

Garments of Grace Clothing Imagery in the Bible Lesson 1 2Q 2011

I have heard several rumors around the community that this class is composed of a group of people who don't think for themselves, a group of people who have surrendered their thinking to Dr. Jennings and come each week to class to hear what I have to say.

This idea has been heard all over the community – we know this is not true. One thing which might inadvertently give this impression is if someone were to say, “Dr. Jennings said in class this week...”etc. I want to encourage you, as always, to believe nothing because I say it, but to think through what I have said, examine the evidence, make up your own mind, and then when you are convinced of the truth present it as your own – don't attribute it to me but say “The Bible says!” or “The evidence says!”

INTRODUCTION

Read first paragraph – “We are awash...”

The lesson is correct – we are awash in symbols – what is the danger in symbols? That we might draw the wrong meaning from the symbol.

What about the rainbow – a symbol given in the Bible to remind us of what? What about today? What message is being proclaimed by a rainbow flag or a rainbow bumper sticker? Do we have to be careful what meaning we derive from a symbol? Let's keep this in mind the entire quarter.

In the Loom of Heaven

SABBATH

Read memory verse, “Blessed are they whose transgressions are forgiven, whose sins are covered.” Rom 4:7

Thoughts? What does this text mean? The words are symbols, what is the meaning? Do sins get covered? Is God's plan of salvation nothing more than a cosmic cover-up? Is it a great cosmetic, covering over defect and blemish?

My paraphrase of this verse is: "Happy are they whose wicked minds are restored to perfect purity, whose selfishness is eradicated.

Read first paragraph, "Christ..." thoughts? How do we understand this?

Did you notice this sentence, "Christ has made reconciliation for sin, and borne all its ignominy, reproach, and punishment..."? Where does punishment for sin arise? Notice she didn't say, bore the Father's infliction of punishment for sin.

Here we have the covering metaphor again – is it a cover-up? Is it the candy coated rotten-apple? Just cover the sin, cover the defect, paint over the rot, put a band aid over the necrosis, is that what this mean?

How have you heard this theory put forth?

Jump to MONDAY

Read second paragraph, "What hope..." thoughts?

What is generally missing from the traditional explanation of this symbolism?

This robe, woven in the loom of heaven, has in it not one thread of human devising. Christ in His humanity wrought out a perfect character, and this character He offers to impart to us. "All our righteousness are as filthy rags." Isa. 64:6. Everything that we of ourselves can do is defiled by sin. But the Son of God "was manifested to take away our sins; and in Him is no sin." Sin is defined to be "the transgression of the law." 1 John 3:5, 4. But Christ was obedient to every

requirement of the law. He said of Himself, "I delight to do Thy will, O My God; yea, Thy law is within My heart." Ps. 40:8. When on earth, He said to His disciples, "I have kept My Father's commandments." John 15:10. By His perfect obedience He has made it possible for every human being to obey God's commandments. **When we submit ourselves to Christ, the heart is united with His heart, the will is merged in His will, the mind becomes one with His mind, the thoughts are brought into captivity to Him; we live His life. This is what it means to be clothed with the garment of His righteousness. Then as the Lord looks upon us He sees, not the fig-leaf garment, not the nakedness and deformity of sin, but His own robe of righteousness, which is perfect obedience to the law of Jehovah.** {COL 311.4}

Is there a difference between covering over sin and actually transforming the sinner? Is there a difference between getting a legal credit in a record book and getting transformed?

In fact, the theory typically given leads us astray because it undermines the reality of what is transpiring. They talk about Christ's perfect law keeping being applied to our record – let's use this language, and accept that the record of Christ gets applied to our record in heaven – next question how? How could Christ's perfect law keeping get applied to our records?

What is recorded in our records?

Remember, **your character is being daguerreotyped [photographed] by the great Master Artist in the record books of heaven, as minutely as the face is reproduced upon the polished plate of the artist. What do the books of heaven say in your case?** Are you conforming your character to the Pattern, Jesus Christ? **Are you washing your robes of character and making them white in the blood of the Lamb?** "Behold, I come quickly; and My reward is with Me, to give every man according as his work shall be" [Revelation 22:12]. . . . {TSB 62.1}

So if we take this example of Christ perfect law keeping being applied to our record in heaven, what is the route such law keeping must necessarily take to get into our records?

It must go through our own hearts and minds as the records in heaven actually record the condition of our characters. We have either been won back to trust in God or we have not. This other idea of something happening in a record book outside, separate and distinct from what is transpiring in us is a fiction and a distortion. It does put God in the business of misrepresenting reality.

Classically it is taught that God says we are righteous when we are not righteous. Think about that.

Read next paragraph, “Paul said in Romans...” thoughts? Notice the lesson itself states that it was after Abraham trusted God that he was recognized as righteous. What is the natural state of our hearts?

Do we naturally “trust” God or is the carnal heart at war with God? Thus, which came first, God’s recognition that Abraham was righteous, or a change in Abraham from distrusting God to trust in God? God is working to actually cleanse, heal, restore, rebuild, renew, regenerate our hearts and minds and rewrite His law of love in us, to win us back to trust in Him. It is only when we experience that trust in Him that righteousness occurs in the life, and then subsequently in the record of the believer.

The Greek word translated imputed or credited is: *logizomai* and means:

3049 λογίζομαι [*logizomai* /log·id·zom·ahee/] v. Middle voice from 3056; TDNT 4:284; TDNTA 536; GK 3357; **41 occurrences**; AV translates as “think” nine times, “impute”

v v: verb

TDNT Theological Dictionary of the New Testament

TDNTA Theological Dictionary of the New Testament, Abridged in One Volume

GK Goodrick-Kohlenberger

AV Authorized Version

eight times, “reckon” six times, “count” five times, “account” four times, “suppose” twice, “reason” once, “number” once, and translated miscellaneous five times. **1** to reckon, count, compute, calculate, count over. 1A to take into account, to make an account of. 1A1 metaph. to pass to one’s account, to impute. 1A2 a thing is reckoned as or to be something, i.e. as availing for or equivalent to something, as having the like force and weight. 1B to number among, reckon with. 1C to reckon or account. **2 to reckon inward, count up or weigh the reasons, to deliberate. 3 by reckoning up all the reasons, to gather or infer. 3A to consider, take into account, weigh, meditate on. 3B to suppose, deem, judge. 3C to determine, purpose, decide.** *Additional Information: This word deals with reality. If I “logizomai” or reckon that my bank book has \$25 in it, it has \$25 in it. Otherwise I am deceiving myself. This word refers to facts not suppositions.* ¹

Thoughts? Is imputed righteousness separated from an actual change in the person or are they inextricably connected? Listen to some quotations from one of the founders of our church and see how you hear the meaning of imputed righteousness:

Abundant grace has been provided that the believing soul **may be kept free from sin**; for all heaven, with its limitless resources, has been placed at our command. We are to draw from the well of salvation. . . . In ourselves we are sinners; but in Christ we are righteous. **Having made us righteous through the imputed righteousness of Christ, God pronounces us just, and treats us as just.** He looks upon us as His dear children. Christ works against the power of sin, and where sin abounded, grace much more abounds. {God’s Amazing Grace 181.4}

How do you hear this description of imputed righteousness? It is through imputed righteousness we are “made” righteous. Does

¹Strong, James: *The Exhaustive Concordance of the Bible : Showing Every Word of the Test of the Common English Version of the Canonical Books, and Every Occurrence of Each Word in Regular Order.* electronic ed. Ontario : Woodside Bible Fellowship., 1996, S. G3049

being made righteous mean something different than being “declared” righteous, or being “accounted” righteous, or being “credited” with righteousness?

Metaphor in the Bible is leprosy – when did the High Priest declare someone clean, before or after they were made clean? Leprosy was a metaphor for sin – Christ cleansed the lepers and then told them to go to the priest to be “declared” clean.

“By beholding we become changed, morally assimilated to the One who is perfect in character. By receiving His imputed righteousness, through the transforming power of the Holy Spirit, we become like Him. The image of Christ is cherished, and it captivates the whole being. {God’s Amazing Grace 96.4}

How is “imputed” being used in this statement? Does it sound like a mere legal accounting? Is it more than that?

We aim too low. The mark is much higher. Our minds need expansion, that we may comprehend the significance of the provision of God. **We are to reflect the highest attributes of the character of God. . . . The law of God is the exalted standard to which we are to attain through the imputed righteousness of Christ.** {OHC 364.2}

Is the imputed righteousness of Christ somehow connected to what we attain? Is attainment different than credits? What would it mean to aim to low? Would it mean we are aiming for legal pardon rather than character transformation?

He would have us comprehend something of His love in giving His Son to die that He might **counteract evil, remove the defiling stains of sin from the workmanship of God, and reinstate the lost, elevating and ennobling the soul to its original purity through Christ's imputed righteousness.**
TMK 206

Where does it sound like Christ's righteousness is being "imputed"? Into record books or into believers? And because the record books record what is transpiring in the character of the believer by imputing His perfect character into the believer it is recorded in the heavenly record book!

Is there a difference between legally accounting one righteous and actually transforming the believer into righteousness? Do you find EGW to be in harmony with the Biblical meaning of *logizomai*? Absolutely!

So, how might we, with this understand read Romans 4:20-24?

Here is my paraphrase:

Yet, even though, from human understanding, the promise seemed hopeless, Abraham did not waver in his confidence in God, but praised God as he ²¹ realized God was able to miraculously fulfill the promise. ²² This unwavering trust in God, in the face of scientific evidence to the contrary, was recognized as righteousness because this trust replaced distrust and opened Abraham's mind to receive the endowment of a new heart, right motives, and Christlike principles established by God's recreative power. ²³ This record of his trust being "recognized as righteousness" is not written merely for Abraham, ²⁴ but for everyone who trusts in God. For everyone who trusts in God, who raised Jesus from the dead, is recognized as righteous because distrust in God is gone and through trust he receives the endowment of a perfect heart and new motives created within. Romans 4:20-24 My paraphrase

Thoughts?

Read last paragraph "Imagine it is..."

Let's explain the symbolism – how can this be understood correctly, how could this same symbolism get misconstrued?

FRIDAY

Do we agree that God never changes, is the same yesterday, today and tomorrow?

Do we agree that God's law cannot change?

Do we agree that man was changed when man sinned?

Then does it make sense that God, through Christ, would have to effect change in man in order to save man?

Notice what the first paragraph states:

Read first paragraph- thoughts – what does this mean? What is being described? What does the law require? Does it require a payment? Why does it require a perfect life?

TUESDAY

Read first three paragraphs – “A preacher...” what is the man saying? What is the message?

Read last paragraph, “Though Paul...” thoughts?

WEDNESDAY

The lesson asks us to Romans 6:1-13 – thoughts? Read this section, What does this symbolic language mean?

Here it is from my paraphrase:

Romans 6:1 What, then, should we say about this amazing healing plan? Should we spread the infection of distrust and selfishness, cause more devastation and destruction so that the power of God's healing solution may be more fully displayed? ² Absolutely not! We have taken the antidote, and the infection of distrust and selfishness has been purged from our hearts and minds; how then, can we choose to be

reinfected with distrust of God and practice selfish methods again? ³ Or don't you realize that all of us who were immersed into union with Christ Jesus were immersed into selflessness and have died to self-centeredness? ⁴ We symbolically demonstrate we have joined him in dying to self by being buried in water, in order that just as Jesus arose from the dead displaying the life giving glory of the Father, we too live a new life displaying God's glorious character in our lives.

^{6:5} If we have joined him in dying to self, we will absolutely join him in his resurrection and new life! ⁶ For we know that when our old selfish hearts and fear ridden minds trust God and surrenders to be crucified with Christ, the infection of selfishness is purged, and our hearts are no longer controlled by Satanic principles – ⁷ because anyone who dies to selfishness is free from Satan's methods, principles and control.

^{6:8} Now if we join Christ in dying to self, we are confident we will live with him forever. ⁹ Because Christ was raised from the dead and cannot die again; he has secured the remedy and has revealed the truth, and death cannot touch him again. ¹⁰ The death he died, he died once destroying Satan's lies, the infection of fear and selfishness and restoring love and trust; therefore, the life he lives, he lives to glorify God.

^{6:11} In the same way recognize you are dead to the ways of Satan and alive to the ways of God as revealed in Christ Jesus. ¹² Therefore do not indulge the selfish desires and participate in destructive activities. ¹³ Do not use your physical body for evil, to indulge selfishness, but rather offer your entire being to God – revealing that Satan's principles of death have been replaced by God's principles of life. So offer your entire self to God doing what is right and healthy because it is right and healthy.

Thoughts?

THURSDAY

Read third paragraph, “We must keep...” thoughts? What does this mean? Is this distinction in scripture or is this distinction created by people trying their best to understand the God’s plan of salvation?

When did this idea of atonement originate? Who were the men who conceived it? Was it not men coming out of the Dark Ages? Why has light not advanced in 500 years? Do we really believe that this is the ultimate word in understanding God’s plan of salvation?

Read last paragraph, “The understanding that...” thoughts? What does this sound like to you?

FRIDAY

Read and discuss questions.