

meet. Body modification is of pagan origin. These truths were written over four thousand years ago and still apply today. In **Leviticus 19:26-28**, there is a number of forbidden pagan practices. These are unnatural acts against the human body which was created in the image of God (tattoos, shaved heads, goatees, piercing, cutting flesh, weird haircuts). Matthew Henry said this about the text, "Those that worshipped the Host of Heaven in honor of them, cut their hair so as that their heads might resemble the celestial globe." If it does not matter whether or not a man has a beard, why all the legislation? As a society degenerates into an animalistic culture, strange alternations of the body are prevalent.

## CONCLUSION

Christians must learn to think Biblically and not be swayed by society (**John 5:24, Isaiah 5:20**). The beard is a part of Holy Scripture and early church writers spoke much of it. Most preachers throughout church history wore beards. Charles Spurgeon had a beard and required his deacons also to wear beards. Today most denominations frown upon the beard saying it is a sign of rebellion because many hippies in the 1960's wore beards. But some of these hippies wore clothes and brushed their teeth (notice I said "some"). Does this make those practices wrong also? The abuses of the beard does not give right to discard it; there are abuses of the ordinances, but we don't cast out baptism and the Lord's Supper because others abuse them.

The world hates Biblical masculinity and war has been declared on the beard in many circles. It is taboo to most Christians. Another author made this estimation, "If you took a pictorial survey from the time of Christ until the present time, of all the preachers of the gospel, you would find about eighty to ninety percent of them wore beards. The objections people give against the beard are shallow and human reasoning (such as, looks bad, itchy, gets dirty, only bad guys wear beards, my wife does not like it, etc.). I challenge you to consider Bible dictionaries and other writings on the subject; they may give you a scriptural understanding of God's ways (**Isaiah 55:8-9**). One author in the eighteen hundreds stated that, "Shaving is an unnatural, irrational, unmanly, ungodly, and a fatal fashion among Christians." The universal Jewish encyclopedia states, "The glory of the face is the beard."

A quote taken from The Dictionary of Early Christian Beliefs by Clement of Alexander states, "This, then, is the mark of the man, the beard. By this, he is seen to be a man. It is older than eve. It is the token of the superior nature. . . It is therefore unholy to desecrate the symbol of manhood, hairness."

# The Riches

## OF GRACE

"hath appeared to all men." Titus 2:11

Robert W. Reed  
September 2008



# The Beard

*"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."*

**Psalms 133:1-2**

### + Facial Hair +

This article is a brief discussion about the beard. It is an important issue because it is a part of Scripture and "All Scripture is given by inspiration of God" (**II Timothy 3:16**). The beard is mentioned about nineteen times in the Old Testament and none in the New Testament. There is a reference to Messiah's beard in **Isaiah 50:6** which gives us a New Testament principle, considering Jesus Christ is our example to follow (**I Peter 2:21**). In **Psalms 133:2**, the beard is used as an illustration in the context of blessings, favor, and unity. This beautiful Psalm speaks of the unity of the brethren and God speaks well of the beard. Throughout Holy Scripture, God's people had beards: Aaron the high priest **Psalms 133:2**; David the king, **I Samuel 21:13**; Ezra the scribe, **Ezra 9:3**; and Christ the Messiah, **Isaiah 50:6**.

"Men may not destroy the hair of their beards and unnaturally change the form of a man. For the law says, "You will not deface your beards." For God the Creator has made this decent for women, but has determined that it is unsuitable for men."

Apostolic Constitutions (Compiled c. 390, E), 7.392



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*"Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ,  
and thou shalt be saved, and thy house."  
Acts 16:31*

In this article we will consider three aspects concerning the beard. We will look at its origin, its purpose, and the shaving of the beard. Even though the beard is a Biblical issue, having one will not make a person holy. It is not something that brethren should be divided over, but it is something that should be considered.

## THE ORIGIN OF THE BEARD

To begin with, the beard is a part of God's original design in creation. God is the Author and Creator of the beard and to speak against it is to speak against God Himself. In **Genesis 1:1, 26-28**, God created man (male and female) in His own image and placed them in paradise. The man was created with a beard and woman was created without one. A woman cannot grow a beard unless there is a hormonal imbalance due to age, sickness, or disease. God caused the beard to grow genetically on a man's face.

In **verse 31**, God said that His creation was very good, which means the facial hair on a man and no hair on a woman's face was not an afterthought, but was a part of God's design. The beard was given to man before the fall and not after. It is not a product of evolution, but a tribute to the God of creation. God adorned men with a beard; it was a part of His order of creation.

In reference to Biblical truth, the wrong questions in our modern society are being asked. In this case, the question is not whether it is right to have a beard, but the real question is, is it correct to shave it off? Please understand that a man has a beard whether he likes it or not, for that is the way the Creator made him. If he decides to remove the beard, it becomes a daily chore. It is difficult to erase the outline of where the beard grows because the beard is one of the most natural things in the world. It is a part of the way God has chosen to represent His own image in the outward appearance of man (**I Corinthians 11:7-12, 14-15**). May we not change the original design of God's creation, nor speak against His Holy Word (**Romans 9:20**). There are divine regulations in the Bible concerning the beard, showing its importance (**Leviticus 19:27; 21:5**). It is assumed in Scripture that man will grow a beard. The beard is commended in Scripture and not prohibited; it is the norm and not unusual. To alter the beard is to change the way God created us.

## THE PURPOSE OF THE BEARD

There are a number of reasons why God gave men beards, and we will consider a few.

**First**, the beard is given as a distinction between a man and a woman, **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.*" A man with short hair and a beard cannot be mistaken for a woman. The unisex look destroys and blurs the distinctions between the sexes. The beard is a clear mark of masculinity for the smooth face is naturally given to women and children. The Biblical law created a hedge between the confusing of the sexes. The text is given to maintain the sanctity of the distinction between a man and a woman that was made at creation. To destroy the distinction is to destroy God's Word.

An author stated in reference to distinction was, "The lion is glorious in his mane, without it he's just another cat, not the king of beast, just so, God has marked the male in His image, not by a crown on his head, but by the beard on his chin." Male distinctions are seen in clothing, hair length, and the beard (**Revelation 9:7-8**).

**Second**, the beard is given to a man for a covering, a protection from the elements because of his work and labor. It serves as a natural sunscreen. Many outdoorsmen such as loggers, hunters, and farmers can testify to this fact.

**Third**, the beard is a sign of maturity. It shows the change from boyhood to adulthood. With maturity, the beard voluntarily begins to grow. It is God's design for the beard to stay underdeveloped during childhood. Have you ever noticed how excited a boy gets when he discovers hair has started to grow on his face? Have you ever wondered why they get so excited? Well, it is because God put hair on the face to show the transition from boyhood to manhood. It is always amusing to watch a young man as he starts discovering the changes in his face. He may not fully understand what it is all about, but he does know it is important.

The word elder is from a Hebrew word very similar to the Hebrew word for beard, for an elder is a bearded one, once again, showing maturity.

**Fourth**, the beard was the badge of manly dignity. To shave or cover the beard was a sign of grief or mourning (**II Samuel 10:4-5**). To compel a man to cut off his beard was to inflict shame and disgrace. To neglect the beard was a sign that something was very wrong (**II Samuel 19:24; I Samuel 21:13**). To damage the beard willfully was a sign of mourning (**Ezra 9:3; Isaiah 15:2; Jeremiah 41:5**). The beard was a badge of honor and respect and the beard was common and normal among God's people.

**Fifth**, the beard represented authority in the order of creation (**I Corinthians 11:3**). Headship is a part of God's order and the appearance of the man identifies him as the head and leader.

## THE SHAVING OF THE BEARD

In the Old Testament, God's people were a peculiar people, separated from the world, and the men wore full beards indicating their submission to God (**Leviticus 18:3**) The shaving of the beard was done only in connection with purification of leprosy (**Leviticus 14:8-9**), special vows (**Numbers 6:9**), or as a sign of grief, judgment, shame, humility, conquest, or enslavement. When Scripture speaks of removing facial hair on a man, it is always mentioned in an abnormal circumstance. Under normal circumstances, the beard was never shaved.

In **Leviticus 19:27** the beard was not to be marred, "*Ye shall not round the corners of your heads, neither shalt thou mar the corners of thy beard.*" This regulation was not only for the people, but also for the priest: **Leviticus 21:5**, "*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.*" To shave or mar the corners of the beard was forbidden by God among His people, such as, to remove a portion of the beard; leaving a mustache or goatee would be considered marring. Again, God's people wore full beards to show their devotion to the true and living God. There is a difference between trimming one's beard and shaving off a portion of the beard. The corner of the beard would be the edge, the quarter and not the whole. It is a defined region and not the whole. It probably refers to portions of the face where the beard and the hair