

Timeline of Hair Length

Andrii Zvorygin

February 23, 2024

1 Introduction

In 1 Corinthians 11:14 Paul asks “Does not even nature itself teach you that if a man has long hair, it is a dishonor to him?” While many have not investigated and assumed the answer was yes, let us look to history to find out an answer. The general pattern across history has been that long hair is a symbol of status and power, whereas short hair is a symbol of servanthood and poverty. From pagan deities to Hebrew prophets and founders of most major religions had long hair and beards. Often when a lineage of kings would opt for shorter hair styles, their dynasty would end. Forcing short hair was done by monks, slavers and socialists. This compact history emphasizes hair not just as personal adornment but as a potent symbol of cultural values, divine preference, and individual beliefs across ages.

2 Hair Length Timeline

1. 4000-2600 BC Ancient Sumeria: Rulers are depicted with large beards, servants with bald clean shaven heads.
2. 3000 BC Ancient Egypt: Pharaoh head-dress emphasizes large amounts of hair and a big beard whereas shaved heads were common among slaves and servants to distinguish their lower social status. Though head shaving was also done for ritual purification by priests.
3. 2600 BC - 2334 BC Sumeria: Depiction of leaders started including bald clean shaven men.
4. 2334 - 2154 BC (Akkadian Empire) took over Sumeria
 - Akkadian Deities and Rulers: During the Akkadian Empire, one of the world’s first empires, deities and rulers were often depicted in art and sculptures with long, elaborately styled hair. This was a symbol of divinity, strength, and authority. The Akkadian representations

of gods and goddesses set a precedent for Mesopotamian art and were influential in the region.

5. c. 2000 - 1800 BC (Time of Abraham)
 - The Bible mentions Abraham came from Ur, where men at the time were often depicted with large stylized beards.
 - Mesopotamian Deities: Gods and goddesses in the Sumerian and Akkadian pantheons, like Inanna/Ishtar and Enki/Ea, depicted with long, flowing hair.
 - Egyptian Deities: Egyptian gods such as Osiris and Isis often shown with stylized hair or elaborate head-dresses.
6. c. 1500 - 1300 BC (Time of Moses)
 - Moses in Later Artistic Depictions: While no contemporary depictions of Moses exist, later artistic renditions often portray him with long hair, aligning with the traditional image of a prophet and Leviticus 19:27.
 - Egyptian Deities during the New Kingdom: Gods like Amun and Ra continued to be depicted with stylized hair or headdresses, reflecting their divine status.
7. 1200 - 1000 BC: Nazirite Vow in Ancient Israel: Introduced during this period as detailed in the Book of Numbers, the Nazirite vow included not cutting one’s hair as a sign of dedication to God.
8. Samson: One of the last Judges of Israel, described in the Book of Judges (chapters 13-16) in the Hebrew Bible. His long hair was a symbol of his Nazirite vow and the source of his strength.
9. 1100 - 1000 BC Samuel: A prophet and judge in ancient Israel, described in the Books of Samuel in the Hebrew Bible. Samuel was dedicated to God as a Nazirite from birth by his mother, Hannah. “I will

- give him to the Lord all the days of his life, and no razor shall touch his head" (1 Samuel 1:11).
10. 800 - 700 BC Isaiah: In Isaiah 3:16-26 Isaiah details punishments from God including making scalps bald (17,24) followed by loses in battle (25). Notably as God gave men beards, male pattern baldness should not be considered a punishment.
 11. 8th-5th Century BC Greece: Homeric and Classical Periods: Short hair begins to symbolize the ideal of the civilized man in contrast to the long-haired barbarians. While most of their gods feature long hair, their god of hedonism is Dionysus clean shave with short hair and his short haired satyr minions are half man but have horns and hooves, enticing people into carnal pleasures.
 12. 700 - 600 BC Jeremiah: In Jeremiah 7:29 Jeremiah instructs people rejected and abandoned by God to cut off their hair and experience God's wrath.
 13. c. 500 - 300 BC (Classical Period)
 - 551 - 479 BC Confucius: Confucius, a renowned Chinese philosopher and the founder of Confucianism, where he advocated for maintaining one's body, hair, and skin intact, as they were received from one's parents. In ancient China, scholars and philosophers often kept their hair long as a sign of wisdom and learning.
 - 5th-4th Century BC, Golden Age of Athens: Short hair continues to be associated with the ideal of Greek beauty which focuses on Pederasty or homosexual pedophilia. Spartans, known for their military discipline, are an exception with their longer hair, which they believed symbolized their elite status and bravery, they also engaged in Pederasty but for mentorship instead of sex.
 - Taoist immortals and deities, like the Eight Immortals, began to be depicted in art and literature. These figures were often shown with long hair, symbolizing their connection to the natural world and their transcendence of ordinary human concerns.
 - Jain and Buddhist monks and nuns shave their head as a sign of renunciation.
 14. c. 300 BC - 200 AD (Hellenistic and Roman Periods)
 - Early Buddhist Iconography: By the 5th to 4th century BC, anthropomorphic depictions of the Buddha began to emerge. These depictions often included stylized hair in the form of tight curls and a top knot which became a distinctive feature of Buddha images. Whereas Buddhist monks and nuns shave off their hair.
 - Alexander the Great, a homosexual, spreads Greek culture of short haired clean shaven men through the world marking start of the Hellenistic period.
 - Roman Republic: Short hair becomes a standard for Roman citizens, reflecting their Hellenistic influences. Much as with the Greeks most of their gods have long hair, but their clean shaven hedonistic god Bacchus is Dionysus and satyr minions at new extremes with his followers having frequent orgies, drunkenness, eating animals alive and civil disorder.
 - Hindu Deities in India: Deities such as Shiva (with matted locks) and Vishnu (with flowing hair) depicted with long hair, symbolizing spiritual power.
 - Han Dynasty: Confucian Revival: The Han Dynasty saw a revival of Confucian ideals, with long hair in men being a mark of scholarly dignity and moral refinement. Men typically wore their hair in a bun or knot, often covered with a headpiece as a sign of social status.
 15. c. 1st Century AD (Early Christian Period)
 - Christian Depictions of Jesus: Early depictions varied, but by the 4th century, the image of Jesus with long hair and a beard became more standard.
 - Imperial Rome: Short hair remains the norm for Roman men, symbolizing Roman citizenship and social status.
 - The passage from 1 Corinthians 11:14, where Paul asks about hair length in relation to cultural norms and gender distinctions, is interpreted by many scholars as reflective

of the cultural and societal norms of Corinth and the broader Greco-Roman world at the time.

- 117-130 AD Roman Emperor Hadrian has a very public sexual pederasty relationship with a young boy and even founded the city of Antinoopolis in his honour.
- 0-300 AD Early Christians maintain natural image without wigs, makeup, etc.
- 1st-3rd AD Bodhisattva Depictions in Mahayana Buddhism: As Mahayana Buddhism developed during this period, particularly in regions like Gandhara and later in East Asia, the artistic depictions of Bodhisattvas began to include features such as long, flowing hair. These depictions were influenced by Hellenistic artistic styles and local cultural interpretations. The long hair of Bodhisattvas like Avalokiteshvara (Guanyin) symbolized spiritual grace, compassion, and a departure from conventional societal norms.

16. c. 500 - 1200 AD (Medieval Period)

- Christian Icons: Continued depiction of Jesus and saints with long hair.
- Norse Deities: Norse gods like Thor depicted with long hair.
- 5th-15th century Europe: Monastic orders often practiced tonsure, shaving the tops of their heads to symbolize renunciation of worldly fashion and desires.
- 5th-8th century: Merovingian Kings: The Merovingian dynasty, which ruled over the Frankish kingdoms (in parts of what is now France and Germany), were known for their long hair. This was a distinctive feature of the Merovingian kings, symbolizing their royal bloodline and divine right to rule. The tradition held that Merovingian kings did not cut their hair as a sign of their nobility and as a physical manifestation of their authority. Until about the 17th century the majority of kings continued to maintain long hair.
- 8th-11th century: Vikings: The Vikings, known for their seafaring and raids across Europe, often depicted in historical and archaeological records with long hair and

beards. Long hair in Norse culture was sometimes associated with social status and warrior prowess.

- 618-907 AD: Sui and Tang Dynasties, Men often wore their hair long, sometimes in elaborate styles, influenced by interactions with nomadic tribes and other cultures.
- Bon Deities in Tibetan Tradition: In the Bon religion of Tibet, deities were often depicted with long hair, symbolizing a connection to spiritual realms and divine powers. This pre-Buddhist spiritual tradition had a significant influence on Tibetan culture and religious practices.
- Ngagpa Tradition in Tibetan Buddhism: Separate from the Bon tradition, the Ngagpa practitioners of Tibetan Buddhism, dating back to the 8th century AD, are lay tantric practitioners known for maintaining long hair as part of their spiritual identity and commitment to a unique path that blends esoteric practices with household life.
- 9th-12th century: Samurai Warriors: In feudal Japan, the samurai, a warrior class, often wore their hair in a distinctive style known as a 'chonmage', which involved keeping the top hair long. This hairstyle was both practical for wearing a helmet and a symbol of their status and honor as warriors.
- 960-1279 AD: The Song Dynasty saw a resurgence of Confucian thought, known as Neo-Confucianism. Hairstyles for men remained traditionally long, tied up in a bun, reflecting the era's conservative social values.

17. 1054 AD East-West Schism, where shaved short haired Catholics split from long haired bearded Orthodox. Catholics start the crusades.

18. 1119 AD Catholic Council of Toulouse threatens excommunication to those who allow natural hair growth.

19. c. 1200 - 1600 AD (Renaissance)

- European Art: Renaissance art revived classical depictions of both Christian and pagan deities, often with long hair.
- 1368-1644 AD: The Ming Dynasty marked a return to Han Chinese

leadership and a revival of traditional culture and Confucian norms. Men wore their hair long, often in a topknot, as a symbol of their fidelity to Confucian ideals and rejection of foreign Mongol influences.

- Leonardo Da vinci, long haired famous painter and inventor, considered epitome "Renaissance Man".
- Sikhism: Founded by Guru Nanak in the 15th century in the Punjab region of South Asia. Sikhs often keep their hair uncut as a sign of respect for the perfection of God's creation, formalized by Guru Gobind Singh in 1699 with the creation of the Khalsa, where keeping "Kesh" (uncut hair) became one of the Five Ks.

20. Colonial Period (16th to 19th Century)

- 1551 Moscow Council of a Hundred Chapters says men are to wear beards in imitation of Christ.
- Transatlantic Slave Trade: Africans enslaved and transported to the Americas often had their heads shaved by slave traders. This act was a method of erasing their identity and culture, marking the beginning of their dehumanization and commodification.
- 1644–1912 AD: The Qing Dynasty, established by the Manchus, mandated a specific hairstyle: the queue. Han Chinese men were required to shave the front of their heads and grow the hair at the back into a long braid, symbolizing submission to Manchu rule. This was a dramatic departure from previous hair practices and was initially met with resistance as it was seen as a sign of subjugation.
- 1666 Moscow Sobor Nikonian Reforms lead to beard shaving and extreme persecution.
- 17th-18th Century european kings started having shorter hair and wearing wigs instead.
- 18th century Peter I (the beard shaver) puts a beard tax on people who want to keep their beard.
- 18th-20th Century monarchies all over Europe were overthrown.

21. 20th Century AD (Rastafarianism)

- Early 20th Rasputin, a rural mystic with long hair who became a de facto ruler of Russia and had many spiritual powers.
- Gandhi a bald ascetic lawyer helped India gain its independence.
- World War I and II (1914-1918, 1939-1945): Shaving heads of prisoners of war or those in concentration camps, notably by the Nazis during the Holocaust, was a systematic act of dehumanization.
- Rastafarianism: Emerged in Jamaica in the 1930s. The wearing of dreadlocks is a symbolic observance that reflects the Rastafarian's spiritual journey and a connection to the biblical Nazirite vow, as well as a symbol of an African identity.
- Japanese Internment Camps (1942-1945): While not universally applied, there were reports of head shaving among prisoners in some Japanese internment camps during World War II, aimed at dehumanizing and controlling the captured.
- 1966-1976: balding Mao forced both men and women to wear their hair short as part of his war against the "Four Olds" (old customs, old culture, old habits, old ideas) and create a socialist/communist culture. Lenin, Mussolini and Gorbachev were other prominent bald authoritarians.
- 1981: Ra of the Confederation of Planets in the Law of One 75.33-34 states that long hair of at least 11cm is helpful as an antenna for spiritual information.
- 1980-2010s: Catholic priests are unmarried, have short hair and are in the news for continuing the Hellenistic practices of sexual pederasty.
- Dalai Lama and other bald Tibetan Buddhists are noted for their compassion and kindness. Dalai lama in his books states that the married householders (Ngakpa) have the highest attainments, Ngakpa are known for their long hair and beards. Though Dzogchen and rainbow body (transfiguration/ascention) is achieved by people regardless of hair length.

The historical trajectory of hair, as detailed in scriptures like 1 Corinthians 11:14-15, where

Paul discusses hair length in relation to cultural and spiritual practices, underscores not just its aesthetic value but its profound cultural, religious, and societal significance. Long hair, often celebrated across various cultures as a symbol of divine favor and authority, akin to the Nazirite vow of dedication in Numbers 6:5, contrasts sharply with the associations of short hair with notions of slavery and subjugation, reminiscent of the shaved heads of slaves in ancient

times. These dichotomies underscore the power dynamics in societal perceptions of hair length and style, emphasizing the importance of personal freedom and autonomy, as seen in the freedom Christ brings (Galatians 5:1). Advocating for the liberty to choose one's hair length and style promotes a society that values diversity, individuality, and dignity, reflecting the biblical principle of personal freedom within the community of believers.