

Isaiah 47:2 (Misinterpreted Scriptures)

Take the millstones, and grind meal: uncover thy locks, make bare the leg, uncover the thigh, pass over the rivers.

Misinterpretation: The UPC often uses this Scripture to try to prove that it is wrong for men to wear shorts or for women to wear skirts above the knee.

Facts: If this Scripture is teaching that men cannot wear shorts then it is also teaching that women cannot remove their veils. Let's take a closer look at the Scripture to see what I mean.

To understand this Scripture we must look at what the phrase "uncover thy locks" means. "Uncover thy locks" means "remove the veil." Here is how several mainstream English translations render Is. 47:2 (I have included Young's Literal Translation, since many UPC pastors use this translation for study):

Isa 47:2 YLT (Young's Literal Translation)

Take millstones, and grind flour, Remove thy veil, draw up the skirt, Uncover the leg, pass over the floods.

Isa 47:2 NASB

Take the millstones and grind meal. Remove your veil, strip off the skirt, Uncover the leg, cross the rivers.

Isa 47:2 ESV

Take the millstones and grind flour, put off your veil, strip off your robe, uncover your legs, pass through the rivers.

Isa 47:2 GNB

Turn the millstone! Grind the flour! Off with your veil! Strip off your fine clothes! Lift up your skirts to cross the streams!

*Isa 47:2 JPS (Jewish Translation of the Old Testament)
Take the millstones, and grind meal; remove thy veil, strip
off the train, uncover the leg, pass through the rivers.*

I included these five mainstream English translations because I want to show that the common rendering of the verse is "remove your veil," and that it is not a translation that I came up with on my own. My point is this: If this verse proves that it is immodest for a person to wear shorts or skirts above the knee then it also proves that it is immodest for women to remove their veils.

What does the Bible say about men wearing shorts?

Many churches in the UPC teach that men should not wear shorts. In my experience the only Scriptural backing that is given for this doctrine is this Scripture passage:

Isa 47:1-3 KJV

(1) Come down, and sit in the dust, O virgin daughter of Babylon, sit on the ground: there is no throne, O daughter of the Chaldeans: for thou shalt no more be called tender and delicate.

(2) Take the millstones, and grind meal: uncover thy locks, make bare the leg, uncover the thigh, pass over the rivers.

(3) Thy nakedness shall be uncovered, yea, thy shame shall be seen: I will take vengeance, and I will not meet thee as a man.

I have already discussed this passage in my article on

[Misinterpreted Scriptures](#), so in this article I am simply going to repeat the material that I have already written in that article:

Misinterpretation: The UPC often uses this Scripture to try to prove that it is wrong for men to wear shorts or for women to wear skirts above the knee.

Facts: If this Scripture is teaching that men cannot wear shorts then it is also teaching that women cannot remove their veils. Let's take a closer look at the Scripture to see what I mean.

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Isa 47:2 YLT (Young's Literal Translation)

(2) Take millstones, and grind flour, Remove thy veil, draw up the skirt, Uncover the leg, pass over the floods.

Isa 47:2 NASB

(2) "Take the millstones and grind meal. Remove your veil, strip off the skirt, Uncover the leg, cross the rivers.

Isa 47:2 ESV

(2) Take the millstones and grind flour, put off your veil, strip off your robe, uncover your legs, pass through the rivers.

Isa 47:2 GNB

(2) Turn the millstone! Grind the flour! Off with your veil! Strip off your fine clothes! Lift up your skirts to cross the streams!

Isa 47:2 JPS (Jewish Translation of the Old Testament)

(2) Take the millstones, and grind meal; remove thy veil,

strip off the train, uncover the leg, pass through the rivers.

I included these five mainstream English translations because I want to show that the common rendering of the verse is "remove your veil," and that it is not a translation that I came up with on my own. My point is this: If this verse proves that it is immodest for a person to wear shorts or skirts above the knee then it also proves that it is immodest for women to remove their veils.

It is clear that there is no basis for using this Scripture to try to prove that shorts are immodest on men or women. The UPC teaching that says that men should not wear shorts is a great example of the common UPC practice of pulling one Scripture out of context and using it to create a doctrine that it was never meant to teach. The simple fact of the matter is that the Bible never even hints that shorts are immodest on men or women.