

## Garments of Grace Clothing Imagery in the Bible Lesson 4 2Q 2011

### The Coat of Different Colors

#### SABBATH

Read first two paragraphs, "The seed (so to speak)... thoughts?"

How many believe it was wrong for Jacob to take more than one wife? How many think Jacob did not do wrong by taking more than one wife?

It seems obvious that Jacob should not have taken the two concubines – but what do you think about Jacob taking Rachel as his wife? What do you think he should have done after the deception practiced upon him?

Would you consider him married to Leah? Would marriage require informed consent to be considered married? What about in God's eyes – is it sex that makes one married? Is it the ceremony? Is it the voluntary commitment of two individuals to accept each other as husband and wife? Did Jacob actually do this with Leah?

Did Jacob marry Leah? When? When Jacob left the wedding ceremony and was on his way to the wedding tent, had he married Leah or Rachel? Who did he commit himself to be the husband of?

Did Jacob sin in having intimate relations with the sister of the woman he thought he was marrying?

What would you have done if you had been Jacob? Should he have returned Leah? Should he have stayed married to only Leah?

What would have happened to Leah in that society if Jacob would have said no? Is it likely she would have been shunned? Could she possibly have been expelled from her family with no inheritance, might she have been killed?

Where do we find in the scripture God chastising Jacob for having multiple wives?

Why do you think God didn't chastise him for it?

Was the sin Jacob's? Or was it Leah's and her father's? Was Jacob being merciful to this woman by not spurning her?

## SUNDAY

Read first paragraph, "Life, as we all.." thoughts? How can one apply this knowledge effectively?

Where do each of us have the most power to actually effect change? Isn't over ourselves? If we change ourselves what will those around us do?

Read bottom pink section – what can we actually control? Can we control anything beyond our own choices?

The universe runs on such predictable laws that we sometimes get the illusion that we can control outcomes or even others, but can we?

Who was the first US President targeted by an assassin?  
January 30, 1835, Andrew Jackson.

- Richard Lawrence, an unemployed house painter, approached Jackson as he left a congressional funeral held in the House chamber of the Capitol and shot at him.
- His gun misfired.
- Jackson, who was 67 at the time, repeatedly clubbed Lawrence with his walking cane.
- During the ensuing scuffle, Lawrence took another pistol out of his pocket and pulled the trigger. But that gun also misfired.

- Bystanders joined in, wrestling Lawrence to the ground and disarming him. One of them was Rep. Davy Crockett of Tennessee.
- In the 1930s, researchers at the Smithsonian Institution test fired Lawrence's derringer pistols. Both of them discharged normally on the first try.
  - <http://www.politico.com/news/stories/0108/8184.html>

Richard Lawrence could control purchasing the guns, loading the guns, going to the capital building, pulling out the guns, pointing the guns, pulling the trigger – but could he control whether they fired or not?

Can we control how things turn out? We control our choices – but because God's laws are so predictable and reliable we come to believe we can control outcomes – we can't!

This is what it means to live by faith – to choose to do, in governance of ourselves, that which is in harmony with God's laws, methods, principles and purposes for our lives and trust God with the outcome.

What has helped you be able to trust God with outcomes in your life?

What about the last sentence in the pink section, "Ask yourself, How might these choices impact others, and is that what I really want to see happen?"

- Is this the best basis for decision making?  
"They won't like it. They might be mad. They might get their feelings hurt, or be upset..." is this the best basis for decision making?
- How do we fit in our awareness of others to our decision making? What is the balance?

## MONDAY

Joseph and his brothers – how would you describe their relationship?

What contributed to the tensions?

Fourth paragraph, “Finally...” thoughts? How do you understand this?

Just as it is written: “Jacob I loved, but Esau I hated.” Romans 9:13

Thoughts?

- Did God not love Esau?
- Was God’s love for Jacob the reason Esau rebelled?
- What does it mean God loved Jacob but not Esau?

Could it be that Jacob was receptive to God’s love, so God’s was able to actively love Jacob, but Esau would not receive or respond to God’s love?

What about Jacob and his sons?

- Is it likely Jacob didn’t love his other sons?
- Is it possible Joseph was more receptive to God’s love and therefore, the natural result was a closer unity to anyone else who also had God’s love operating in their heart, thus a closer bond between Jacob and Joseph, than Jacob and the sons who were so obviously selfish?

Let’s turn to TUESDAY’s lesson and read second paragraph, “There was one...” thoughts?

- Could Joseph’s heart, character, disposition, have had anything to do with why he was closer to his father than the other sons?
- Do you think Jacob preferred to have 10 of his son’s he couldn’t trust?
- Would Jacob have preferred to have 10 sons just like Joseph?

What about God?

- Does God love some people more than others?
- Does our response to God have anything to do with how much of His love we experience and thus how close we are to Him?

I have found this to be true in my life. When I have travelled around the world and met people who worship a God of love, as Jesus revealed, who practice those principles in their lives – I have an automatic affinity for them, we are just closer than I am with people who don't share this perspective and love for God. Haven't you found this to be true as well?

So was Jacob at fault for the difference in loving closeness between the sons and himself?

In the third paragraph it states, "Whatever the father meant by giving Joseph the coat- and it could simply have been a token of love and nothing more – it was a big mistake, for it fanned even more the flames of hatred in the brother's hearts toward Joseph."

Thoughts?

- Does this mean when God blesses His faithful children and it fans the flames of jealousy in the wicked, stirring up persecution, that God made a mistake?
- Should God withhold blessings because He doesn't want those with selfish hearts to get jealous?

WEDNESDAY

Read first paragraph, "Not only..." thoughts?

Is this hard to imagine? Could anyone we know do this?

The teacher can do much to discourage that evil habit, the curse of the community, the neighborhood, and the home--the habit of backbiting, gossip, ungenerous criticism. In this no pains should be spared. Impress upon the students the fact that this habit reveals a lack of culture and refinement and of true goodness of heart; it unfits one both for the society of the

truly cultured and refined in this world and for association with the holy ones of heaven. {Ed 235.3}

**We think with horror of the cannibal who feasts on the still warm and trembling flesh of his victim; but are the results of even this practice more terrible than are the agony and ruin caused by misrepresenting motive, blackening reputation, dissecting character?** Let the children, and the youth as well, learn what God says about these things: {Ed 235.4}

"Death and life are in the power of the tongue." Proverbs 18:21. {Ed 235.5}

Thoughts? Why is gossiping such a destructive behavior?

- How did the war begin in heaven?
- What happens in the minds of those who hear the gossip?
- What causes the gossip to be most influential?
- Does the esteem one holds for the person sharing the gossip cause it to be accepted more easily as fact?

What can we do to put a stop to the spread of rumor and gossip in our community? Can we commit to go to people directly and talk to them rather than "I got from a reliable source..."?

Second paragraph states, "The first thing the brothers talked about when they saw Joseph from afar was the dreams, which made their hatred for him grow." Thoughts?

- Why were the brothers mad? They didn't want to bow down to Joseph.
- What did they do to ensure they never would? Sold him as a slave.
- What did this result in? Joseph become ruler and them bowing down to him.
- What lesson is there in this?

Is there a lesson in trusting God with outcomes?

What happens when we try and plan and plot to ensure things turn out the way we want them?

- What if the brothers would have trusted God with how it turns out and merely went about choosing to govern themselves in harmony with God's principles?
- What would have happened?
- Would they have sold Joseph?

What about today?

- Should we try and plan and plot to ensure things turn out the way we want, or merely choose to practice God's methods in our lives and trust Him with how things turn out?
- Might that mean we go through a period of uncertainty? Joseph spent 13 years as a slave before he became ruler – during that time might he have had some uncertainty.

Why is it important to focus on developing healthy decision making in harmony with God's methods?

Each actor in history stands in his lot and place; for God's great work after His own plan will be carried out by **men who have prepared themselves to fill positions for good or evil**. In opposition to righteousness, men become instruments of unrighteousness. But **they are not forced to take this course of action**. They need not become instruments of unrighteousness, any more than Cain needed to. . . . {CC 371.2}

**Men of all characters, righteous and unrighteous, will stand in their several positions in God's plan. With the characters they have formed**, they will act their part in the fulfillment of history. In a crisis, just at the right moment, **they will stand in the places they have prepared themselves to fill**. Believers and unbelievers will fall into line as witnesses to confirm truth that they themselves do not comprehend. **All will cooperate in accomplishing the purposes of God, just as did Annas, Caiaphas, Pilate, and Herod. In putting Christ to death, the priests thought they were carrying out their own purposes, but unconsciously and unintentionally they were fulfilling the purpose of God.** {CC 371.3}

God looks into the tiny seed that He Himself has formed, and sees wrapped within it the beautiful flower, the shrub, or the lofty, wide-spreading tree. So does He see the possibilities in every human being. **We are here for a purpose. God has given us His plan for our life, and He desires us to reach the highest standard of development. . . .** {CC 371.4}

What plan does God have for your life?

What do you think caused the hatred the brothers had toward Joseph?

- Was it the dreams?
- Was it the coat?
- Was there something in Joseph that was the source of such hatred?
- What about Christ? What caused the hatred of Christ? Was there something in Christ that caused hatred?
- What was the source of their hatred?

Read last paragraph, “Thus, here...” thoughts?

- Was Joseph superior to his brothers?
- In what way?
- Was his character superior to theirs?
- How did Joseph become superior to his brothers?
- Was he born this way?

Read bottom pink section, thoughts?

- What does it mean to keep our emotions under the power of God?
- What is God’s power?
- How do we experience that power?
- The gospel is the power of God according to Paul.
- Zechariah states that it is not by might nor by power but by how the Spirit works.
- How do we get our emotions under the power of God?



- Truth and Love – we must examine our feelings in light of truth, keeping reason and good judgment in charge of decisions and actions, and practice God’s methods of other centered love.

EGW had comments on emotions:

- "It is through the Word—**not feeling**, not excitement—that we want to influence the people to obey the truth. On the platform of God’s Word we can stand with safety. The living Word is replete with evidence, and a wonderful power accompanies its proclamation in our world." MS 115, 1908; *Selected Messages*, vol. 3, pp. 372-375; portions in *Selected Messages*, vol. 2, pp. 43,44; VSS 290; LDE 93; "The Ralph Mackin Story," *Review and Herald*, Aug. 17, 1972
- "I am afraid of **anything** that would have a tendency to turn the mind away from the solid **evidences** of the truth as revealed in God’s Word. I am afraid of it; I am afraid of it. We must bring our minds within the **bounds of reason**, lest the enemy so come in as to set everything in a disorderly way. There are persons of an excitable temperament who are easily led into fanaticism; and should we allow anything to come into our churches that would lead such persons into error, we would soon see these errors carried to extreme lengths, and then because of the course of these disorderly elements, a stigma would rest upon the whole body of Seventh-day Adventists. . .
- "During the years of Christ’s ministry on earth, . . . **The truth was proclaimed intelligently**, and so **plainly that all could understand**. . . Now I am afraid to have anything of a fanatical nature brought in among our people. There are many, many who must be sanctified, **but they are to be sanctified through obedience to the message of truth**. I am writing on this subject today. In this message there is **a beautiful consistency that appeals to the judgment**. We cannot allow excitable elements among us to display themselves in a way that would destroy our influence with those whom we wish to reach with the truth. . . (compare 2SG 50; 1T 66; LS 215)

What was she afraid of? Anything that would turn the mind away from “solid evidence”. What might that be? What turns the mind away from evidence?

- Emotions
- Traditions
- Blind faith
- Allowing others to think for you
- Thinking patterns in which one refuses to test one’s ideas against the evidence -

#### THURSDAY

Read top paragraph, “How could they...” – thoughts?

- How could they?
- What led them to act this way?
- What happened to love in their hearts?
- What took over?

Do people go from good to evil in an instant?

- Peter's fall was not instantaneous, but gradual. Self-confidence led him to the belief that he was saved, and step after step was taken in the downward path, until he could deny his Master. Never can we safely put confidence in self or feel, this side of heaven, that we are secure against temptation. **Those who accept the Saviour, however sincere their conversion, should never be taught to say or to feel that they are saved.** This is misleading. Every one should be taught to cherish hope and faith; but even when we give ourselves to Christ and know that He accepts us, we are not beyond the reach of temptation. God's word declares, "Many shall be purified, and made white, and tried." Dan. 12:10. Only he who endures the trial will receive the crown of life. (James 1:12.) {COL 155.1}

Thoughts about this? What does it mean? Should we experience security in our salvation? Should we live in doubt? What is the balance?

- Could it mean that we should not consider our self “fully” saved, i.e. cured – rather than rescued from a terminal state and partaking in the cure?
- If we accept the idea we are cured, when we are not, then we have a problem. But if we recognized we are not cured, but are daily participating with God in His treatment for our condition we can have confidence in the outcome.

FRIDAY

Read and discuss questions 1, 3, 4