

Sunday, July 30, 2017—I Corinthians 11:13-16 Nature Itself

Introduction

- Last Sunday we finished our consideration of the paragraph spanning verses 2 through 12. In doing so we observed that Paul’s instructions regarding head coverings were related to and patterned after the created order that God established in the beginning.
- This morning we want to consider verses 13 through 16 and concluded this section about hair and head coverings.

I Corinthians 11:13

- **Judge in yourselves: is it comely that a woman pray unto God uncovered?**
- The first important thing to note about verse 13 is that it is the beginning of a new paragraph that runs through the end of verse 16. The content of this paragraph is related to verses 2 through 12 but its purpose/point is slightly different.
- Second, notice that it is a question rather than a statement.
- *Judge*—the verb “judge” is in the imperative mood. Paul is ordering the Corinthian to “judge” something for themselves based upon what he taught them in verses 2 through 12.
- *Comely*—the English word “comely” carries the following meanings according to Noah Webster’s *American Dictionary of the English Language* (1828):
 - Properly, **becoming**; suitable: whence, handsome; graceful. Applied to person or form, it denotes symmetry or due proportion, but it expresses less than beautiful or elegant.
 - Decent; suitable; proper; **becoming**; suited to time, place, circumstances or persons.
- Notice that the English dictionary uses the word “becoming” to define “comely.” The same dictionary defines “becoming” as: “Fit; suitable; congruous; proper; graceful; belonging to the character, or adapted to circumstances”
- In the King James Bible, the Greek word that is translated as “comely” in verse 13 is elsewhere translated as some form of “becoming” 6 times.
 - Matthew 3:15
 - Ephesians 5:3
 - I Timothy 2:10

- Titus 2:1
- I Corinthians 11:13—based upon verses 5, 6, 10 is it “comely” or proper for a woman to pray unto God uncovered? The obvious answer is no.

I Corinthians 11:14

- **Doth not even nature itself teach you, that, if a man have long hair, it is a shame unto him?**
- Once again notice that this verse is in the form of a question.
- Paul appeals to nature itself in this verse as a teaching mechanism. Simply stated, Paul is saying that “nature” ought to teach one that it is a “shame” for a man to have long hair.
- I Corinthians 11:5-6—in the context Paul brought up a woman’s hair to illustrate a spiritual truth. Now in verse 14 he seems to be making a point about a man’s physical hair. Thus far in Chapter 11 he has said nothing about a man’s physical hair.
- The obvious answer to Paul’s question is yes. It is a shame unto a man to have long hair yet no clear instructions are given regarding exactly how long is acceptable. Therefore, it seems to me that Paul’s main point is that men should look like men and not woman.
- I Corinthians 6:9-11—recall from a previous study that some of the Corinthians before their salvation had been involved in living an “effeminate” life style.
 - Having the qualities of the female sex; soft or delicate to an unmanly degree; tender; womanish; voluptuous.
 - Womanish; weak; resembling the practice or qualities of the sex; as an *effeminate* peace; an *effeminate* life.
 - Womanlike, tender, in a sense not reproachful.
- Deuteronomy 22:5
- Paul says that one should look and act like what they are by nature. Currently, we are living in a post scientific age where people are trying to outsmart nature.

I Corinthians 11:15

- **But if a woman have long hair, it is a glory to her: for *her* hair is given her for a covering.**

- A woman having long hair is glory unto her and serves as her physical covering. Thus, Paul's use of hair as an illustration in verses 5 and 6.
- Like I said a few weeks ago a woman's hair is very important to her. Does this verse mean that a woman must have "long hair?" Once again, no standard is given. What it does mean is that a woman should look and act like a woman.

I Corinthians 11:16

- **But if any man seem to be contentious, we have no such custom, neither the churches of God.**
- Verse 16 is directed at men. How would a man be contentious in this paragraph? He would seek to rebel against that natural order of things spoken of in verse 14.
- Romans 1:30—"inventors of evil things"
- Paul nor the churches of God have no such custom as to behave in unnatural ways.