνδρός, οὕτως καὶ ὁ ἀνὴρ διὰ τῆς γυναικός· τὰ δὲ πάντα ἐκ τοῦ θεοῦ.

ὡςπερ as, even as

Verse 13

ἐν ὑμῖν αὐτοῖς κρίνατε· πρέπον ἐστὶν γυναῖκα ἀκατακάλυπτον τῷ θεῷ προσεύχεσθαι;

κρινῶ judge, pass judgement on

Here, 'decide'

πρέπον Verb, pres act ptc, n nom/acc s
πρέπει impers verb it is fitting/proper;
πρέπον ἐστὶν it is fitting/proper

'it is appropriate'

ἀκατακάλυπτος see v.5

τῷ θεῷ προσεύχεσθαι Thistleton translates, 'conduct prayer' in order to emphasise that the context is that of public worship.

The appeal in verses 13-15 is clearly to cultural norms.

Verse 14

οὐδὲ ἡ φύσις αὐτῆ διδάσκει ὑμᾶς ὅτι ἀνὴρ μὲν ἐὰν κομᾷ, ἀτιμία αὐτῷ ἐστίν,

οὐδε neither, nor

φύσις, εως f nature, natural condition

Thistleton translates, 'the very nature of things.'

διδασκῶ teach

κομαῶ wear long hair

ἀτιμία, ας f disgrace, shame, dishonour

"Now he means by 'natural' what was accepted by common consent and usage at that time... For long hair was not always regarded as a disgraceful thing in a man." Calvin

Verse 15

γυνὴ δὲ ἐὰν κομᾷ, δόξα αὐτῇ ἐστίν; ὅτι ἡ κόμη ἀντὶ περιβολαίου δέδοται.

δόξα, ης f glory

κομη, ης f hair

ἀντι prep with gen for, in place of

περιβολαίον, ου n cloak, covering, veil

Carson argues that long hair is given to her in place of a covering/veil. He suggests that some from a hyper-Jewish group were insisting on a woman wearing a full Jewish veil as a sign of her submission. Paul discounts their argument and says that her hair is enough.

The point may be argued as to whether Paul is here saying that no form of covering other than the hair is required. Nevertheless, Carson's conclusion is sound that Paul was concerned to maintain creation structures in the home and in the church. We should also be concerned with this principle without being bound to the particular cultural forms in which it has been expressed in the past.

Verse 16

εἰ δὲ τις δοκεῖ φιλόνεικος εἶναι, ἡμεῖς τοιαύτην συνήθειαν οὐκ ἔχομεν, οὐδὲ αἱ ἐκκλησίαι τοῦ θεοῦ.

δοκεῶ think, suppose

φιλονεικος, ον argumentative

τοιουτος, αυτη, ουτον such, of such kind, similar, like

συνηθεια, ας f custom, practice

οὐδε neither, nor

"Paul has no intention of arguing the matter with any who is given to wordy battles ... 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." Morris