

The Beard, Its Historical and Biblical Significance

by John Weaver

The sermon explores the historical and biblical significance of the beard, arguing that it is not a requirement for being a Christian, but rather a public and private testimony of one's faith.

Duration: 1:12:00

Scripture: Leviticus 21:1-6, Psalm 133:1, Matthew 6:33

Topics: "Biblical Manhood", "Outward Appearance"

Description

In this sermon, the preacher focuses on the significance of unity among brethren. He urges the audience to judge righteous judgment, emphasizing the importance of looking beyond outward appearances and instead focusing on the heart. The preacher then addresses the topic of beards, stating that they are not prohibited in the Word of God but are actually encouraged. He argues that the taboo against beards, especially among pastors, is man-made and not from God. The sermon concludes with a reference to Isaiah 50:6, where Jesus willingly endured the humiliation of having his beard plucked off, highlighting the importance of respecting and valuing one's beard.

Transcript

Leviticus chapter 21, verses 1 through 6, and I'm going to begin then on the historical and the biblical significance of the beard. I want you to see this from the Word of God, and then I want you to think concerning it. Leviticus chapter 21, beginning with verse 1. 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, for his father, for his son, for his daughter, for his brother, and for his sister, a virgin that is nigh unto him, which hath 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." Now, this passage is dealing with the priest. I want you to note, if you would, God specifically forbids the priest, therefore, to make any cuttings in his flesh, to make a tonsure or a roundness on his

head, that is purposefully, and he also forbids him to round the corners of his beard.

Now, not only is this true of the priest in general, or particular, it is also true of the people in general. For instance, look back in Leviticus 19, verses 26-28. You shall not eat anything with the blood, neither shall you use enchantment, nor observe tithes.

You shall not round the corners of your heads, neither shalt thou mar the corners of thy beard. You shall not make any cuttings in your flesh for the dead, nor print any marks upon you. I am the Lord." It might interest you to know that tattooing is forbidden in the Bible, as well as mutilating the beard or mutilating the hair on the head.

Now, let me begin by telling you what I am not doing this morning. First of all, I am not trying to defend my beard. My beard does not need defending, so I am not trying to give a defense for something that I have had for 15 years.

Secondly, I am not trying to bind my convictions upon your conscience. What your responsibility is, is to search the word of God for yourself and to make application from that word in your own life. Certainly, as you hear the word taught this morning, you ought to consider it and make application as well.

Thirdly, I am not saying that a man who has a beard is more holy than one who does not have a beard, and a man who does not have one is less holy than a man who does have one. I am not saying that at all. But I am saying that you and I must deal with the scriptures that God has given us concerning the beard.

Now, let me tell you what I want to ask you to do. First of all, I want to ask you to do what our Lord says in John 7, verse 24. I want to ask you to judge righteous judgment.

Now, there is a difference between judging righteous judgment and judging unrighteous judgment. In unrighteous judgment, we go by appearance. The Bible tells us that the Lord does not look on the outward form of man when he looks on the heart.

Most of us just simply look on the outward form of man. When we judge by appearance, let me give you an illustration. If we say, well, you know how it is, just a clean-shaven face looks better, well, I tell you what, let's go down to the post office and look through all the wanted posters.

You will be amazed that 90-95% of the individuals on the wanted posters have clean-shaven faces. Therefore, we could conclude, if we are judging by appearance, that all who have clean-shaven faces are criminals. Or at least most of them are.

Which, of course, that would be an unrighteous judgment. But I am saying we are not to judge by appearance, but we are to judge righteous judgment. You say, on the other hand, then, well, a beard oftentimes is associated with hippies.

And that is certainly the truth. It has been like that for many years. But that does not mean that a beard is it wrong in and of itself.

Let's take a lot of the other doctrines in the Bible. Let's take, for instance, baptism. We do know that there are individuals who teach baptismal regeneration.

That is, that your baptism saves you. Are we going to throw out the doctrine of baptism just because some wrongly use it and pervert it? Let's take the doctrine of the Lord's Table. The Roman Catholic Church

takes the Lord's Table and makes it transubstantiation.

They say that the bread and the wine actually become the body and the blood of Christ, which is certainly wrong and incorrect and unbiblical. Are we going to stop absorbing the Lord's Table just simply because someone abuses it and misuses it? Premarital sex is wrong. It is fornication.

It is whoremongering. Are we going to throw out marital sex just because some abuse it? Well, of course not. And likewise, just because there are individuals that have abused the beard does not mean that you just simply throw it out.

Incidentally, let me tell you what the going thing is today, and it has been really for twenty years now. The going thing is what is known as the unisex look. Have you ever seen barber shops or beauty shops with the word unisex on it? Which means that they just cater to making man and woman look alike as well.

So the thing today is the unisex look. It is certainly not the beard. Let me tell you one thing about a beard.

One thing about a man with a beard is this. You can never, ever confuse him with a woman, because usually speaking women do not have beards. Now, there are several things I want to force you to do this morning if that word can be used rhetorically.

What do I want to force you to do? First of all, I want to force you to learn to think biblically. In other words, most of us on any subject that you throw out, we automatically have preconceived ideas and we automatically say, well, I think, or in my opinion, or whatever, and we give forth our arguments. What we want to do is to learn to think biblically, this is what God says about it.

The second thing I would like to force you to do is to see that not only is a beard not prohibited in the word of God, but it is in reality enjoined in the word of God. Thirdly, I want to point out that the problem today, especially with pastors, is that a beard is a taboo. Not God's taboo, but it is man's taboo.

We've got to come back to the place where our consciences are bound only to the word of God. Let me just make one statement, and I'm not going to get into this a great deal. If you study Romans 14 and 1 Corinthians 8, you learn a great deal about Christian liberty.

There are a great many things in there. The Apostle Paul tells us that we have liberty of conscience to do. By that, I do not mean sin.

No man has the right to sin. Sinning is not liberty, sinning is licentiousness. But when Paul talks about Christian liberty, he's talking about things that are not sinful in and of themselves, and he's also talking about things on which men's consciences do not uniformly agree.

And a beard, certainly, is one of those things. Men do not universally agree on the beard. In fact, I know preachers who will tell you, and I have heard them with my own ears, say that it is downright ungodly for a man to have a beard, which is a false statement, an unbiblical statement.

But I'm just simply pointing out that there are some who disagree, but they have not studied the word of God, I can assure you right now. But in Christian liberty, the word of God warns us not to be a stumbling block to the weaker brother. The interesting thing is, the word stumbling block there is skandalos.

It's where we get our English word, scandal, from. And the skandalos was actually a trapstick. It was a bit stick that was set on a trap that the animal triggered, and when the animal triggered it, the cage fell down

upon the animal and he was ensnared, he was trapped, he was scandalized, so to speak.

God warns us not to be a scandal or a stumbling block to our brothers. However, you have to read in the context, and to be a stumbling block, you have to encourage someone to do the same thing that you're doing without having your knowledge. That is what the word offense means in the Bible.

We have taken the word offense and we have perverted it and misused it. We hear someone say, well, I'm offended at that. What they literally mean when they say that is, I don't like it, or it upsets me, or it makes me mad.

But when the Bible uses the term offense, that we're not to offend our brother, we're not to cause him to stumble, it means that we're not to encourage him to do the same thing that we're doing without having our knowledge. In fact, I had a woman come to me one time when I first grew my beard, and she said, I'm offended at your beard. I said, lady, you can't be offended at my beard, because you couldn't do what I was doing even if you had my knowledge.

So you have to understand what biblical offense is. The real problem is this. Our consciences from our youth have been misinformed and mistaught.

One of the hardest things that you as a Christian will ever do is to re-instruct and re-teach your own conscience in things that you study from the Word of God you find not to be sin, and not to be wicked, and not to be wrong, because your conscience will then begin to scream and you'll have to say, just shut up, I'm not going to listen to you. God's Word says it's not sin, and I'm going to listen to God's Word. There is not a preacher, there is not a Christian, there is not a scholar around that can show one verse in the Bible that is against a beard, not one verse.

By the way, let me point out that a beard, just to begin with, is a public and a private testimony. You say, what in the world do you mean by that? Well, I mean it's a private testimony every time you look in the mirror, because you remember and recognize why God gave you that beard. And it can be a public testimony, because I have had a tremendously large number of individuals ask me about it, especially when I first started growing the beard about fifteen years ago.

I would be sitting in a restaurant and I would have people come up and ask me about the beard and I would have an opportunity to sit down and witness to them for thirty or forty minutes. But now, let me point out, to begin with this morning, the historical significance of the beard. Do you realize that you can look at history and see the rise and fall of Biblicism, that is, the rise and fall of the influence of the Bible upon men and women, or the lack of influence of the Bible upon men and women, by studying the beard? It's an interesting phenomenon.

Did you know that Egypt was the only nation in antiquity that forbade by law a man to wear a beard? And interestingly enough, the symbolism of Egypt is that it is everything that is against God and against the Bible. Egypt signifies humanism personified. But Egypt was the only nation that forbade by law a man to wear a beard.

But isn't it interesting, and I don't know if you have ever noticed it or not, but on all the sculptors and on all the steles and on all of the things that show the pharaohs, it always shows them with a false beard. Now, when I say false beard, I've got material here if you want to see some of this. I don't know that I've got one large enough just simply to hold up to see.

But you will see a picture of a beard coming down from the pharaoh's chin, and then you will see the string going up around his ears where the beard is tied on. Now, why in the world would they forbid by law for a man to wear a beard, and yet at the same time, when the pharaoh's sculptor was being made, it was always made with a false or a fake beard? Well, I think you will see that just a little bit later. Let me go ahead and point something else out.

Usually, any false god that you see represented in any of the hieroglyphics or any of the steles or any of the artifacts, usually the false gods are always clean-shaven. Let me tell you what the Council of Carthage in 200 A.D., a church council, said concerning immodest dress. Are you listening? Ladies, I want you to make sure you hear this.

This is immodest dress in 200 A.D. The Council of Carthage said, 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. So the early church said a man with long hair and a clean-shaven face would be immodestly dressed. Tertullian, the early church father, went on to write his treatise on the beard and said the main purpose was to keep down lust.

Interestingly enough, all of the early church fathers spoke concerning the beard. The fourth Council of Carthage in 398 A.D. gave this decree. The clergyman shall not let his hair grow nor remove his beard.

So there were church laws that indicated that a pastor especially was obligated to have a beard. In fact, all men had beards in Bible time. When the barbarian hordes took Rome, they had long hair and they had clean-shaven faces.

When those barbarian hordes took over Rome, the Roman church was what we called Romanized, and that is when the priests began to have a clean-shaven face and they began to wear the tonsure, which is the round bald spot that is shaved in the back of their head. Incidentally, that was also in worship of the sun god. But during this particular time when the barbarians took over Rome, when Rome fell, you can see the effect of humanism because men then had long hair and clean-shaven faces.

Then came the Reformation, and when the Reformation came on, there was a resurgence of biblical truth. If you will study and look at the Reformers, the Reformers all had beards and short hair. That continued up until the period of the Enlightenment.

When the Enlightenment came in, which was nothing more than the Renaissance, which was humanism, the short hair and the beards went back out and the long hair and clean-shaven faces came in. In fact, that was during the French Revolution. In fact, it affected our own colonies because George Washington, the father of our country, wore what was his hairstyle? Someone tell me.

Not a wig, a pigtail. He wore a pigtail, and that was the effect of the Enlightenment even upon our country. But later on, after Washington, beards came back in and the long hair went out, and up until about the Civil War, the men had beards again.

Look at Robert E. Lee, look at Stonewall Jackson, look at Jeb Stuart, look at all the men during that time, and you will see they had short hair and they had nice flowing beards. Now, that continued up until the turn of the century. At the turn of the century, when German liberalism and modernism came in, it went right back then to the long hair and the clean-shaven face, and it's been all that time up until now.

In fact, today you have the unisex look. Now, that's just a brief history concerning the beard, showing the rise and fall of it. Let me just begin now by telling you, secondly, the beard is assumed in Scripture.

Now, the beard is like the doctrine of God. The doctrine you never find in the Bible where the Bible tries to prove the existence of God. The Bible just assumes God is.

In the beginning, God created the heaven and the earth. And so likewise in the Bible, the beard is assumed. It is true there is no definite command to grow the beard.

In fact, you don't have to have a command to grow the beard. The beard on a man is going to grow regardless. But although there is no definite command to grow a beard, there are definite commands to regulate that beard.

The interesting thing is this. Those Hebrew rulers were called elders. The Hebrew word for elder is zakin, and it came from the Hebrew word zakon, which means beard.

In other words, the word elder literally means bearded ones. The elder got his name from his beard. So if a pastor is an elder, in which the Bible teaches that, then of course it has reference to a beard.

Now, what about the value of the beard? Don't lose me, because we're fixing to start turning into Bibles and Scriptures like you wouldn't believe in just a moment. What about the value of the beard? Let me give you several quotes. For instance, here is a quote from the Universal Encyclopedia.

The Semites looked upon the beard as the glory and the pride of man. Similarly, another statement is, the glory of the face is the beard. Now, I want you to listen very carefully as I give you a paragraph from Calumet's Dictionary of the Bible, and listen to what he said.

It's interesting, and by the way, if you want to look through this, I only have about 15, 20, 30 sheets just dealing with this subject. But listen as I quote from Calumet's Dictionary of the Bible. Among them, that is the Semites, the Hebrews, it is more infamous for anyone to have his beard cut off than among us to be publicly whipped or branded with a hot iron.

So the worst thing that you could do now to a Hebrew or to a Semite was to cut off his beard. Now listen to it. Many men in that country would prefer death to such a punishment.

The wives kiss their husbands' beards and children their fathers' beards when they come to salute them. The men kiss one another's beards reciprocally when they salute in the streets or come from a journey. Now, wait a minute.

Let me stop there. I told you a while ago that there are some things in the Bible that you can't understand without understanding the significance of the beard. Now, here is a statement from the Bible Dictionary saying that women kiss their husbands' beard, children kiss their fathers' beard, men kiss each other's beards as they met in the street, that is, friends, close loved ones, or when they came from a long journey.

Can anyone think of any scriptures in the New Testament that this would relate to? What is one that everybody asks the preacher about all the time? Greet one another with a holy kiss. Did you know that is found in Romans 16.16? It is found in 1 Corinthians 16.20? It is found in 2 Corinthians 13.12? 1 Thessalonians 5.26 and 1 Peter 5.14? There are five or six different scriptures that say to greet one another with a holy kiss. How did they do that? They did it by kissing the beard.

That was the custom. That was the display of loving affection in Bible times. Now, I continue.

They say that the beard is the perfection of the human face, which would be more disfigured by having this cut off than by losing the nose. They admire and envy those who have fine beards. They pray and do but see, they cry, that beard.

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, what disadvantage is this, they say, to such a beard? How much such a beard is to be pitied? If they would correct anyone's mistakes, they will tell him, for shame on your beard. Does not the confusion that follows such an action light on your beard? If they entreat anyone or use oaths in affirming or denying anything, they say, I conjure you by your beard, or by the life of your beard to grant me this, or by your beard this is or this is not so.

They say further in the way of acknowledgment, may God preserve your blessed beard. May God pour out his blessing upon your beard. In comparison, this is more valuable than one's beard.

Notice, if you would please, they took oaths affirming or denying anything on their beard. I conjure you by your beard, or by your beard this or by your beard that. Do you realize that there are oaths today based upon beards? For instance, how many of you have read the story, The Three Little Pigs? Come on, everybody has read The Three Little Pigs.

Now, the big bad wolf said, I want to huff and puff and blow your house down, and what did the little pig say? Not by the hair of my chinny-chin-chin. The words, here's an oath based upon a beard. By my beard, says the little pig, you're not going to do this.

So I'm saying, all this is filtered down even in our society today. This serves to illustrate, if you understand this, several passages of scripture. Do you remember in 1 Samuel chapter 21, and especially in verse 13, 1 Samuel chapter 21, David had gotten into a Philistine city.

He was fleeing from Saul, and all of a sudden, the men began to say, hey, is not this the man that is said, that's 1 Samuel 19, is this not the man that is said, Saul has slain his thousands, but David has slain his tens of thousands? And David began to fear, and someone tell me what David did. What did David do when he feared for his life when he was there in that Philistine city? What did he do? Anyone know? It's chapter 21, I told you wrongly. 1 Samuel 21 verse 13, here it is, and he changed his behavior before them, and feigned himself mad in their hands, and scrambled on the doors of the gate, and let his spittle fall down upon his beard.

So David started drawing and scratching on the walls, and at the same time, he spit and let the spit run down on his beard. And look what happens, verse 14, then said Achish unto his servants, Lord, you see the man is mad. Wherefore then have you brought him to me? Have I need a madman that you have brought me this fellow to play the madman in my presence? Shall this fellow come into my house? Achish the king says, a man's got to be insane to mess up his beard like that.

He's spitting all over his beard, and he's scrambling at the wall. Now, you can't understand that unless you understand the significance of the beard in the Bible. And so David escaped from Achish by playing insane, and one of the ways he indicated he was insane, he then let that spittle fall down upon his own beard.

Now, I mentioned before, when anyone wished to express the value of something in the Bible, they would always say that it is more valuable than a man's beard, or the wife would say it's more valuable than my husband's beard. Now, the beard in the Bible is always a badge of honor, dignity, and respectability. I want you to look in your Bibles to the book of Proverbs, chapter 20, and verse 29.

Proverbs 20, verse 29. Here's what Scripture says, "...the glory of young men is their strength, and the beauty of old men is their gray head." Now, let me tell you how the Hebrew puts it. The ornament of young men is their strength, and the honor of old is the gray hairs, or the hanging of the gray from the chin.

In other words, the honor of old men is their gray beard, is what it's talking about. Not just their gray hair on their head, but the gray hair on their chin as well. So the glory of a young man is his strength.

The glory of an old man is that gray hair that's on his face. Now, let me tell you just four things very quickly about a beard, and I want you to listen to it, especially the first one. To pull the beard is to inflict an indignity.

Now, if you want to upset a man with a beard, just pull it. Not just because it hurts, it does indeed hurt, but it is to put an indignity upon him. So to pull the beard is to inflict an indignity.

To have the beard forcibly cut off or mutilated is a symbol of disgrace. To remove the beard voluntarily is a symbol of mourning, and we're going to look at that in the Bible. To stroke it in preference to utter something is to utter seeming words of weight.

Did you know that not only in history, but in the Bible, battles have been fought over a man's beard? Entire battles. Let me tell you about one in history. In the year 1764, a pretender to the Persian throne by the name of Kerim Khan sent ambassadors to Mer Mahina, the Prince of Bengerbeg on the Persian Gulf, and demanded tribute of him.

But in return, he cut off the ambassador's beards. Kerim Khan was so enraged at this that he went the next year with a large army to make war upon this prince, and he took the city and almost the whole territory to avenge the insult. This was 1764.

Now, I want you to look back in your Bibles to 2 Samuel 10, because it has not only happened down through history, recent history, it has happened in the Bible. In 2 Samuel 10, beginning with verse 1, look at it. It came to pass after this that the king and the children of Ammon died, and Hanun his son reigned in his stead.

Then said David, I will show kindness unto Hanun the son of Nahash, as his father showed 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 honor thy father, that he hath sent comforters unto thee? Have not David rather sent his servants unto thee, to search the city, to spy it out, and 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 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 Zuba, twenty thousand footmen, and the king of Maacah a thousand men, and of Ishtar twelve thousand men. And when David heard of it, he sent Joab and the host of the mighty men. Now let me just stop right there.

The rest of the story is this, that David and his servants wipe out all of these Syrians. They just take them off the face of the earth. But I want you to know what started the whole war.

David said he's going to comfort Hanun, because his father died. And David sends his servants over there, and ambassadors, and David says, Look, I'm sorry that your father's died. If there's anything that I can do, let me know, and we'll do it.

Well, Hanun's counselor said, Listen, do you think that we're stupid? We know what David's doing. David doesn't care anything about you. David doesn't care anything about your father.

He's sending these men to spy out the land. So instead of taking David's ambassadors at face value at what the real reason David sent them for, they took them and they shaved off one half their beards. And then they cut their garments in two at the buttocks.

Now, the men were so embarrassed and so humiliated, they would not even come back to Jerusalem. Now, let me ask you a question. If you were out downtown Waycross, Georgia, or downtown Atlanta, Georgia, and you had a beard, and someone took you and forcibly cut off half your beard, and then stripped you naked, and left you in the middle of the street for everybody to see, which would embarrass you the most? I believe I know it probably wouldn't be the fact that your beard would be mutilated.

It would be that your hiney was showing. But I want you to know, that which embarrassed these men was not that their hiney was showing, but their beard had been mutilated. Look what David said.

Verse 4, Wherefore, a nun took David's servants, and shaved off the one half of their beards, and cut off their garment in the middle, even to their buttocks, and sent them away, when they told her 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. It was the fact that their beards were mutilated that so embarrassed them, and so insulted them.

And here an entire war was fought in the Bible, just because someone shaved off some men's beards half-way. An interesting thing is this. James Ward, who lived from 1769 to 1859, published a pamphlet entitled, here's the title of it, A Defense of the Beard on Scriptural Grounds, giving eighteen reasons why man was bound to grow a beard unless he was indifferent as to offending the Creator and good taste.

And then in 1860, a book was published, and by the way, I don't have this book. If anybody ever finds it, I want it. But here's the book that was published, here's the title of it, Shaving, A Breach of the Sabbath and a Hindrance to the Spread of the Gospel.

I'd really like to see what he said in the book. But interestingly enough, if you will take a pictorial review of all the men of God from the Apostles until this century, you will find that ninety to ninety-five percent of them had beards. Let me tell you something else.

Not only did Charles Haddon Spurgeon have a beard, but he demanded that all of his preachers and all of his deacons have beards. And if you have a set of Metropolitan Tabernacle, if you'll pull down one of the

volumes on the cover jacket, you'll see all of Spurgeon's deacons standing there, their pictures on one of those volumes. I forget which volume number it is.

But if you look at his deacons, you'll notice every one of them have full beards. So Spurgeon then insisted that his deacons have beards. Now, since I've given you this historical background, I know that you're wanting to ask this question.

What, then, is the meaning of the beard? I want to give you this. There are at least four things that the beard means. First of all, the beard means life unto God.

If you will look in your Bibles to the book of Leviticus chapter 13, just several verses I think that you will understand as I read them. Leviticus chapter 13, beginning in verse 29. Here you have the law concerning the leper, or at least part of this law.

We're not going to look at all of it. But in Leviticus chapter 13, verse 29, if a man or woman have a plague upon the head or the beard, verse 30, then the priest shall see the plague, and behold, if it be inside deeper than the skin, and there being it a yellow thin hair, then the priest shall pronounce him unclean, it is a dry skull, even a leprosy upon the head or beard. Verse 33, he shall be shaven, but the skull shall he not shave, and the priest shall shut him up that hath the skull seven days more.

The man that had leprosy was shaven. Why was the man that had leprosy shaven? Because leprosy in the Bible is a picture of sin and death and judgment. Do you remember when Miriam murmured against Moses? What did God smite Miriam with, someone tell me? Leprosy.

And she had to stay without the camp. Now, it is true Moses intervened for her and interceded, and God healed her and restored her. But God said if she spit in her father's face, she'd have to stay out of the camp seven days, let her stay out at least that long.

God healed her, but the judgment was God smote her with leprosy. What about Gehazi? When he went and took wrongfully from Naaman the Syrian, and he lied concerning what Elisha had commanded him, and when he got back from hiding the money and the garments, Elisha said, Went not my heart with thee? When that man turned around in his chariot, he said, Behold, the leprosy that clave unto Naaman shall clave unto thee. And Gehazi was smitten with that leprosy.

Leprosy in the Bible is a type of the judgment of God. Leprosy in the Bible was a sickness that could not be cured. A leper in the Bible was sure of certain death.

It was like age today. You get age, you die, and that's all there is to it. There is no remedy for it.

And so the beard, which was a symbol of life, was shaved. Not just for sanitary reasons, not just that that individual was under the death sentence. You see, only live men can grow beards.

Dead men do not grow beards. So a beard is a symbol of life. It means that we have life under God.

Secondly, a shaven face meant submission to man and being a slave to man. Look in your Bibles to the book of Genesis chapter 41. Genesis 41.

Do you remember when Joseph had been sold into slavery into Egypt? And then he was in the house of one of the chief stewards, Potiphar's house, and of course his wife lied about him, and Joseph was thrown in prison wrongfully. And Joseph was in there and he was trying to get out and praying about getting out.

Well, God, of course, got Joseph out.

And God arranged it where Joseph would be second in command in all of Egypt. Now, note what happens in Genesis chapter 41, and note verse 14. And 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.

Now, why did Joseph shave himself? Why did he shave his beard off? Because Joseph was going to be in submission to Pharaoh. Pharaoh said that you will be second. I'm going to be number one.

And in the Bible, in New Testament times, in Bible times, for a man to have a clean shaven face indicated that he was a slave, that he was indicative of a servile attitude or in a servile position. Listen to what the biblical encyclopedia says, and I quote, to be deprived of a beard was and still is in some places of the East the badge of servility, a mark of infamy, that degraded a person from the ranks of men to those of slaves and women. I'm sorry, ladies, that was a good quote, but that's what it said.

But notice it degraded a man to the position of being either a slave or a woman. So first of all, the beard indicates life. Secondly, the lack of a beard indicates servility, slavery, submission to man.

Thirdly, the well-kept groomed beard meant separation unto God. Now, what do I mean by separation unto God? Here it is. All of these other nations were idolatrous.

They worshipped idols. God demanded a full, well-rounded beard. Do you remember we read in Leviticus 19, verses 26-28, it said the priest was not to mar the corners of his beard? And then in Leviticus 19, or chapter 19, verses 26-28, once again the people were not to mar the corners of their beard.

To mar the corners meant to shave their beard right here. If this was shaved right here, you would have in essence a mustache and a goatee. Do you realize that if you had a mustache and a goatee, in Bible times, it meant that you were a worshipper of Oratol, or Bacchus, or Baal.

In other words, in Bible times, you could look at a man's beard and tell who his God was. The heathen were to be punished. They were the ones who rounded their beards.

They were not worshippers of Jehovah. Now, look in your Bibles, first of all, to the book of Jeremiah chapter 9. I'm going to show you this in three different places, and I trust that some of your Bibles have marginal references anyhow. But I want you to see what the Bible is talking about.

Jeremiah 9, verses 25 and 26. Now, look at it, Jeremiah 9, verse 25, "...Behold, the days come, saith the Lord, that I will punish all them who are circumcised with the uncircumcised." Now, we can identify with that. We know that the uncircumcised are those who are not in the covenant, and those that are in the covenant, the circumcised, those that are wicked, God says, I'm going to punish them along with the heathen wicked alike.

Verse 26, "...Egypt, and Judah, Edom, and the children of Ammon, and Moab, and all that are in the utmost corners." What does it say? What do you have? Margaret? Oh, "...having the corners of their hair pulled." So, when he says he's going to judge those that are in the utmost corners, literally he's talking about those who round the corners of their beard. If you will look over in chapter 25, and verse 23, you'll see exactly the same thing. Jeremiah 25, verse 23, "...Dedan, and Timah, and Buz, and all that are in the utmost corners are all that round the corners," that is, of their beard.

When you round the corners of your beard, it's indicative of idolatry. Look in chapter 49, and verse 23 of Jeremiah. Jeremiah 49, verse 23, it's the same phrase, same Hebrew construction, "...and their camel shall be a booty, and the multitude of their camel a spoil, and I will scatter into all the winds them that are in the utmost corners," that is, them that round the corners, "...and I will bring their calamity from all sides, and thereof saith the Lord." So, God is talking about judging those who round the corners of their beards.

The reason he judges them is because they are idolaters. Because God forbade a man to mar the corners of his beard. So, when a man had a well-kept, groomed beard, one that was a full beard, it was indicative of the fact that he was not an idolater, that he was separated to Jehovah God.

A full beard meant the blessings of God upon his people. Look in your Bibles to Psalm 133. A full beard meant the blessings of God upon his people.

Psalm 133, and let's read the entire psalm, since it's only three verses, and I say this because I think you will see the significance of this. He says, "...behold how good and how pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in unity." I'm talking about brotherly love now. "...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 forevermore." So, here we're talking about the blessings of God, and when God is showing you His blessings, He says, "...it's like the ointment that's poured out upon the top of Aaron's head, that went down his hair, even to his beard, and then flowed down into his garments." So, the beard that was plucked out, the beard that was shaved off, the beard that was left unattended, was indicative of great mourning or calamity or the judgment of God. Now, the full beard meant the blessings of God, just like it's talking about here. But when that beard was plucked out, when that beard was left unattended, when that beard was cut off, it meant either mourning, calamity, or the judgment of God.

Now, I want to show you this in the Bible. I want you to follow it with me. Turn in your Bibles, first of all, to 2 Samuel, chapter 19.

I've made a statement from the Scripture, and I want to prove it from the Scripture. 2 Samuel, chapter 19. You'll remember Mephibosheth.

Mephibosheth was the seed of Jonathan. You'll remember David took Mephibosheth into his family, and he took care of Mephibosheth as his own son. But Mephibosheth was of the seed and the lineage of Saul.

Of course, Jonathan was Saul's son. And so now Absalom, David's own son, has run David off the throne and is trying to kill him. And Ziba, who was Mephibosheth's servant, he comes and he lies to David about Mephibosheth.

And Mephibosheth says, Now shall the kingdom be restored to me in the house of my father. And the reason Ziba lies about Mephibosheth is he wants all of the property. Well, when David comes back home, Mephibosheth, someone can tell me what his problem was.

One of his problems, I should say. He was what? He was lame. He couldn't walk.

He was lame on both feet. So David is coming back home. Now Absalom is killed.

His army is scattered. Look in verse 24, 2 Samuel 19. 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 that the king departed until the day he came again in peace.

Now Ziba had lied about Mephibosheth. Mephibosheth was in mourning because David had been driven from the throne. And what did Mephibosheth do to indicate he was in mourning? He neither dressed his feet, that is he did not take care of his lame feet, nor did he trim his beard, nor did he wash his clothes.

He was in mourning because of what happened. Look in your Bibles to the book of Job chapter 1. You remember, of course, in Job how Job had lost everything, plus his sons and his daughters. They were all killed in Job 1 and verse 20.

The Bible says, Then Job arose, and rent his mantle, and shaved his head, not just the hair on his head, but his beard as well, and fell down upon the ground and worshipped. See, when a man shaved his beard in the Bible, or failed to keep his beard, it indicated there was a great calamity or there was a period of mourning. Look in your Bibles to the book of Ezra, Ezra chapter 9. Back just a few books, Ezra chapter 9, let's read the first three verses.

Notice, if you would, what Ezra did to indicate his mourning and the calamity of the sins of the people. Ezra 9 verse 1, Now when these things were done, the princes came to me, saying, The people of Israel, and the priests, and the Levites, have not separated themselves from the people of the lands, doing according to their abominations, even of the Canaanites, the Hittites, the Perizzites, the Jebusites, the Ammonites, the Moabites, the Egyptians, and the Amorites. For they have taken of their daughters for themselves and for their sons, so that the holy seed have mingled themselves with the people of those lands.

Yea, the hand of the princes and the rulers have been chief in this trespass. Now watch this, the godly have been intermarrying with the ungodly, and they are telling Ezra what happens. Verse 3, Ezra said, And when I heard this thing, I rent my garment and my mantle, and plucked off the hair of my head, and off my beard, and sat down astonished.

Ezra said, I was so hurt, I went into a shock and calamity, and a period of mourning, and I shaved my head and I shaved my beard. Now look in the book of Isaiah chapter 7, Isaiah 7, verses in the Bible concerning a beard, but there are a multitude of them. Verse 20, now let me, before I read this verse, let me back up.

I told you that the shaving of the beard meant either a period of mourning or calamity or thirdly, it meant the judgment of God. Watch what God says, Isaiah 7 and verse 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.

Now God says, I'm going to judge my people. I'm going to shave them with a razor that is hired, and my razor is going to be the Assyrian empire. And God says, I'm going to shave them so closely, it will not only consume the hair of their head and the hair that is on their legs and on their feet, it will even consume their beard.

So when God wants to tell a people that he's going to judge them, the way he does so is saying I'm going to take your most prized possession. I'm going to take your beard and I'm going to shave it off. I'm going to

mutilate it.

You will know my judgment, says God, because when I get through with you, I'll make you clean shaven. Now look at Isaiah 15 and verse 2. Isaiah 15 verse 2. Once again, indicative of the judgment of God. The scripture says, he is going up to Bajeth and to Diabon, 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. Now he's talking about judgment.

In their streets they shall gird themselves with sackcloth on the top of their houses. In their streets everyone shall howl, weeping abundantly. Why? Because of the judgment of God.

And God says, I'm going to judge you and the way that he proves he's going to judge them, he said every beard is going to be cut off. Look in chapter 41 of Jeremiah. Jeremiah chapter 41 and verse 5. Jeremiah 41 and verse 5. Jeremiah chapter 41 and verse 5. That there came certain from Shechem, from Shiloh, and from Samaria, even four score 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 here were some men who were in mourning, and of course Gadaliah murders them, and that's the context, but the fact is they were in mourning and they had their beards shaven and their clothes rent. Look in chapter 48 and verse 37. Jeremiah 48 and verse 37.

For every head shall be bald, and every beard clipped, upon all the hands shall be cuttings and upon the loins sackcloth. Once again, judgment of God. God said, I'm going to shave you clean.

Look in the book of Ezekiel chapter 5 and verse 1. Ezekiel 5 and verse 1. Now let me tell you about Ezekiel. Ezekiel was a priest that God called to be a prophet. And Ezekiel was prophesying in captivity in Babylon.

And God took portrayal of Ezekiel in Babylon, and gave to his people the judgment that was still yet to fall on Jerusalem, had Ezekiel to do certain things. And here's what he had him do. Look in Ezekiel 5 verse 1. And thou son of man, take thee a sharp knife, even thee a barber's razor, and cause it to pass upon thy head and upon thy beard.

Then take thee balances to weigh and divide thy hair. And then he goes on to tell him what to do, which is indicative of the judgment of God. He says, this is exactly what I'm going to do to Jerusalem.

So in other words, when God is going to set forth his judgment, and when God is going to show the severity of his judgment upon the people, he does so under the analogy of shaving them and taking away their beard. You see, the greatest indignity, the greatest insult, one of the purest signs of the judgment of God upon anyone is for his beard to be mutilated or shaved off. Now with that in mind, I want you to turn back to Isaiah 50.

Isaiah 50 and look at verse 6. I hope this verse means something to you with this background in mind. Isaiah 50 and verse 6. Talking about our Lord Jesus Christ, the Messiah, our Lord says, 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.

You see, our Lord had a beard. And what those wicked men did was they took handfuls of his beard and jerked it out, ripping his cheeks, mutilating his face, not just to inflict pain. Yes, they were intending to do

that, but in so doing, they were thus telling the world that Jesus Christ is going to be the one who bears the judgment of God for his people.

That is why the word of God says, He God made him Christ to be sin for us who knew no sin that we might be made the righteousness of God in him. So when Jesus Christ had his beard plucked out, grabbed and snatched by the handfuls by wicked men, it just was a sure and absolute sign that he was the judgment bearer for his people. Let me cover one other thing this morning, and that is the purpose of the beard.

Have you ever asked yourself this question, why do men have a beard and women don't? Why does God cause it to grow genetically upon a man's face? You know, there are many people who will debate whether or not it is right or wrong to have a beard, but that is not the issue that is debatable. That which they should be debating is whether it is right or wrong to shave, because a man has a beard. And that is the most natural thing in the world to do, is to let the beard grow.

So it is not whether it is right or wrong to have a beard because a man has a beard. You have got to determine whether or not it is right or wrong to shave. You see, beards were regarded as sacred ornaments given by God to distinguish men from women.

Now, I want you to turn to one passage, and I want to deal with it just momentarily. And I want to read you several commentators on this passage. Deuteronomy 22.5 is a highly controversial passage, but I think that when you see it in this light, it will certainly give you clearer insight.

Deuteronomy 22.5, God says, 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 sort abomination to the Lord. Now, it is true that one of the things that is prohibited in this verse is transvestitism, that is, men dressing like women, women dressing like men. It is true that transvestitism is associated with idolatry, which I will deal with just a little bit later.

But the main thrust on this verse is a prohibition to break down the distinctions between men and women. Now, let me read to you what Kyle and Delitch, two Old Testament commentators, say on Deuteronomy 22.5. I quote, The immediate design of this prohibition was not to prevent licentiousness or to oppose idolatrous practices, but to maintain the sanctity of that distinction of the sexes which was established by the creation of man and woman, and in relation to which Israel was not to sin. Every violation or wiping out of this distinction was unnatural, and therefore an abomination in the sight of God.

So every wiping out of this distinction was unnatural and a violation in the sight of God. So what he is saying, in essence, is this. When a man shaves, it is a wiping out of that distinction that distinguishes a man from a woman.

Now, the Hebrew word for clothing here, when it says in Deuteronomy 22.5, a man is not to put on a woman's clothing, does not just simply refer to a woman's dress or a woman's garb. And likewise, when it says that concerning the woman shall not wear that which pertains to the man. But it even deals with the armaments and it even deals with domestic utensils.

In other words, what it is saying is this, that the man is not to get into the place and the position of a woman, and the woman is not to get into the place and the position of a man. In other words, women have absolutely no business being in military service. And a man has absolutely no business being in those areas which are reserved particularly and especially for women.

In other words, this verse is direct against anyone and everyone who would obliterate the distinction between the sexes. And of course our government today is trying to distinguish, to obliterate this distinguishing, distinguishment because they're saying that men and women are the same and hence we've got the unisex and there's certainly no difference between them in the government's eyes. But therefore what he's saying is this, that that man is to look like a man and the woman is to look like a woman.

Now, how many of you have ever heard of Venus? The goddess Venus. Venus is supposed to be the goddess of what? Love. Okay.

Supposed to be the goddess of love and pleasures. Now, an interesting thing is this. Sacrifices were offered to Venus by men who were dressed like women and by women who were dressed like men because they were transvestites.

There was a purposeful breakdown of the sexes. Now, that's exactly the problem in Egypt. The Egyptians were basically transvestites.

They were idolaters. And the reason that Pharaoh had that fake beard tied on him was to distinguish him from his queen because they were all clean-shaven and they had bad by-law for a man to have a beard. Now, an interesting thing about Venus is this.

If you have ever looked at a picture of the goddess Venus, look it up in any encyclopedia. You will note this, that the distinguishing characteristic of a woman is her breasts. And Venus was pictured with a multiplicity of breasts.

But she also had a beard. So they put the distinguishing characteristic of a woman on the statue and the distinguishing characteristic of a man and they tried to make Venus a unisex god. And thus there was transvestitism where the men dressed like women and women dressed like men.

You see, even the pagans knew that a beard was the distinguishing characteristic of a man. Laying in his commentary on Deuteronomy 22.5 says, Divinely instituted distinction between the sexes was to be sacredly observed. And in order to this, the dress and other things appropriate to the one were not to be used by the other.

Whatever tends to obliterate this distinction between the sexes tends to lie sensuousness, immorality, and confusion. Whatever tends to render the male sex effeminate and the female sex masculine is an injury to both. And that is certainly true.

There is one thing about a man that has short hair and a beard. You can never ever mistake him from a woman. Let me tell you what Herodotus, a fifth century historian, said when the Scythians invaded Rome.

They had long flowing hair and clean shaven faces. Herodotus wrote that these Scythians were smitten by a deity who had made them into women. That is how they regarded men without beards.

Let me point out two other scriptures. If you understand the significance of the beard, look in your Bibles to 2 Samuel 20. You will understand the duplicity and the wickedness in Joab when he went to murder Amasa.

In 2 Samuel 20 and verse 9, 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. Do you remember? Greet one another with a holy kiss. I told you they kissed each other's beards.

So here Joab, he takes 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, and he smote him therewith in the fifth rib, and shed out his bowels to the ground, and he struck him not again, and he died. So here was Joab in his duplicity, in his wickedness, says, Amasa, my brother! And he bends over to kiss his beard, which was a loving, warm, brotherly greeting.

Amasa was so struck with Joab's friendship and warmth, he never even noticed that sword in Joab's hand, and Joab murdered him, under the guise of kissing him. Now, someone help me out. We won't turn there in the Bible.

Judas followed Joab's example, and he told those Pharisees and Sadducees, He whom I kiss, hold him fast. So Judas, in his wickedness, went to take Christ's beard and kiss it, just like Joab of old, a warm, brotherly, affectionate greeting. In so doing, he was deceiving and selling his master for thirty pieces of silk.

You cannot understand the betrayal of Judas without understanding the significance of the beard. Now, let me tell you something. A beard distinguishes a man as a creature under God from a woman as a creature under God.

The beard is a reassertion of our sanctification, of our separation unto God. And I'm going to tell you right now, you will see more beards in the coming years in the ministry, especially as persecution comes along. That's going to be a distinguishing characteristic of those who are separated unto God from those who are worshippers of humanism and wickedness.

Shall we pray? Heavenly Father, in the name of Jesus Christ, we ask you today to teach us thy word, to build us up in the most holy faith, and help us, Lord, to honor the Lord Jesus Christ. We ask, Father, that your will would be done in our lives. Lord, help us to judge righteous judgment.

Help us to see things in the word of God based upon thy word, and to organize and order our lives accordingly. We're thankful for all of your love to us. Protect us, we ask in Christ's name.

Amen.

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