

The Historical And Biblical Significance Of The Beard

Dr. J. Howard Powell

"Ye shall not eat any thing with the blood: neither shall ye use enchantment, nor observe times. Ye shall not round the corners of your heads, neither shalt thou mar the corners of thy beard. Ye shall not make any cuttings in your flesh for the dead, nor print any marks upon you: I am the Lord" (Leviticus 19:26-28).

"And the Lord said unto Moses, Speak unto the priests the sons of Aaron, and say unto them, There shall none be defiled for the dead among his people: But for his kin, that is near unto him, that is, for his mother, and for his father, and for his son, and for his daughter, and for his brother, And for his sister a virgin, that is nigh unto him, which hath had no husband; for her may he be defiled. But he shall not defile himself, being a chief man among his people, to profane himself. They shall not make baldness upon their head, neither shall they shave off the corner of their beard, nor make any cuttings in their flesh. They shall be holy unto their God, and not profane the name of their God: for the offerings of the Lord made by fire, and the bread of their God, they do offer: therefore they shall be holy" (Leviticus 21:1-6).

I would like to begin by telling you what I am not going to do, then positively, tell you what I am going to do. First of all, I am not defending anyone's beard, nor am I trying to defend myself if ever I decide to grow a beard. That is not my aim in this message.

Secondly, I am not trying to bind my conscience upon yours, nor am I asking you to see things my way ... but I am going to ask you to submit and be easily entreated to God's engrafted word, which I believe when you hear the word of this subject, you will be convinced and satisfied on this important Biblical matter.

You are responsible to study the Word of God for yourself and see the truth therein, for your conscience should be bound only to the Word of God and not what man says.

Firstly, I am not saying that a man who has a beard is more holy than one who does not have a beard. And I am not saying that a man who does not have a beard is less holy than one who does have a beard.

I am not necessarily encouraging anyone to grow a beard, but I am

certainly not discouraging it either.

Now I want to ask you to do several things, and the first one is this: **John 7:24, "Judge not according to the appearance, but judge righteous judgment."** All too often we are in the habit of judging by appearance. I am not talking about the overbearing appearance of Hippies and unclad women. But someone says, "That beard on that man just appears bad because its bad to have a beard."

Surely, there are ways to dress and appear which is sinful, and we have a right to judge, but only by "**righteous judgment.**"

If you judged by appearance instead of righteous judgment, I could take you into the Post Office of the United States and show you men on the wanted list and you will discover that about 90 per cent of those men who have their pictures on the wanted list are clean shaven. Therefore, I could conclude, if I judged according to appearance, that anyone that is clean shaven is a criminal and must be wanted by the F. B. I. Now that would be silly, wouldn't it? Well, that is not judging righteous judgment, but is simply judging by appearance.

Let me clear up another area also. Someone says, "Well, you know beards are associated with the dirty, sinful life of the hippies." Well, that is not necessarily so as I am going to prove to you with the Scripture. Just because someone perverts a truth does not mean that you throw that truth out the window of one's life. For instance: The Roman Catholic Church has perverted the Lord's Table by turning it into a perpetual mass. Every time the bread and fruit of the vine is partaken, they believe it is actually turned into the literal blood and body of Christ. Just because they have perverted that truth, does not mean that we are to cease using the communion table, but rather we continue to use it in its Biblical, proper perspective.

And some have taken the ordinance of Baptism and perverted it to be a part of the acquiring of salvation. This does not mean we quit baptizing. But rather, we take the truth of Baptism and the Lord's Supper and use them Biblically.

So I am saying simply that, "You don't throw the baby out with the bath water." You use truth in its proper, Biblical perspective.

Incidentally, many of the Hippies today are going all out for the Kung Fu or Kojak look, or the unisex look. In many cases boys are looking like girls and girls are looking like boys.

Now I would still condemn the Hippy for his improper use of the beard, because it would not be correct according to the Word of God for him to wear his beard the way he does.

Secondly: A beard is not prohibited in the Word of God, but rather it is commended in the Word of God!

Thirdly: What I want to do is to encourage you to think Biblically on the subject of the beard. You see, we claim to think according to the Word of God, so we say we are Christians. We believe the Word of God is true and that Jesus Christ is our personal Lord and Saviour. That's all true and good if we are truly saved, but it is amazing how we tend to separate things. Here is something you agree with over here, and sure, everybody knows it. But over here is something that you have never heard of or ever seen before. Immediately, instead of searching the Word of God and finding out for yourself what God says, you automatically form your own thought and opinion, apart from the Word of God.

A man may say, "I don't know whether it is right or wrong for a man to have a beard." Well, let's change that thought because that's not really ours to decide. God has already determined that men have beards. What a man must decide is, not whether it's right or wrong to have a beard, but whether it's right or wrong to shave it off. And you can't shave it off and get rid of it. It's there and God has created it. So, that which you need to decide is, whether it is right to shave it off, not whether or not it is right to have a beard.

You see, the problem today is this, especially as you think about preachers in our modern setting. Many a bearded pastor is a "TABOO" and an unusual sort of person. However in Biblical times and in all history past, it has not been unusual, but rather it has always been the norm. But what we have today is, that it is simply going against many a man's personal judgment as a "NO, NO."

Now I don't want to get into the doctrine of Christian liberty as found in **I Corinthians** chapter **8** and what it actually means to offend someone. But let's suppose one of these ladies came up to me tonight and said, "Pastor, your beard offends me." (That is, if I had a beard.) Now I wouldn't want to be ugly, but if that happened and I was wearing a beard, I would laugh in her face, because that is an improper use of the Biblical word offend. The Hebrew word for offend is, mik-shol and it is in the masculine voice and

means stumbling block or enticement to ruin. **Psalms 119:165, "Great peace have they which love thy law: and nothing shall offend them."**

If you study it out, you will find to offend someone Biblically speaking, is to encourage them to do the same thing you are doing without you having knowledge of it. So, how could my beard offend a woman? She could not do what I could do even if she had my knowledge. She cannot be offended and tempted to have a beard like mine for God did not give her one to begin with. You study **Romans** chapter **14** and **I Corinthians** chapters **8** and **9** and you will find that to be true. Another problem today is, we have people that are known as legalist and are Pharisaic. You remember that the Pharisee wanted everyone to see things exactly the way he saw them. Yet, Our Lord went always contrary to the customs and the traditions of the Pharisees, and that is what upset them so much. Now our Lord did it purposely, because had He not done it, He would have been bowing to their legalistic, Pharisaic attitudes.

If I chose to grow a beard, one of the reasons would be, to make people see that they must come to grips with what God says and not what man says. The problem today is, the conscience of men and women have been improperly instructed. They need to get into the Word of God and find out the proper instructions concerning this subject at hand.

In this message I want you to see that the beard is a **PUBLIC** and a **PRIVATE** testimony. If you wear a beard, or may I say, let it grow out, it is to be properly and neatly trimmed and kept. It is a public testimony when everyone sees it. It is a private testimony when the man who wears it looks into the mirror and remembers what that beard signifies according to the Word of God. It is not an ornament to enhance his beauty or looks necessarily (though many men do look very handsome with a nice trimmed beard, while others do not.)

When you see the Scripture, you are going to learn that there are plenty of passages in the proclamation of the truth of God's Word about the beard.

Now I want to handle the Historical significance of the beard first, though it is not as important as the Biblical, but I think you need to know it.

You can always judge history by judging and discerning the rise and the fall of the beard! And here is an interesting bit of historical information: Egypt was the only country in antiquity that forbade a man to let his beard grow out. Every Biblical scholar will be quick to tell you that Egypt is a type

of the world. Egypt is a type of that which is contrary to God and His law and His people. Egypt was a nation by law who forbade a man to have a beard. Yet, when you look at Egyptian art and Egyptian sculpture, you will notice that Pharaoh (especially) has a real sharp pointed goatee coming straight down from his chin. But if you look real closely at their arts and sculptures, you will find that there is a real thin line going up behind his ears. Do you know what that is? That's a string, because the beard that he has is a fake beard and it was tied on. Now the reason is this: The Egyptians were known as "Transvestites". The men look like the women and the women look like the men. However, when Pharaoh had his sculpture made or a picture drawn of him, they always drew that fake beard, that he had tied on, in order that the people could know that he was the Pharaoh and not the queen or some other woman.

Another interesting thing is this: If you will notice in Greek mythology and Roman mythology, whenever you see a picture of a false god, usually he is clean shaven. Most all false gods are represented with clean shaven faces. The council of Carthage, which was a council in the early church about 200 A.D. met to discuss and try to work out many problems in the church. One of the problems they discussed at the council of Carthage was immodest dress. You see, they had problems with immodest dress back then the way we do today. Now they were not discussing mini-skirts, shorts, halters, etc. which is lewd and sinful even in our day. But let me quote from the council of Carthage, for here is what they came up with: "Any man, who appears in Church with long hair and a clean shaven face, will be excluded from communion, for that man is immodestly dressed."

If a man came to church with long hair and a clean shaven face, he was declared immodestly dressed. It was Tertullian, the early church father, who wrote his treatise on the beard and said that the purpose of the beard was TO KEEP LUST DOWN.

All the early church fathers wrote concerning the beard. In fact, the council of Carthage met again in 398 A.D. and they came up with this. The clergyman shall not let his hair grow nor remove his beard. Now these were church councils.

When the Barbarian Hordes invaded Rome, they had long hair and clean shaven faces. And it was at this time, as a whole in the realm of Christendom, that the church was Romanized. All these Barbarian sects and

other kinds of people began to infiltrate the church and it literally ceased to be a Christian church as such and became amalgamated with all the heathen. At that time nearly all the beards were shaven off. Men had clean shaven faces and long hair. This was the effect of Heathenism upon the church. Sculptures and pictures of Christ shows Him with long hair but that is not true.

They show Him with a beard because Scripture says so. They show Him with long hair because of Barbarian influence. This continued like this with an occasional beard or two now and then until there came what is known as the Protestant Reformation. It is interesting to note what past history has for us to see concerning the past three centuries in regard to renowned men recorded in our history books.

In the 18th Century between 1773-1894 which covers a span of 121 years. I list the life span of five noted men who wore no beards and wore short hair. These men lived an average of 48.4 years. They are:

1. Sadi Carnot 1837-1894
2. Joseph Fraunhofer 1787-1826
3. Augustin Fresnel 1788-1827
4. Sir Humphry Davy 1778-1829
5. Thomas Young 1773-1829

In the 17th Century between 1627-1727 which covers a span of 100 years we have a list of five noted men who wore no beards, yet wore long hair. These men lived an average of 54.8 years. They are:

1. Olaus Roemer 1644-1710
2. Robert Boyle 1627-1691
3. Christian Huygens 1629-1695
4. Gottfried W. Leibnitz 1646-1716
5. Sir Isaac Newton 1642-1727

In the 16th century between 1546-1642 which covers a span of 96 years we have a list of five noted men who wore beards and short hair. These men lived an average of 59.8 years. They are:

1. Willebrod Snell 1591-1626
2. Johannes Kepler 1571-1630
3. Galiled Galilei 1564-1642
4. Simon Stevinus 1548-1620

5. Tycho Brahe 1546-1601

Also, during the French Revolution, 18 leading figures in the French Revolution had no beards and they all lived between 1732-1838. Covering a span of 106 years.

But it was during the 16th century that the great revival awakening came known as the reformation. This was when Bloody Mary, Queen of England was in power (1516-1558) and persecuted thousands of Christians. This was when in 1517 Martin Luther, the converted priest, nailed 95 thesis to the castle church door in Germany and from that came the trumpet sound, come back to the Word of God! "**The just shall live by faith.**"

When you look through our history books, you will begin to find that with the reformation and the Bible in the foremost thoughts of man, that men began to have short hair and beards. This great reformation and revival took place during the time when men as a whole wore beards and had short hair. Whenever humanism or the mind of man was at the top, men would have long hair and clean shaven faces. Whenever the Bible was at the top, they wore short hair and had beards.

Now the reformation carried right on until in France there developed what was known as the enlightenment.

These were "Deists" who put man's reasoning above the Word of God. Consequently, because of that, the beards went out and short hair went out also, and back again came the clean shaven faces and the long hair. This kept up right until the time of George Washington. In 1789, of course, the long hair was going out as such, but if you will remember George Washington had pig tails. I guess it looked like a modern hippy, but it was going out. After that men had short hair and beards up until the time of the Civil war. It is an amazing thing if you will look at all the Godly men during the Civil war; they all had beards. Stonewall Jackson and Robert E. Lee were Godly men. And many others we could name. But this continued on up until World War I. After that the beards started going out again when the influx of German liberalism began to come into this country, then it went almost altogether, that is, men shaving off their beards.

So today, we are caught up in what is called the Kung Fu or Kojak or the Unisex look until just recently. Now there is a resurgent of the beard even in our country. Right now in England, if you were to pick out 20 men off the street, while you were blindfolded, 15 of them would have beards.

So that's very briefly the historical aspect of the beard. Now, let me make this statement. The beard is assumed in Scripture just like the doctrine of God is assumed. There are no definite commands to grow a beard, but there are divine regulations concerning the beard. When you come to the Scriptures, there is no verse that will try to prove that God is. For instance, when you open your Bible to Genesis 1:1 In the beginning God... There is no verse that tries to tell you, that here you can prove God is by this or by that. No, the doctrine of God is just assumed and taken as a reality because we are told, In the beginning God created the heaven and earth. No amount of words beyond **Genesis 1:1** is really needed to prove that God is.

It is likewise with the beard. There is no definite command in the Bible to grow a beard. There are no divine regulations concerning man's decision to grow or not to grow a beard. It is assumed that men would have one and he makes the decision whether he wants to let it grow or cut it off.

An interesting thing is that, the Hebrew word for beard is Zaqan (Zaw-kawn), and the Hebrew word for elder is Zaqen (Zaw-kane). So the Elders in the Old Testament were called that because of their beards, for this is what the word Elder meant.

Now I want to share with you the value of the beard. Now some of this may seem rather humorous but I will assure you it was not humorous in history, nor would it be humorous today.

The Semites looked upon the beard as the glory and the pride of man. The Universal Jewish Encyclopedia says, "The glory of the face is the beard."

I want to read you an article and stop from time to time and make a comment, and read a number of Scriptures that will tie in.

Talking about the Semites, it is more scandalous, and of bad report, and held in abhorrence, for anyone to have his beard cut off, than for them to be publicly whipped or branded with a hot iron. Many men in that country of the Middle East would prefer death than to receive such a punishment. Wives kiss their husband's beards and the children kiss their father's beards. When men come to greet one another, the men kiss one another's beard, reciprocally, when they salute each other in the streets or come back from a journey. They say, "The beard is the perfection of the human face which would be more disfigured by having it cut off than by losing the nose."

They admired and envied those who had fine beards, and they would say, and I quote, "Pray do, but see they cry, that beard." The very sight of it

would persuade anyone, that he to whom it belongs, is an honest man. If anyone with a fine beard is guilty of an unbecoming action, they would say, and I quote, "What a disadvantage to such a beard. How much is such a beard to be pitied." When correcting someone who is guilty of an unbecoming act, they would say, and I quote, "For shame on your beard." In the code of Jewish law by Gansfried, Volume IV, page 54 it says, "One who fears God should not use a razor on any part of his beard, even on his lip or under the chin." If a Semite intreats anyone, or uses oaths in affirming or denying anything, they say, and I quote, "I conjure you by my beard or your beard." or "By the life of your beard, grant me this," or "By your beard this is or is not so."

I would imagine that everyone of you have heard the story of the Big Bad Wolf and The Three Little Pigs. That big bad wolf says to the pigs, "I'll huff and I'll puff and I'll blow your house down." And the little pigs say, "Not by the hair of my chinny chin chin." Now that's a little children's story, but it is a truth taken from history, that men swore by their beards. Furthermore, the Semites say, in the way of acknowledgment, "May God preserve your blessed beard." "May God pour out His blessings upon your beard." And in comparison they would say, "This is more valuable than one's beard." Now these accounts may contribute a lot to illustrate several passages of Scripture. The dishonor done by David to his beard by letting spittle fall on it. I Samuel 21:13, And he changed his behavior before them, and feigned himself mad in their hands, and scrabbled on the doors of the gate, and let his spittle fall down upon his beard. David wanted to make it seem to Achish that he was mad, so he acted out fits of insanity by letting spittle fall on his beard.

During the time of King David, it was believed that no man in good health of body and mind, would thus defile what was esteemed so honorable as the beard. The story was like this: King Saul was after David, and David said, "The time is going to come that I'll fall by the hand of Saul." So he escaped into the hand of Achish who was a Philistine. **I Samuel 18:6-7, "And it came to pass as they came, when David was returned from the slaughter of the Philistine, that the women came out of all cities of Israel, singing and dancing, to meet king Saul, with tabrets, with joy, and with instruments of music. And the women answered one another as they played, and said, Saul hath slain his thousands, and David his**

ten thousands." Well, David saw he was in hot water, so he feigned himself mad. He acted out the nature of a mad man and slobbered all over his beard and let it run down. He scrabbled awkwardly and irregularly by marking on the wall. You see, in that ancient day people were booked as "crazy" who would mark on a wall, and mess up his beard as David did. They would say, "Look at him! that man is crazy. Get him out of here, he's insane." You see, the custom was, not to touch or harm a crazy person, for fear you would catch the disease. And for one to perform such an indignity on his beard was considered in the East an intolerable insult. So David slobbered on his beard to make himself seem mad, so he could escape the hand of Achish.

However, if the beard be venerated (looked upon with reverential respect), we see the seriousness of the neglect of Mephibosheth not trimming his beard. **II Samuel 19:24-26**, "And Mephibosheth the son of Saul come down to meet the king, and had neither dressed his feet, nor trimmed his beard, nor washed his clothes, from the day the king departed until the day he came again in peace. And it came to pass, when he was come to Jerusalem to meet the king, that the king said unto him, Wherefore wentest not thou with me, Mephibosheth? And he answered, My lord, O king, my servant deceived me: for thy servant said, I will saddle me an ass, that I may ride thereon, and go to the king; because thy servant is lame." In this story, David was ran off the throne by Absalom his son, and Mephibosheth wanted to go with him. You see, the very fact that Mephibosheth had neglected his beard, indicated that he was honest and wanted David to return.

If men kiss one another's beards when they salute in the streets, or when one has lately come from a journey, then we may discover traces of a deeper dissimulation in the behavior of Joab toward Amasa. **II Samuel 20:9-10**, "And Joab said to Amasa, Art thou in health, my brother? And Joab took Amasa by the beard with the right hand to kiss him. But Amasa took no heed to the sword that was in Joab's hand: so he smote him therewith in the fifth rib, and shed out his bowels to the ground, and struck him not again; and he died." It was the custom way of greeting one another. They would kiss each other's beard. Joab came to Amasa in a seeming act of friendship or kindness or honor and said, Art thou in health, my brother? And when he bent over to kiss his beard, WHAM! He let him have it right under the fifth rib.

No doubt this was exactly what happened when Judas Iscariot betrayed out Lord. **Matthew 26:47-48**, "And while he yet spake, lo, Judas, one of the twelve, came, and with him a great multitude with swords and staves, from the chief priests and elders of the people. Now he that betrayed him gave them a sign, saying, Whomsoever I shall kiss, that same is he: hold him fast." So Judas went and kissed the beard of our Lord, which was the common way of greeting brethren and friends in Bible times.

When anyone would wish to express the value of anything, they would say, "It is worth more than a man's beard." So the beard was a badge of honor, a badge of dignity, a badge of respectfulness. **Proverbs 20:29**, "The glory of young men is their strength: and the beauty of old men is the gray head."

You can sum up what the Bible teaches about the beard in four simple statements:

1. To have the beard forcibly cut off or mutilated is a symbol of disgrace.
2. To pull it is to inflict indignity.
3. To remove it voluntarily is a sign of mourning.
4. To stroke it is to express the importance of one's words of value or weight.

Did you know many battles have been fought over a man's beard? For to pull a beard in ancient time was to inflict indignity. In the year 1764 a pretender to the Persian throne named Kerib Khon, sent an ambassador to Mer Mahena, the Prince of Bendervick on the Persian Gulf. Kerib Khon demanded tribute from Mahena but Mahena in turn cut off the Ambassador's beard. Kerib Khon was so enraged at this that he went the next year with a large army and made war upon this prince and took the city and almost the whole of his territory to avenge the insult.

II Samuel 10:1-7, "And it came to pass after this, that the king of the children of Ammon died, and Hanun his son reigned in his stead. Then said David, I will shew kindness unto Hanun the son of Nahash, as his father shewed kindness unto me. And David sent to comfort him by the hand of his servants for his father. And David's servants came into the land of the children of Ammon. And the princes of the children of Ammon said unto Hanun their lord, Thinkest thou that David doth

honour thy father, that he hath sent comforters unto thee? hath not David rather sent his servants unto thee, to search the city, and to spy it out, and to overthrow it? Wherefore Hanun took David's servants, and shaved off the one half of their beards, and cut off their garments in the middle, even to their buttocks, and sent them away. When they told it unto David, he sent to meet them, because the men were greatly ashamed: and the king said, Tarry at Jericho until your beards be grown, and then return. And when the children of Ammon saw that they stank before David, the children of Ammon sent and hired the Syrians of Bethrehob, and the Syrians of Zoba, twenty thousand footmen, and of king Maacah a thousand men, and of Ishtob twelve thousand men. And when David heard of it, he sent Joab, and all the host of the mighty men." They started it by mutilating the beards of David's servants. It was a disgrace, according to the Word of God, to have the beard forcibly mutilated.

James Ward, who lived from 1769 to 1829 published a book entitled "The Defense of the Beard on Scriptural Grounds." Giving 18 reasons why man was bound to grow a beard, unless he was different as to offend the creator and good taste.

Another book appeared in 1860 entitled, "Shaving, a breach of the Sabbath and a hindrance to the spread of the Gospel." It 's amazing how we change, isn't it! If you were to take a pictorial survey from the time of Christ until the present time, of all the preachers of the Gospel, you would find about 80 to 90 percent of them wore beards. Did you know that Charles Haden Spurgeon not only had a beautiful beard, but he demanded that all his deacons have beards. There is a picture of Spurgeon and all his deacons in the office of Rev. John Weaver in Jesup, Georgia. All the deacons have beards. Though the Bible didn't require it, Spurgeon did, concerning his deacons.

Now, What does the beard mean Scripturally? There are four meanings in the Word of God concerning the beard. I want to show them to you:

1. The beard in Scripture means, Life unto God. **Leviticus 14:9**, "**But it shall be on the seventh day, that he shall shave all his hair off his head and his beard and his eyebrows, even all his hair he shall shave off: and he shall wash his clothes, also he shall wash his flesh in water, and he shall be clean.**" Notice here: He shall shave off his beard. Now in one sense

of the word, there was sanitary reasons involved. Here the leper had to shave off his beard. But I believe there was a bigger reason than that.

You will remember that leprosy in the Bible is a type of sin. Leprosy in the Bible indicates the judgment of God. **Numbers 12:1**, "**And Miriam and Aaron spake against Moses because of the Ethiopian woman whom he had married: for he had married an Ethiopian woman.**" Verse 10, "**And the cloud departed from off the tabernacle; and, behold, Miriam became leprous, white as snow: and Aaron looked upon Miriam, and, behold, she was leprous.**" God judged her right there on the spot. Leprosy is a type of sin and judgment. When they took a leper, the first thing they did was to shave off his beard. This indicating that the leprous man was under the judgment of God. In typology, he was in his sins. To have the beard meant life, because dead men do not grow beards. Only living men grow beards.

Thus to have the beard is an indication, Biblically speaking, that we are alive unto God and we're not judged of God nor condemned of Him. We're not dead in trespasses and sins. That is, if we're saved and born again in Christ Jesus.

Let me digress just a moment: God gave men beards and I believe one of the reasons is to distinguish them from women. In the Bible, we are not commanded to wear a beard, but if we do wear a beard, we are commended by God. If we wear a beard, our testimony for Jesus Christ must match up to what we are as born again children of God, if we're truly saved. If we wear a beard, it must be neatly kept and trimmed or God will judge us for it.

The beard in Scripture teaches four simple things:

1. To pull it is to inflict indignity.
2. To have it forcibly cut off or mutilated is a symbol of disgrace.
3. To remove it voluntarily is a sign of mourning.
4. To stroke it is to express the importance of one's words or value or weight.

So what does the beard mean Scripturally?

1. It signifies life unto God.
2. It signifies submission unto God.
3. It signifies separation unto God.
4. It signifies the blessings of God.

And so, the beard first and foremost means "life unto God." If we are

truly saved we are not under condemnation, or judgment or the wrath of God Almighty because we have eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord. You see, how, by symbolical means, we get the Gospel out even through the beard!

2. Not only does the beard signify life unto God, but the beard signifies submission to God. A shaven face signifies submission to man. And let me show it to you. **Genesis 41:14**, "**Then Pharaoh sent and called Joseph, and they brought him hastily out of the dungeon: and he shaved himself, and changed his raiment, and came in unto Pharaoh.**" Let me quote from the Bible Encyclopedia. "To be deprived of a beard was, and still is, in some places of the East, the badge of overbearance and a mark of public disgrace that degraded a person from the ranks of men, to those of slaves and women." So to be clean shaven was a mark of being a slave or a servant of man.

When Joseph was sold as a slave in Egypt and was in the house of Potiphar as his slave, Potiphar's wife accused him wrongfully and he was thrown into prison. There he prophesied how the baker was hanged and the cup bearer (or butler) was set free, and it came to pass.

Then finally that Butler remembered Joseph before Pharaoh and soon Joseph came before Pharaoh to interpret Pharaoh's dream. Now why did Joseph shave himself? Because he was going in unto the man whom he was to be in submission to for the rest of his life. You remember Joseph said repeatedly, There is none higher than me, save Pharaoh. **Genesis 41:40**, "**Thou shalt be over my house, and according unto thy word shall all my people be ruled: only in the throne will I be greater than thou.**" He was the second in command, but he was to be in submission to Pharaoh, and so he shaved off his beard. Indicating now that he was in submission to Pharaoh.

But Biblically speaking, the beard indicates that men are in submission to God ... and I'm not saying that Joseph was not in the will of God when he shaved off his beard, because God put him there. But I am saying that the shaving of the beard in the context of the Bible, indicates the submission to man, whereas the beard indicates submission to God. Neither do I imply that just because a man has a beard he is in submission to God. Many thousands of bearded men are not submitted to God because millions all over the world are lost in sin and without Jesus Christ as their personal

Saviour.

3. A well kept groomed beard means separation unto God. Not only life unto God and submission unto God, but separation unto God.

Leviticus 19:27, "Ye shall not round the corners of your heads, neither shalt thou mar the corners of thy beard." Leviticus 21:5-6, "They shall not make baldness upon their head, neither shall they shave off the corner of their beard, nor make any cuttings in their flesh. They shall be holy unto their God, and not profane the name of their God: for the offerings of the Lord made by fire, and the bread of their God, they do offer: therefore they shall be holy." Now what did God mean when he said, "Not to mar the corners of the beard?" Well, their beard indicated that they were separated unto God.

In ancient times every nationality of men had beards in one form or another, but only the Hebrew had a full beard. (Of course, remember that the Egyptians had a law forbidding beards, and the drawings and sculptures of the Pharaoh's showed false beards.) Those heathen that worshipped Bakus, Baal, Oritall: They had what is known as simply a mustache and goatee. Thus the corners were rounded.

In Bible Times, you could look at a man's beard and tell who he was. If he had just the mustache and goatee, he was a worshipper of Bakus, or Baal, or Oritall. But if he had a full beard, it meant he was a worshipper of Jehovah God.

Of course, this does not stand true today. But this is what God is saying in the Bible: Namely, that their beard was a mark of their separation unto God and they were not to mar that mark. In **Jeremiah** chapter **9** we see that the beard is a sign of life, submission and separation unto God. But the symbol is nothing unless it is backed up by the life. When these Hebrews who had full beards would say, "We're submitted unto God and separated unto Him," and yet they lived lives contrary to that sign, God judged them! God judged them just like they were an idolator because that was the way they were acting. **Jeremiah 9:25, "Behold, the days come, saith the Lord, that I will punish all them which are circumcised with the uncircumcised."** Now that simply means, "Those who follow after the ways and customs of the heathen, who cut off their beards and let their hair grow long." That's why the beard is not only a public testimony, but a private testimony.

Whenever a man sees himself in the mirror with his full beard, he is to remember (if he is saved) that he is alive unto God and is to be submitted unto God and separated unto God. If one's actions denies that symbol, God will judge him. In other words, "Live according to what is on your face!" Because that is saying to the world and to yourself, "I am in submission unto God, and separated unto Him."

4. In **Psalms 133** we see, the beard not only signifies life unto God, submission unto God, and separation unto God, but it also signifies the blessing of God. **Psalms 133**, "**Behold, how good and how pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in unity! It is like the precious ointment upon the head, that ran down upon the beard, even Aaron's beard: that went down to the skirts of his garments; As the dew of Hermon, and as the dew that descended upon the mountains of Zion: for there the Lord commanded the blessing, even life for evermore.**"

So the beard signifies the blessing of God upon the child of God. However; the beard was plucked out, shaved off, or left unattended during a time of great mourning or great calamity. But to have a fine, healthy, anointed beard in Bible times was a symbol of the blessings of God. **II Samuel 19:24**, "**And Mephibosheth the son of Saul came down to meet the king, and had neither dressed his feet, nor trimmed his beard, nor washed his clothes, from the day the king departed until the day he came again in peace.**" Here Mephibosheth was in mourning for David.

Job when he heard how all his children were killed, and all his cattle and everything else was gone. Do you know what he did? **Job 1:20**, "**Then Job arose, and rent his mantle, and shaved his head, and fell down upon the ground, and worshipped.**" He sat in the ash heap and went into mourning.

In Ezra's day the people were sinning against God. **Ezra 9:3**, "**And when I heard this thing, I rent my garment and my mantle, and plucked off the hair of my head and of my beard, and sat down astonished.**" Ezra went into mourning for it was a time of calamity.

Because the beard in the Bible is so highly prized, and is counted as such an honourable thing, God would emphasize how He was going to judge His people. He always emphasized the greatness of that judgment by telling them He was going to cut off their beards.

Isaiah 7:20, "**In the same day shall the Lord shave with a razor that is hired, namely, by them beyond the river, by the king of Assyria, the**

head, and the hair of the feet: and it shall also consume the beard."

We are fixing to see a great Gospel truth right here! What God is saying is, "Alright, you northern tribes, you are sinning against me, and I am going to hire me a razor, namely the King of Assyria, and I am going to shave off your head (all of it) ... And the hair of your feet and it's going to be so severe, I'm going to get your beard also."

God is giving them a sign of His judgment by shaving off their beards. **Isaiah 15:2, "He is gone up to Bajith, and to Dibon, the high places, to weep: Moab shall howl over Nebo, and over Medeba: on all their heads shall be baldness, and every beard cut off."** You see, God's judgment was so severe here that every beard would be cut off.

In Jeremiah the walls of Jerusalem had been destroyed, the Temple had been destroyed, the people were carried away into captivity into Babylon. **Jeremiah 41:5, "That there came certain from Shechem, from Shiloh, and from Samaria, even fourscore men, having their beards shaven, and their clothes rent, and having cut themselves, with offerings and incense in their hand, to bring them to the house of the Lord."**

Now why did they shave off their beards? Because Nebuchadnezzar had destroyed everything and there was a great calamity and judgment. **Jeremiah 48:37, "For every head shall be bald, and every beard clipped: upon all the hands shall be cuttings, and upon the loins sackcloth."** God says this judgment shall be so severe that their head and face shall all be bald. **Ezekiel 5:1, "And thou, son of man, take thee a sharp knife, take thee a barber's razor, and cause it to pass upon thine head and upon thy beard: then take thee balances to weigh, and divide the hair."** Now remember that Ezekiel is prophesying and showing them how severe that plague from God is going to be. This was another judgment.

God says to Ezekiel to cut off his beard, as a symbol of what he was going to do to those people who are left in Jerusalem. He is going to cut them off! Now when God would set forth and indicate the severity of His judgment on His people because of their sin. He did so by doing it under the analogy of cutting off their beards. That which was so prized! That which was so honorable!

That which was esteemed most highly! For to have the beard cut or shaved off forcibly was a sure sign that they were under the judgment of God Almighty! To have the beard plucked out meant that the wrath of God

was coming upon the people or the individual.

Isaiah 50:6, "I gave my back to the smiters, and my cheeks to them that plucked off the hair: I hid not my face from shame and spitting." Isaiah chapters 50 through 53 speaks of the suffering servant of Jehovah, the Lord Jesus Christ.

Jesus was beaten with the cat of nine tails, and He gave His back to it, but also He gave His cheeks to those who took His beard and spitefully and wickedly plucked it out!

So I hasten to say that that was not done just to cause Him more pain, but that was saying, according to custom symbolically, "You are cursed of God and you are under the wrath of God and you are being judged by Him."

And beloved, was not Jesus under the judgment of God's wrath for us? Was He not being judged for us? **I Peter 3:18, "For Christ also hath once suffered for sins, the just for the unjust, that he might bring us to God, being put to death in the flesh, but quickened by the Spirit." Yes, he was! II Corinthians 5:21, "For he hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him."** You see, those who crucified Jesus were doing it wickedly, but the fact was, they were fulfilling prophecy. **Isaiah 53:1-12, "Who hath believed our report? and to whom is the arm of the Lord revealed? For he shall grow up before him as a tender plant, and as a root out of a dry ground: he hath no form nor comeliness; and when we shall see him, there is no beauty that we should desire him. He is despised and rejected of men; a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief: and we hid as it were our faces from him; he was despised, and we esteemed him not. Surely he hath borne our grief's, and carried our sorrows: yet we did esteem him stricken, smitten of God and afflicted. But he was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace was upon him; and with his stripes we are healed. All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way; and the Lord hath laid on him the iniquity of us all. He was oppressed, and he was afflicted, yet he opened not his mouth: he is brought as a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before her shearers is dumb, so he openeth not his mouth. He was taken from prison and from judgment: and who shall declare his generation? for he was cut**

off out of the land of the living: for the transgression of my people was he stricken. And he made his grave with the wicked, and with the rich in his death; because he had done no violence, neither was any deceit in his mouth. Yet it pleased the Lord to bruise him; he hath put him to grief: when thou shalt make his soul an offering for sin, he shall see his seed, he shall prolong his days, and the pleasure of the Lord shall prosper in his hand. He shall see of the travail of his soul, and shall be satisfied: by his knowledge shall my righteous servant justify many; for he shall bear their iniquities. Therefore will I divide him a portion with the great, and he shall divide the spoil with the strong; because he hath poured out his soul unto death: and he was numbered with the transgressors; and he bare the sin of many, and made intercession for the transgressors."

So, if anyone comes up to you and tells you that it is a sin to have a beard, they are trying to be more holy than the Son of God, and that's blasphemy! No man can even begin to match the holiness of Jesus Christ, for we are all sinful by nature. **Psalms 51:5, "Behold, I was shapen in iniquity; and in sin did my mother conceive me." Isaiah 64:6, "But we are all as an unclean thing, and all our righteousnesses are as filthy rags; and we all do fade as a leaf; and our iniquities, like the wind, have taken us away."**

So Jesus gave His back to the smiters, and His cheeks to them that plucked off the hair. The sinless Son of God, suffering the wrath and judgment of God for sinners. He took the shame for us and it is even evident through the symbolical aspect of the plucking out of the beard.

Now, I want to conclude with the purpose of the beard: First of all, let me say this. No human author of the Bible had to prove that God exists. **Psalms 14:1, "The fool hath said in his heart, There is no God."** Many problems are solved with the first verse of the Bible. **Genesis 1:1, "In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth."** So the Bible is not a text book that attempts to prove that God exists. It is accepted naturally as we read about creation and the one who created. Its just accepted, with the exception of the fool who believes there is no God.

As we naturally accept the authenticity of God and the Bible as the Holy Word of God, we must naturally accept the authenticity of the beard and its divine symbol. In the beginning God created... and in that beginning He

created man with a beard, and both these truths are assumed through our natural intellects and beliefs. The person who accepts the Bible as "God breathed" will readily acknowledge the existence of God.

Now my point is this: Just as it is foolish for a man to deny the existence of God, likewise, it is foolish for a man to deny the beard and its purpose as a God given privilege to wear it, if he so chooses. It's just as ridiculous to say that a man has no beard, or he shouldn't wear it if he did have, even though God created it for him, as to say, "There is no God, and people should not believe there is a God even if there is a true and living God." That would be terribly foolish, wouldn't it? So the beard is here to stay!

Have you often wondered why God causes a beard to grow upon a man and not a woman? Do you think for one moment that God caused this because of man's sin? Do you think the beard on a man is there for the purpose of punishing him? **Deuteronomy 22:5**, "**The woman shall not wear that which pertaineth unto a man, neither shall a man put on a woman's garment: for all that do so are abomination unto the Lord thy God.**"

Beards, historically and Biblically have been regarded as a sacred ornament given by God to distinguish men from women. It is a fact that, if you go into an orthodox Synagogue, when the men and women go in, they usually go in separate. The men will go in first and they will be praying as they go in: "I thank thee O God, that thou didst not make me a woman." Then the women come in behind the men and they pray: "I thank thee O God, that thou didst make me according to thy will."

Now the passage in **Deuteronomy 22:5** has been perverted a great deal. This passage was not given to prevent licentiousness or to oppose idolatrous practices, though that could be a part of it. But the main thing was, to maintain the sanctity of that distinction of the sexes, which was established by God's act of the creation of man and woman, and in relation to which Israel was not to sin. Every violation or the wiping out of this distinction between man and woman was unnatural, and therefore, an abomination in the sight of God whereby judgment follows. Now the word "Abomination" means, "A stench in the nostrils of God." And the Hebrew word for clothing here, means more than just man's clothing. It would even include men's ornament, which quickly shows you that it is unBiblical for women to be in the armed forces, though God may let it be through His permissive will.

And likewise, man is not to put on any domestic clothes of women or women's utensils or anything else pertaining to women's dress. That is why I don't carry a purse on my shoulder. That is why I don't have a ring in my ear or a ribbon in my hair. So you see, this verse is directed against any and all who would obliterate the distinction between the sexes. That is why it is a sin for man to have long hair. It destroys the distinction between the sexes. That is why unisex is wrong. **I Corinthians 11:14-15, "Doth not even nature itself teach you, that, if a man have long hair, it is a shame unto him? But if a woman have long hair, it is a glory to her: for her hair is given her for a covering."**

Now in Heathen and pagan worship, they worship a number of gods and goddesses. One of them happens to be Venus. Venus happens to be the goddess of love and pleasure. Sacrifices were offered to Venus by men dressed as a woman, and by women dressed as men. This is known as transvestitism.

They were Transvestites. A beardless man was considered to be effeminate, but the amazing thing is this. Although Venus was a woman goddess, a goddess of love and pleasure, if you were to look at a statue of Venus, you would notice very quickly by her bust that was a woman indeed. But they also made her with a beard. There she stands. A distinguishing characteristic of a man with a beard. Now **Deuteronomy 22:5** is a Divinely instituted distinction between the sexes. This Divinely instituted distinction is to be sacredly observed. All who obliterates it from their life is an abomination to God. And most all who do obliterate it, tend to licentiousness and immorality and confusion.

So here is the purpose of the beard: God gave the man a beard in order to distinguish him from the woman. A man who has a short hair cut and a beard can never be mistaken for a woman, and that is God's purpose.

Have you ever noticed in the New Testament, over and over where the Bible says, **Romans 16:16, "Salute one another with an holy kiss." I Corinthians 16:20, "All the brethren greet you. Greet ye one another with an holy kiss." II Corinthians 13:12, "Greet one another with an holy kiss." I Thessalonians 5:26, "Greet all the brethren with an holy kiss." I Peter 5:14, "Greet ye one another with a kiss of charity."** How do you think they did that? It was the kiss of the Old Testament. Men kissing each other's beards.

If someone says, "Well, what you have shown me is in the Old Testament." Then they are saying to me in essence that the Old Testament is not the Word of God, or that the Old Testament is not applicable today. When they say that, they are going to have to throw away most of the New Testament because 75% of the New Testament is the Old Testament. Now I am not saying we live under law, for we live under grace. **Ephesians 2:8-9, "For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God. Not of works, lest any man should boast."**

And so, God created the beard for man to wear, and as long as he keeps it trimmed and groomed and looking neat, he won't be judged by God in that respect. However; God's judgment will not keep him from growing a beard anytime he desires for God created the beard for man to do as he wants to with it. For the law of creation is a stabilizing law that will never change. God's creative act is an eternal act. That is why man can only be saved by Grace through faith. It is not of himself, for if it be of himself, he would boast to high heaven like the Pharisees of old claiming he did something to save himself. **Ephesians 2:10, "For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them."** The two little words, "we are" introduces us to something very personal in this verse. If we are, then what are we? It doesn't say, Christ is or Paul was or Matthew wrote or John said, or Moses did but we are. If we are then what are we?

You see, what we are by nature we are as a result of our birth, home, education, abilities, habits, things we have seen, heard, read, and even thought. This very moment you are by nature what your life has made you naturally speaking. Your total environment and habitat makes you the product you are. Our basic habitat is that we were all born in the human race which makes us sinners by nature. **Romans 3:23, "For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God."** **Psalms 51:5, "Behold, I was shapen in iniquity; and in sin did my mother conceive me."**

Romans 3:10, "As it is written, There is none righteous, no, not one." **Isaiah 64:6-7, "But we are all as an unclean thing, and all our righteousnesses are as filthy rags; and we all do fade as a leaf; and our iniquities, like the wind, have taken us away. And there is none that calleth upon thy name, that stirreth up himself to take hold of thee: for thou hast hid thy face from us, and hast consumed us, because of our**

iniquities." Man by nature will not call on God to save him, for his nature does not call for it. Therefore, unless the Holy Spirit comes and convicts him of his lost condition and gives him saving faith to believe, he will get religious and try to do everything he can by good works to save himself apart from the new birth. **John 3:1-18, "There was a man of the Pharisees, named Nicodemus, a ruler of the Jews: The same came to Jesus by night, and said unto him, Rabbi, we know that thou art a teacher come from God: for no man can do these miracles that thou doest, except God be with him. Jesus answered and said unto him, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God. Nicodemus saith unto him, How can a man be born when he is old? can he enter the second time into his mother's womb, and be born? Jesus answered, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God. That which is born of the flesh is flesh; and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit. Marvel not that I said unto thee, Ye must be born again. The wind bloweth where it listeth, and thou hearest the sound thereof, but canst not tell whence it cometh, and whither it goeth: so is every one that is born of the Spirit. Nicodemus answered and said unto him, How can these things be? Jesus answered and said unto him, Art thou a master of Israel, and knowest not these things? Verily, verily, I say unto thee, We speak that we do know, and testify that we have seen; and ye receive not our witness. If I have told you earthly things, and ye believe not, how shall ye believe, if I tell you of heavenly things? And no man hath ascended up to heaven, but he that came down from heaven, even the Son of man which is in heaven. And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of man be lifted up: That whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have eternal life. For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life. For God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world; but that the world through him might be saved. He that believeth on him is not condemned: but he that believeth not is condemned already, because he hath not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God." Ephesians 2:10, "**