



BELIEVERS CHAPEL

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The Sermons of S. Lewis Johnson

1 Corinthians 11:2-16

"Evangelical Feminism and the Bible – Part VI"

TRANSCRIPT

[Message] All right, it's 7:30 let's begin with a word of prayer.

[Prayer] Our Father, we turn to Thee in the name of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, and we thank Thee that we access into the holy presence of our great triune God. We thank Thee for the enlightenment that has been given to us enabling us to understand the gospel, to understand the saving death of Jesus Christ, and the continually saving activity of his priestly work at Thy right hand. And Lord we express to Thee not only the gratitude of our hearts but the worship of our hearts; that we have such a great God, one of whom there is no one else, among the gods supreme, and the other gods are not gods at all. We thank Thee and praise Thee for the Bible which God has given to us to guide our steps. We thank Thee for the light that it sheds upon the life that Thou hast given us to live. And we ask Lord that Thou wilt enable us to be submissive to the Scripture. There are many things that we do not understand. There are many things that we probably understand falsely. And there are many things we thank Thee that we understand we believe properly. Enable us as we read and ponder the word to grow in the knowledge of the truth, and may our lives Lord be reflective of the relationship we

claim with Jesus Christ. Enable us to be pleasing to him, pleasing to our great God, and pleasing to the traditions of the word of God, set forth in holy Scripture.

We pray Lord Thy blessing upon us this evening in the last of our studies of this rather difficult subject in our day, one that has been pondered and discussed and argued. Help us to at least learn the major things that Scripture has to say about feminism. We commit our evening to Thee in Jesus' name. Amen.

[Message] Evangelicals, as we have been saying, are seriously troubled and confused by feminism. While affirming the equality of the sexes biblical evangelicals have resisted claims of undifferentiated roles in ministry. In other words, while claiming to follow the Bible, at the same time they've been resistant to the idea that certain roles set forth in the word of God may be reserved for one of the sexes, the role of ministry in a local church, not ministry entirely for women have ministry just as men do, but ministry in the local church reserved for the males has been a great dividing issue among many who claim to be following the Bible. So the idea of undifferentiated roles has taken hold with a lot of people. And in our churches, even in those that we generally regard as being strongly evangelical, I'll just use one as an example, the Southern Baptist Convention, where we now have the ordination of lesbians, not many, but we have some, and in other ways indications of departure from what the Bible has taught.

The Christian media has not helped. Almost all of our Christian medias have been infected by this, and as things you read on channel four or channel eight, or channel five or channel eleven or whatever channel you listen to, or if you have cable the things that you listen there are finding their ways into Christian media, the same general attitudes, the same general questions are raised by the Christian media. And so the strident voices of those who've sought to establish a position that we have been contending is not biblical has reached them at least. The question might arise, and I'm sure it does, are we really being unfair in opposing them? We think about fairness, and we would think, well surely

we should open up ministry to both sexes. Is it fair to reserve ministry in the church for one sex? It reminds me of the prayer the little girl prayed, "Dear God, are little boys better than little girls? I know you're one but try to be fair." [Laughter]

The Wall Street Journal and the *New York Times* have had numerous articles bearing on this over the past few years. And since I take both of those magazines I clip all of those things out thinking that there may be some occasion to use them and last month, the 27th of May there was a response to an article on the Lord's name, an article written by a man by the name of Gustov Nebor in that article a lot of things concerning feminism, concerning the sexes, concerning the church, the doctrine of the trinity, and other things came up. And so now the letters in response to that May 27 article on the front page are coming in. And a couple of days ago I read this one. I won't read the whole article, but finally Michael Whitehead, the general counsel of the Christian life commission of the Southern Baptist Convention composed a poem in response to the issues that were discussed in that article and some of the responses to it. The question was, does God have sex and all kinds of things that we think of when we think of feminism? But his little poem is this, and I'll try to read it slow enough so that you can catch the full force of it, because I thought it was quite good. At least it's humorous.

"Gus Nebor did not make me doubt that God is not a he, but it surely made me wonder if the devil is a she. If they can call God mother earth or even mother goosey, then why don't they change Lucifer to something soft like Lucy? But Reverend Mary Ellen Kilsby wants to make the Lord PC, but the Devil she still calls a prince. How sexist can she be? I think I'll stick with Scripture, Revelation gets my nod, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit best describe the triune God." I thought it was pretty good for a lawyer. [Laughter] And not bad for the Southern Baptist Convention for that matter

Well, we are seeing some very strange things. Some of you are on the mailing list of Probe ministries, and you know that in looking at the literature you have seen some of the illustrations of the things that entered into our theological seminaries. Now, the study

of witchcraft is in many of them, and specifically here in Perkins theological seminary down on Hillcrest. And so what we are really seeing is just the kind of total departure from things of the word of God that you expect if you read the Bible, because that's what our Lord has specifically stated through the apostles, that the Scripture will be offensive to those who do not know the Lord. And they will regard it not as good news but as bad news. Until by God's grace the Holy Spirit changes their hearts and they come to understand what they are before the Lord, and what they need, and what one may find in the saving cross of the Lord Jesus Christ.

Well, this is the sixth and the final one of our studies, and what I've tried to establish are these facts, that male and female possess equality in God's image and in Christ. In other words, in our position in Christ we are equal, and when the apostle writes in Galatians chapter 3 and verse 28, the words that he writes in that very great verse, "There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is neither male nor female; for you are all one in Christ Jesus," is a very important text and we do not intend in any way to lose that. We are all one, male and female, in Christ Jesus. There isn't a single spiritual blessing that would distinguish us in position that both sexes do not share. So that's very important.

We also tried to establish the fact that the Bible teaches male headship in the church. 1 Timothy chapter 2 verse 8 through verse 15, in the verses in which the apostle says that he does not suffer a woman to teach or to usurp authority over a man. Teaching he regarded as being an authoritative expression of truth. And so for that reason, that was reserved for male headship in the church. Now, in 1 Corinthians chapter 14 the passage that we looked at in our recent study, time before last, the apostle wrote in verse 34, "Let your women keep silent in the churches, for they are not permitted to speak; but *they are* to be submissive, as the law also says." So secondly male headship in the church., and then we went on try to point out from 1 Peter chapter 3, verse 1 through verse 7 that the Apostle Peter taught male headship in the family. And that particular

passage is very important for the relationship between husband and wife within the family, the Christian family. Peter, remember, said, "Wives, likewise, *be* submissive to your own husbands that even if some do not obey the word, they, without a word, may be won by the conduct of their wives." In other words, it's an evangelistic outreach for the wife to follow through and take her place as the apostles have said it, in the family.

Verse 7 he had a word for husbands, "Husbands, likewise, dwell with *them* with understanding, giving honor to the wife, as to the weaker vessel, and as *being* heirs together of the grace of life, that your prayers may not be hindered." You see how we have the fact that we are one in Christ, and yet male headship in the church and in the family is not contradictory. And Peter says, reminding again in the midst of the passage that speaks of submission, that the husbands are to dwell with their wives, give honor to them as to the weaker vessel, and as being heirs together of the grace of life that your prayers may not be hindered. So Peter, too, speaks about submission but at the same time heirs together of the grace of life, and warns the husbands that if they do respond in the proper love and care and consideration for their wives, their prayers may be hindered.

And another point that we tried to establish, which is very important because evangelical feminists have been slow to recognize this, and many of them have not recognized it at all and that is that headship is not established in the judgment that God placed upon Adam and Eve after the fall. Because it would be easy for someone, and many do say this, that since Christ died on Calvary's cross and has redeemed, or at least laid the foundation for the redemption of the elect, the people of God. Then those things that are said about women and submission in the church and in the family have now been removed by the redemption of the Lord Jesus Christ. And we tried to point out that the apostle does not follow that argument. He points out that the headship of the male over the female was not established as a result of the fall in the judgment pronounced in Genesis 3. But the headship was instituted in Genesis 2, in the creation of the woman from the man.

Now, that's exceedingly important to recognize, and it's one things that the evangelical feminists have been very, very upset over the claims of other evangelical believers that the things that we are talking about are not things that are removed by the redemption of Christ in the present age, but are things that God established when he created man in the image of God, when he created Eve in the image of God but out of Adam in order to be a helper or a help meet for him. Now those things are the things that I think we have tried to establish. I believe the Bible teaches them, and we've sought to set it forth.

Now tonight, in our last study we want to discuss order in spiritual activity, the spiritual activity that Paul describes as prayer and prophesying. And so we are turning to 1 Corinthians chapter 11, verse 2 through verse 16. And I want to read through the verses and then we'll discuss them beginning with verse 2 through verse 10. Verse 2, after having said, "Imitate me, just as I also *imitate* Christ," the apostle writes,

"Now I praise you, brethren, that you remember me in all things and keep the traditions just as I delivered *them* to you. But I want you to know that the head of every man is Christ, the head of woman *is* man, and the head of Christ *is* God. Every man praying or prophesying, having *his* head covered, dishonors his head. But every woman who prays or prophesies with *her* head uncovered dishonors her head, for that is one and the same as if her head were shaved. (Now there were many reasons why a head might be shaved in ancient times but almost all of the reasons were because they were regarded as being under some form of civil curse. For example, an adulteress might have head shaved. So when Paul says, "one and the same as if her head were shaved" he's talking about that which was regarded as being very bad in that society. Verse 6) For if a woman is not covered, let her also be shorn. But if it is shameful for a woman to be shorn or shaved, let her be covered. For a man indeed ought not to cover *his* head, since he is the image and glory of God; but woman is the glory of man. For man is not from woman, but

woman from man. Nor was man created for the woman, but woman for the man. For this reason the woman ought to have *a symbol of* authority on *her* head, because of the angels. (You notice in this passage again, such as is true of 1 Timothy chapter 2, when the apostle makes his statement about the relationship he argues his points not by referring to Genesis 3, but referring again to Genesis 2. In other words, relationships established in creation. That's extremely important.) Nevertheless, neither *is* man independent of woman, nor woman independent of man, in the Lord. For as woman *came* from man, even so man also *comes* through woman; but all things are from God. Judge among yourselves. Is it proper for a woman to pray to God with her head uncovered? Does not even nature itself teach you that if a man has long hair, it is a dishonor to him? But if a woman has long hair, it is a glory to her; for *her* hair is given to her for a covering. But if anyone seems to be contentious, we have no such custom, nor *do* the churches of God."

Well, this is a passage that is not an easy passage. I'm sure you realize as you read through it that there are a lot of questions that come to the Bible student as he thinks about it. And if you have questions it probably means that you are just like many others who read this passage. And no doubt the passage is related in a very special way to the situation that existed in the days in which the New Testament was being written and in the days in which the Christian church was beginning its spread over the western world.

One might ask the question, why is this necessary, this chapter? And we don't really know. Paul doesn't really say. Now, this is why I'm writing this. Of course, we could say surely there is some justification in the sense that probably there were violations in the society in Corinth of the very points that he makes here. Corinth was well known as perhaps the wickedest city of its time and place in the ancient world. And to Corinthianize, that's the infinitive of the word Corinthians, so to Corinthianize was to engage in the worst kind of sinful living. And so one can understand how some of these

things might have arisen in the society there. But still it doesn't explain all that the apostle writes here. Why does he find it necessary to say the things that he says here? Just a suggestion, we do know and 1 Corinthians makes it plain that the apostle was written by some of the ministers of the word of God and some of his friends who were traveling, and the Corinthians church has written to Paul a letter which was brought to him.

And in this letter a number of things that were on the minds of the Corinthians were set forth, and 1 Corinthians is an answer to a number of those questions that were given to Paul. In fact, there is a little Greek expression now concerning that one finds through the letter in a number of places, which is something of a help in dividing that letter up, giving the sections of the letter that are answers to specific points. So it is possible that what happened was that Paul had written Galatians before 1 Corinthians and he had said in Galatians that we are all one in Christ Jesus. And that particular statement may have come to the knowledge of the Corinthians, because there was a lot of interaction in the first century, people traveling back and forth. One can see that, and that was a small world. And so I can just imagine someone moving from Asia Minor over into Athens and Corinth. And Paul has written the Epistle to the Galatians, and he has said in that epistle that male and female are all one in Jesus Christ. And so if we are all one in Christ Jesus, what about those conventions concerning the activities of male and female and their relationship to one another in family and in church? Do they hold any more some may have thought? And so it is possible that the apostle is writing this chapter to answer the question, if it's true that we are all one in Christ Jesus, what about those things, Paul, that you had taught us originally, are they still holding true? So that's possible, and it may be that that's the occasion for it, but we don't know for certain.

We do know that when Paul talks about the innovations that appear here such as women praying or prophesying and other things that are referred to in the chapter, the apostle does not answer them by saying those things are indecorous. What he says is

they're irreligious. In other words, the things that were happening in Corinthians, if they were happening, they were things that Paul considered to be spiritually wrong, not things that were culturally wrongs, but spiritually wrongs. As you can see he answers them by appealing to Scripture, not appealing to customs. That, it so happens, is an important point.

But looking now at the structure of authority which he establishes, "Now I praise you, brethren, that you remember me in all things and keep the traditions just as I delivered *them* to you. But I want you to know that the head of every man is Christ, the head of woman *is* man, and the head of Christ *is* God." This is a kind of chain of originating and subordinating relationship that are set up. There is God, and in the light of the mention of Christ I think we are justified in saying the Father, because it's God the Father that is referred to since he refers to Christ. We have God the Father, we have Christ, we have man, and then we have woman. This is the chain of authority that is set up by the apostle in verse 3. And as I've tried to mention in our studies, you can see that what we have here in the relationship of the Father and the Son, we have the relationship of two equal persons. No Christian, no true Christian can hold or has historically held that the Father and the Son are not equal. They're equal in all of the attributes. Every attribute that the Father has the Son has. Every attribute that the Father and the Son have, the Spirit has. It's true there are three different persons, and there are different functions within the Trinitarian being. But as far as equality is concerned Father and the Son are equal. And so we have then the statement again of the fact that equality subsists with differentiating roles, the Father and the Son. That's very important. I keep emphasizing it, and I've now said it, I think, ten times, and maybe that's not enough. But that's extremely important.

And you can see that in the trinity is the ideal illustration of it. The Father and the Son equal and yet at the same time he writes, "The head of woman *is* man, and the head of Christ *is* God." "The head of Christ is God" the Father. So as we turn we turn to John

chapter 14 where Jesus said, "The Father is greater than I." That's a text we ought to spend all night on, I mean an hour not all night. I won't see you again if we stay all night, but one hour at least, because it's so important. But the essential point is very plain; the Father is greater than I. And of course the greatness is not the greatness of a different being, but the greatness in function and at that point the mediatorial function of the Lord Jesus.

So that text then makes it very plain that what the evangelical feminists have been saying is wrong right here. For they have been saying all along that you cannot have equality and different functions. You cannot have equality if, for example, the woman is unable to be ordained an elder and minister the word of God in the church. You do not have equality in such a situation. You can see that I've tried to underline that because that's so important, that you cannot equality unless you have undifferentiated functions. And if you'll read the literature that some of the evangelical feminists are putting out, you will find that that is something they will not budge from. They will not move away from it. You cannot have equality if one sex is given by God the role of the ministry of the word of God in the church. Now, of course, females are given opportunities to minister the word of God. They have spiritual gifts. We all know that there are many women who teach the word of God, and teach the word of God to women, and their gifts are frequently far better gifts than many of the men who stand up behind the pulpit. That's why I want to quit early while I'm ahead. Anyway, those are the facts of life. We're not saying a woman cannot teach. We're not saying a woman cannot exercise the gifts of the Holy Spirit that are given. But we're talking about the use of their ministry in a particular situation. That's what Paul talks about.

Now, turning to the sign of authority in verse 4 through verse 10 I'm going to read through this and just make a few comments as we go along, and reserve the last part of the hour for the answer to some difficult questions that probably have occurred to you. Paul writes in the 4th verse, "Every man praying or prophesying, having *his* head covered,

dishonors his head." In other words, in Paul's thought, a man who preaches the word of God in his hat or with a covering over his head would be dishonoring his head. He evidently felt that the uncovered head of the male was a reflection of the glory of God, having been created in the image of God there should not be a covering of it that might reflect upon the fact that he had been created in the image of God and reflected the glory of God. It's a magnificent conception when you think of it. When you look at me do you think of the glory of God? Be honest. But actually if you think about man as over against the beasts, then probably you will admit that at least some of us, male and female, do reflect the glory of God. Well, that's what Paul is referring to.

In verse 5 we have one of the verses that's very difficult. We'll save a fuller discussion of it for the end, "But every woman who prays or prophesies with *her* head uncovered dishonors her head, for that is one and the same as if her head were shaved." In public Christian assembly, if so, she must pray with a veil. As we look at this we would see that if this is a public Christian assembly, and if that is permissible she must pray with a veil. The idea of rising in a meeting of a church and leading in prayer for a woman without a veil, obviously the apostle speaks negatively with regard to that. That would eliminate a lot of the kinds of prayer that takes place in some places, when women rise in regular meetings of the church and pray without a veil. Obviously they're not following the biblical text here.

But is he referring to leading in prayer? You know when we read something like that, "every woman who prays" we think about, at least I did, maybe it's because I've stood behind a pulpit so much, I think of people standing in a meeting and leading the whole congregation in prayer. But that isn't necessarily true, is it? If we read, "Every woman who prays," when for example, a man stands in the meeting at the assembly and says let us bow in prayer. Do we as individuals say, "Well, let him pray?" And while I think about the golf game I had yesterday or something like that, and then when he says amen we're back into the meeting again. Or is that true of the women, too? No, what we

ideally do is we pray along with him. He leads us in prayer, and we follow along following his petitions, and we let him lead us in petitions to the Lord. So when we read in verse 5, "Every woman who prays or prophesies" the apostle might have in mind simply and individual who joins in the prayers that is made by a male.

But one thing you'll notice clearly oneness does not obliterate the distinctions of creation itself. So here there are distinctions and the apostle recognizes them. John Christenson, the early Christian preaching so well known for his preaching. He was an Arminian but nevertheless he was an evangelical man. He said with reference to this that "If you throw off the veil imposed by the Law, throw off that imposed by nature, too." In other words, just forget everything about Scripture, if you're going to throw off the veil you may as well pay no attention to what Paul is talking about.

Now, there's another point here that I want to say just a word about. He says, "But every woman who prays or prophesies." Now, there's a great deal of discussion over prophecy today and disagreement in the evangelical church. There are the charismatics that believe in prophecy. There are the non-charismatics who because of the things that they listen particularly to when they look at the TV screen or the radio, and many of them have become confused over the question of prophecy. Is prophecy a gift that is being exercised today? Many claim that it is. I have good friends that claim that prophecy is being exercised today. We ought to spend a night on that subject, too. It's my conviction that the prophecy that is called prophecy today is not called prophecy at all.

I challenged some of my students at Trinity Evangelical Divinity School when I taught there, because it was given to me to teach Ecclesiology. The administration didn't have a lot of confidence in one or two of the other faculty members in the theology department on this subject, and so they asked me to do it. And I spent the five years up there, and that was one of the courses that I taught at least once every year. But the question of spiritual gifts always came up, and especially the gifts of speaking in tongues, and the gift of prophecy. Those are the kinds of charismatic gifts that so much is made of

today. And I used to challenge my students and say, "All right, you who are charismatics in the audience," because they would be very upset. I could tell by their faces. I did in the way in which they didn't get mad at me, I don't think. They disagreed with me, but they didn't get mad at me. And I would say, "All right, now bring me your prophecies. I want to read them." And most of them couldn't bring me any prophecies. They had in their minds ideally a person could prophesy, because there's not text in Scripture that says you cannot prophesy. This seems to give the women the right to prophesy. Finally one person did bring me a book of prophecies, and he had a whole notebook of prophecies. And so he presented it to me and he said, "Here are some prophecies." And I opened them up, and one of the things I'll regret until the end of days of preaching the word of God, that I did not Xerox those pages. I must say they were the ridiculous class of prophecies that I have ever read as being prophecies. They were little nonsensical silly little things.

"The Lord is going to give us great blessing next Sunday." That was one of the prophecies, which he cited to me. That a prophet got up in a meeting and said, "The Lord is going to give us great blessing next Sunday." Well, you know in a theological seminary you can be very blunt. So I said, "Did the church burn down the next Sunday? Because I could see that that might be a great blessing. [Laughter] Your prophecy is not very definite, because it might be the means of a new building, or at least causing the congregation to come together in a common task of building a church." He didn't appreciate that at all. But in my opinion there are no prophecies today. And if you listen to men over the radio and you see men on the TV screen and they are talking about prophecy, you can be, I believe, absolutely sure that the things that they call prophecies are not prophecies according to the word of God.

Many of the prophecies that were in that book were simply rephrasing of passages from word of God. It's just prophecy was in my opinion a temporary gift given during the days of the apostles when it was necessary for prophecy to take place, because they

did not have the complete word of God. He goes on and he writes, "For if a woman is not covered, let her also be shorn. But if it is shameful for a woman to be shorn or shaved, let her be covered. For a man indeed ought not to cover *his* head, since he is the image and glory of God; but woman is the glory of man." She derives her being from man. She is his glory. And you can see again that Paul does not follow Genesis 3 and the fall and the judgment, but he follows Genesis chapter 2, verse 18 through verse 25. In other words, the glory of the man that the woman possesses is what is set forth by Moses in Genesis chapter 2. It's an original created relationship and it has not been changed.

Now, that requires some explanation and so in verse 8 he says, "For man is not from woman, but woman from man. Nor was man created for the woman, but woman for the man." Now, I'm sure that you can see that what he is arguing is something again from Genesis chapter 2. And this he says is the reason why the man ought not to cover his head, but why the woman should cover her head. "For man is not from woman, but woman from man."

Now, Letha Scanzoni and Nancy Hardesty who have written a book on the relationship of male and female, they are professing evangelicals. Their book is *All We're Meant to Be*. They argue that if beings created first are to have precedence, then the animals are clearly our betters, because they were created before we were created. But Paul is not arguing simply chronology. If you can look carefully he says, "For man is not from woman, but woman from man. Nor was man created for the woman, but woman for the man." So his argument is the argument that the woman's origin is man. And so having her origin in man and being created for him, not him for her, but she for him, in Genesis chapter 2 Paul finds in that the place of the woman and the place of the man.

Now, in verse 9 he goes on and says well I think I did this, "But woman for the man." And now verse 10, "For this reason the woman ought to have," my text has a symbol of authority on her head, because of the angels. Now there is a bit of a question about whether that rendering is correct. You in the audience you have different versions,

what the text really says is for this reason a woman ought to have authority on her head because of the angels. Now, in my opinion "symbol of authority is a correct rendering of that" and the reason that the apostle states that is that he feels that this is proper distinction between the man and the woman. You can see that the apostle would be very much against the amalgamation of the sexes and the distinction that was created by the Lord God in the Garden of Eden is something that is to be kept definitely in the word of God.

But what about this little expression "because of the angels." Well, evidently the apostle thought that the angels were beings who were observers of the human situation. If you turn back to chapter 4 in verse 9 you will have indication of the apostle's viewpoint in this letter itself. He writes in verse 9 of chapter 4, "For I think that God has displayed us, the apostles, last, as men condemned to death; for we have been made a spectacle to the world, both to angels and to men." And so he thought of us in the local church, for example, and he thought of us as believers being individuals who are being observed by the world about us. That's a rather solemn thought, isn't it? To realize that our actions are observed by the world above us, the angels.

Now, whether they're the bad or evil angels is not stated, but the vast majority of the commentators feel that the sex, or shall I put it this way, not the sex but the moral status of the angels is the good angels rather than the evil angels. Although some have said that Paul refers to the evil angels, because the evil angels would be excited by the female sex. And linking that with Genesis chapter 6 and the things that are described there. But that's a very unlikely interpretation. I don't think it's correct. What Paul is saying is that the angels are observers of the created order, and they would be offended by female lapses in observing the order that has been set forth by the apostles in the word of God, in their word of God to them. In Luke chapter 15 and verse 7 we have several instances that may pertain to this. You remember the Lord Jesus telling the parable of the lost sheep and in verse 7 of Luke 15 he says, "I say to you that likewise

there will be more joy in heaven over one sinner who repents than over ninety-nine just persons who need no repentance." Again in verse 10 the same thing, but this time "in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner who repents." And there are other places; we don't have time to turn to them, that suggest that the angels are observers of the created order. And so the apostle here says, "For this reason the woman ought to have *a symbol of authority on her head*, because of the angels," in case of the praying and prophesying.

Now, the proper order and interdependence in underlined in the next two verses, because you might get the impression, if you read this, that the men having everything going for them, and the women don't have much going for them. That, sad to say, is the feeling of a number of females, some males. And unfortunately some males have so used their proper headship so improperly that it is no wonder that many females resent very much the fact that they are told that this kind of activity is scriptural activity. So now in verse 11 notice the "nevertheless" because this is an explanatory qualification of what he has said in verse 8 through verse 10, that the woman ought to have the symbol of authority on the head. The man was not created for the woman but the woman for the man and the man is not of the woman but the woman is of the man. It's beautiful what God has done in the creation, it's true the woman is of the man, but isn't it interesting that every man thereafter is through a woman? This is the magnificent creative wisdom and power of the Lord God. Adam was of God. Adam was not of a woman, but everybody else is. Marvelous way in which God has accomplished his creation.

Now, he wants to make the point, there is an interdependence between the two. Verse 11, "Nevertheless, neither *is* man independent of woman, nor woman independent of man, in the Lord." And in verse 12, "For as woman *came* from man, even so man also *comes* through woman," not of woman, but through a woman. Through birth, through conception birth, but all things are from God. In other words, man is through a woman.

He's not of the woman. The initial cause is not the woman, but the instrumental cause is a woman's activity. And all of us men, we have a mother.

And then to put the capstone on it he says in verse 12 the last line, "But all things are from God." Each alike owe their existence to the Lord, the woman, the man, the woman from the man, the woman on account of the man, the man who from whom the woman comes and through whom all of the others come. They are in their relationship given by God. All things are from God. Everyone owes existence to him. Now finally, verse 13 through verse 16 the apostle says, we have a reasoning mind. Use your reasoning mind. "Judge among yourselves." In other words, the apostle appeals to Christian reason. Paul thinks of the natural world as God made it.

Incidentally when we say that reason has been affected by sin, that's the Noadic effects of sin, the effects of sin that touch our minds, we are not saying we have a mind given by God that may reason, we have a mind and therefore we reason, but we reason under Scripture as taught us by the Holy Spirit. But reasoning is very important. And so, as he says here, "Judge among yourselves." Exercise your Christian reason. Reason under the word of God and under the Holy Spirit who dwells within us. Now, he thinks, I say, of the natural world as created by God and he says, "Judge among yourselves. Is it proper for a woman to pray to God with her head uncovered?" Now, proper that is a word that means something like in the natural arrangement of things is that a proper thing. And then he goes on to say, "Does not even nature itself teach you that if a man has long hair, it is a dishonor to him? But if a woman has long hair, it is a glory to her; for *her* hair is given to her for a covering." In other words, he said, just look at nature itself. Look at the length of men's hair. I know some of you are going to say, "I know some men who have long hair." And you'll say, "I know some ladies whose hair didn't grow out like others." But basically women have the longer hair, and women have the shorter hair.

Epictetus argued from this that all men ought to have a beard, because everybody, every man will have a beard if he doesn't do anything about it. So he argued that for that reason all men ought to have a beard. And he was arguing in something of the same way Paul did, but Paul doesn't use that particular argument. I read that and I thought well maybe I ought to have a beard. [Laughter] It's impressive for an old Bible teacher to come on the stage with a beard. You think some wisdom is liable to come from his lips. So I would stand up and not say anything and walk out and they would say he was a wise man. But anyway, he says here, "but the hair is given for a covering." Now, he's not saying, of course, that woman's hair is her covering. What would be the point of writing everything that he has written here? And furthermore, what would he mean when said the man ought not to cover his head. He's got hair. So he's not saying that. But he is saying that the woman's hair is given her as that which answers to the covering that she should have in the meetings or in places where she prays and prophecies. And the idea of the hair being a covering a neat little way of just making unnecessary everything that Paul has written in all of these verses. That is, of course, not what he means.

But he says in verse 16, "But if anyone seems to be contentious," we don't have any such people in Believers Chapel, I know," But if anyone seems to be contentious, we have no such custom." Some have even interpreted this as being "If anyone seems to be contentious, we have not such custom of contentiousness." Why would a man have to say anything like that? Of course, you have no custom of contentiousness that would be a silly thing. No, what he's talking about is these things that he's been writing about in the chapter, the unveiled woman praying or prophesying. We don't have such custom in the churches of God. In other words, the apostles have taught on this point. It was generally agreed what is taught in 1 Corinthians chapter 11 was general teaching of the word of God.

Now, let me say a few words in conclusion. This chapter is a chapter of many puzzling things and having spent over forty years trying to interpret the word of God and

trying to interpret the original text, I am happy to admit there are things that I still puzzle about in the word of God. And some of them are right in these chapters we've been discussing. Is the head covering merely a cultural matter? This is taught in many of our evangelical seminaries. What Paul is talking about is that which was just the culture of Corinth, and therefore being a cultural matter it's not applicable to us today. That was for Corinth in the 1st century, taught right down 3909 Swiss Avenue by some of the teachers there, not all of them, but some of them. And at Trinity Evangelical Divinity School, at Fuller Seminary, you can name almost any seminary evangelical and you will find the same thing. It's a cultural thing.

But now look at the reasons that Paul gives for what he's talking about. Are they cultural reasons? No they're not cultural reasons. He talks about the creation. He talks about the nature of reality in the creation. He talks about the angels. Cultural? No there's not a thing that's cultural about it. As a matter of fact, with cultural interpretation I could deny almost everything taught in the word of God, and if it were valid, I could simply say something like this, in Corinth they believed in the blood sacrifice of Jesus Christ. But that was their cultural idea. We don't have that cultural idea today, blood sacrifice and redemption through it. So it's not necessary to pay attention to it, and so on down the line. Almost every significant Christian doctrine can be denied on the grounds of culture. Culture is filled with unbelief.

But how may we harmonize chapter 11 verse 4 and 5 with chapter 14 verse 33 to 36. Let me frame it for you. I know most of you probably have already got it, but here we have Paul suggesting in verse 4 and 5 that a woman may pray and prophesy. But over in 1 Corinthians 14 and verse 34 he distinctly says "Let your women keep silence in the churches." How is it possible to pray and keep silent? And how is it possible to prophesy and keep silent? That's the question. A number of answers have been given to this. And I'm going to suggest a couple, and then suggest perhaps something that may deliver Paul from his difficulty. I'm smiling. [Laughter]

It's possible that Paul is referring to something that was occurring in Corinth, and he simply alludes to it as an occurring thing. Every woman who prays or prophesies and it was going on in the Corinthian assembly, and so he really states it as a fact, moving on to something else. And then in chapter 14 makes it very plain that he's against what he said was going on in chapter 11. That's one way to do it. Paul doesn't reject praying and prophesying but he rejects, well I guess I should say this, that Paul acknowledges that it occurred in the churches, but he indicates his opinion of it in chapter 14. There is in the case of meat sacrificed to idols a possible illustration of this in 1 Corinthians chapter 8 and the in 1 Corinthians chapter 10 in verse 22 in which Paul seems to allude to something and then modifies what apparently one might argue from the earlier reference to the text two chapters later.

Now, it's also possible to take the opinion, evangelicals who follow the Scriptures generally, that it was occurring in Corinth, and Paul does not reject the praying and prophesying by he does reject teaching. And that's what he means in chapter 14 and that's what he means in 1 Timothy that he is saying it is possible for women to pray and to prophesy but they cannot teach. The difficulty with that is that statement in chapter 14. "Let your women keep silent in the churches, for they are not permitted to speak. But they are to be submissive as the Law also says."

Now, I'm going to give you what I think might be the answer to this question. I'm going to have to go over a couple of minutes to do it. I'm going to suggest to you that what was happening was happening in this section of 1 Corinthians in public, not in the church but in public. Remember in chapter 14 he says, "Let your women keep silent in the churches," but there's no reference to in the churches in 1 Corinthians 11. And so I suggest to you that what he was saying about praying and prophesying was something that was happening publicly. That is, some of the women of the assembly were praying publicly, but without head covering. And some were prophesying, but without head covering. Now we do have in the New Testament Agabus who came and made a

prophecy and apparently was in the home, remember, in Acts chapter 21. I'd better turn to that just for a moment. In Acts chapter 21, in Caesarea Paul came and his companions to the house of Phillip the evangelist, who was one of the seven and stayed with him, and remember Philip had four virgin daughters who prophesied. And as we stayed many days, a certain prophet named Agabus came down from Judea." So I suggest to you that when we read here that a woman praying and prophesying that it was public but it was not in the assembly, in the meeting of the assembly. And 1 Corinthians chapter 14 has something to say about that.

Furthermore, in verse 17 and verse 18, notice the words, "Now in giving these instructions I do not praise *you*, since you come together not for the better but for the worse." Now, he had just praised them in verse 2, that they remembered him in all things and kept the traditions. But there's one way in which they do not, the Lord's supper. And verse 18, "For first of all, when you come together as a church." In other words, he begins to talk about the church and the things that take place in the local church and the meetings of the churches in verse 17 and verse 18. But verse 2 through verse 16 have to do with things that may happen publicly. And if that is true, then of course, what Paul is saying is every man praying or prophesying in a public area should follow the instructions, the women having a covering, a veil or a covering. The men not having such. But in the meeting of the assembly itself, the women were to keep silent. And I suggest to you that is perhaps what Paul had in mind. It seems to me that at least we have a harmonization of these two passages that might seem to be very difficult to harmonize. In my opinion, that is the way in which the Christian meetings should be carried out. And in cases of difficulty where we have differing view points, the elders of the local churches have the authority to say this is our mind with regard to the word of God, and these are the practices that we follow. And even if as an individual I may have some disagreements, when there are matters such as this I feel it's my responsibility to

follow their directions. I felt that God has given the elders the oversight of our churches and therefore we should follow them.

I apologize for taking you over a few minutes, but I hope that at least major things that we have been talking about have been made clearer. I've gone out of my way to underline and emphasize certain things, but I do think they're important. And I think if you'll follow some of the things that have been said at least, you'll read with a great deal more understanding some of the things that are being discussed in the evangelical churches across this land and in Europe as well. Let's bow together in a closing word of prayer.

[Prayer] Father, we are grateful to Thee for the things that are found in Thy word, and we thank Thee and praise Thee.

[RECORDING ENDS ABRUPTLY]