

Garments of Grace Clothing Imagery in the Bible Lesson 5 2Q 2011

The Priestly Garments of Grace

SABBATH

Read first paragraph, “One great theme...” thoughts?

What does this mean? Did you notice how the lesson seemed to criticize those organizations which have a priesthood acting as earthly mediators?

What about our church? Do we believe in the priesthood of all believers? If so then:

- Why are women not ordained?
- Why are only ordained pastors allowed to be conference presidents?
- Why do we believe the truth must come through the seminary or those who have seminary training?
- Are all believers priests of God or just those with certain credentials?

What does the 1Tim 2:5 text mean there is “one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus”?

What does it mean to be a mediator?

- Go between
- Advocate
- Envoy
- Ambassador
- Representative

What is Christ’s role in mediation?

Who needs a mediator?

Do angels unfallen need a mediator?

“While we rejoice that there are worlds which have never fallen, these worlds render praise, and honor, and glory to Jesus Christ for the plan of redemption to save the fallen sons of Adam, as well as to confirm themselves in their position and character of purity. The arm that raised the human family from the ruin which Satan had brought upon the race through his temptations, is the arm which has preserved the inhabitants of other worlds from sin. Every world throughout immensity engages the care and support of the Father and the Son; and this care is constantly exercised for fallen humanity. Christ is **mediating** in behalf of man, and the order of unseen worlds also is preserved by his **mediatorial** work. Are not these themes of sufficient magnitude and importance to engage our thoughts, and call forth our gratitude and adoration to God?” {RH, January 11, 1881 par. 4}

What does this mean?

Does this change the way we think about mediation?

What does mediation mean? Is it not the work to bring reconciliation? What needs to be reconciled? What about the angels unfallen? How are they preserved by Christ’s mediatorial work?

Would it have anything to do with providing truth to destroy the lies which break the circle of love and trust? Would it have anything to do with restoring humanity to God’s original design?

TUESDAY

What is represented by the High Priest’s clothing?

Only in the Ephod, the curious girdle and the Breastplate of the High Priest do we find gold woven into the fabric.

Make the ephod of gold, and of blue, purple and scarlet yarn, and of finely twisted linen—the work of a skilled craftsman. ⁷ It is to have two shoulder pieces attached to two of its corners, so it can be fastened. Exodus 28:6,7

What do these colors symbolize?

- Gold – God’s divine character of love
- Blue – heavenly origin
- Purple – royalty
- Scarlet – the sacrificed life of Christ
- Fine linen – perfect human character developed by Christ

What is symbolized by the shoulder pieces being joined together? Is it merely functional or symbolic?

From which tribe was the priesthood derived? What does the name Levi mean?

Again she conceived, and when she gave birth to a son she said, “Now at last my husband will become attached to me, because I have borne him three sons.” So he was named Levi. Genesis 39:34

Levi means “joined together”.

The Levites were symbolic of what? The priesthood of believers, you and me:

And thy brethren also, the tribe of Levi, the tribe of thy father, bring thou near with thee [High Priest], that they may be joined unto thee, and minister unto thee: but thou and thy sons with thee shall be before the tent of the testimony... ⁴And **they shall be joined unto thee**, and keep the charge of the tent of meeting, for all the service of the Tent: and a stranger shall not come nigh unto you. Numbers 18:2,4

Are we to be joined to Christ?

Upon the shoulders of the Ephod were engraved the names of the 12 tribes in order of their birth. What does this symbolize?

The shoulders symbolize strength and that Christ strengthens and carries humanity on His shoulders.

As we continue the High Priest garments let's jump to WEDNESDAY and then back to complete Tuesday:

Read first paragraph Wednesday's lesson, "Of all the vestments..." thoughts?

What do you hear in the description, "breastplate of judgment"?

Is it a breastplate of a judicial proceeding or a breastplate to enhance, or provide, or enable good discernment or judgment?

Fashion a breastpiece for making decisions—the work of a skilled craftsman. Make it like the ephod: of gold, and of blue, purple and scarlet yarn, and of finely twisted linen. Exodus 28:15 NIV.

Does it make a difference which way it is heard? What difference does it make?

If you are sick and go to the doctor, do you want a doctor with good judgment? A doctor who can make good judgments?

If you have to go to a place for judgment would you prefer to go to the doctor's office, who has the ability to heal whatever is wrong, for his examination and judgment or to the courtroom? Why?

Which of these two examples is closer to the reality of God's universe?

The Breast Plate was made from Gold and had 12 stones plus Urim and Thummin. On each stone was written the name of one of the twelve tribes of Israel and the breastplate was attached via four gold chains.

Is this symbolism or is Jesus in heaven wearing such an outfit?

Any significance in this symbolism? Can we understand any of the reality it was to signify?

The names written on the stones represent the people of God who are “sealed” or “set” in the character of God, gold breastplate, and close to the heart of God, who come from every nation, tribe and people.

The breastplate was attached via four gold chains what do these represent?

Christ's believing people are to **perpetuate His love**. This love is to draw them together around the cross. **It is to divest them of all selfishness, and bind them to God** and to one another. {CS 16.2}

Meet around the cross of Calvary in self-sacrifice and self-denial. God will bless you as you do your best. As you approach the throne of grace, **as you find yourself bound to this throne by the golden chain let down from heaven to earth**, to draw men from the pit of sin, your heart will go out in love for your brethren and sisters who are without God and without hope in the world.--9T 253-256. {CS 16.3}

Do you hear anything in this passage which would indicate what the golden chain is that binds us to God?

"These things I have spoken unto you," He said, "that in Me ye might have peace. In the world ye shall have tribulation: but be of good cheer; I have overcome the world." Christ did not fail, neither was He discouraged, and His followers are to manifest a faith of the same enduring nature. **They are to live as He lived, and work as He worked, because they depend on Him as the great Master Worker.** Courage, energy, and perseverance they must possess. Though apparent impossibilities obstruct their way, by His grace they are to go forward. Instead of deploring difficulties, they are called upon to surmount them. They are to despair of nothing, and to hope for everything. **With the golden chain of His matchless love Christ has bound them to the throne of God.** It is His

purpose that **the highest influence in the universe, emanating from the source of all power, shall be theirs.**

They are to have power to resist evil, power that neither earth, nor death, nor hell can master, power that will enable them to overcome as Christ overcame. {DA 679.3}

What is the golden chain that binds us to God? What is the highest influence in the universe?

Thoughts?

What of the Urim and Thummin? What do these symbolize? Notice where they are found? They are found on the breastplate – where the stones representing the people of God are found, which is made of gold, representing the divine character, which the people of God now are settled into, and tied to God by the chains of His love. What then do these two stones symbolize?

The work of the Holy Spirit upon the conscience and minds of the believers investing them with spiritual gifts of discernment, insight, judgment, ability to know the right from the wrong.

The Lord answered him [Saul] not, neither by dreams, nor by Urim, nor by prophets. 1 Sam. 28:6. {CC 171.1}

The Lord never turned away a soul that came to Him in sincerity and humility. **Why did he turn Saul away unanswered? The king had by his own act forfeited the benefits of all the methods of inquiring of God.** He had rejected the counsel of Samuel the prophet; he had exiled David, the chosen of God; he had slain the priests of the Lord. . . . **He had sinned away the Spirit of grace,** and could he be answered by dreams and revelations from the Lord? **Saul did not turn to God with humility and repentance.** It was not pardon for sin and reconciliation with God, that he sought, but deliverance from his foes. By his own stubbornness and rebellion he had cut himself off from God. There could be no return but by the way of penitence and contrition; but the proud monarch, in his anguish and despair, determined to seek help from another source. . . . It was told the king that a

woman who had a familiar spirit was living in concealment at Endor. . . . Disguising himself, Saul went forth by night with but two attendants, to seek the retreat of the sorceress. . . .
{CC 171.2}

Thoughts?

The High Priest also had a blue robe:

And thou shalt make the robe of the ephod all of blue. ³²And it shall have a hole for the head in the midst thereof: it shall have a binding of woven work round about the hole of it, as it were the hole of a coat of mail, that it be not rent. ³³And upon the skirts of it thou shalt make pomegranates of blue, and of purple, and of scarlet, round about the skirts thereof; and bells of gold between them round about: ³⁴a golden bell and a pomegranate, a golden bell and a pomegranate, upon the skirts of the robe round about. ³⁵And it shall be upon Aaron to minister: and the sound thereof shall be heard when he goeth in unto the holy place before Jehovah, and when he cometh out, that he die not. Exodus 28:31-38

Thoughts? What does this blue robe represent?

The High Priest also wore a white linen robe identical to the ones worn by the daily priests – does this give any clue?

What does the white linen robe represent? Perfect human character developed by Christ and given as a gift to all who accept it. Then what might the blue robe represent? His divine character, His divinity which was united with our humanity.

What about the bells and pomegranates? What do they represent attached to the blue robe?

- The bells are made of gold- gold represents God's perfect character of love – would the bells then be, the "sound" of Christ's love in action as He works as our High Priest to heal and cure mankind of sin?

- It is from heaven that Christ came thus the sound of His love originates in heaven – and He works as our High Priest in the sanctuary in heaven.
- What of the pomegranates? blue, scarlet and gold?
 - The pomegranate is a fruit full of seeds – seeds symbolize life. Christ is the Seed, Christ came to “seed” a new humanity built of His perfect character, originating in heaven and achieved through His sacrifice, from which all of His followers will spring.
 - If you belong to Christ, then you are Abraham’s seed, and heirs according to the promise. Gal 3:29

The High Priest also wore a miter with a gold plate:

Exodus 28:36-38:

“Make a plate of pure gold and engrave on it as on a seal: HOLY TO THE LORD. ³⁷ Fasten a blue cord to it to attach it to the turban; it is to be on the front of the turban. ³⁸ It will be on Aaron’s forehead, and he will bear the guilt involved in the sacred gifts the Israelites consecrate, whatever their gifts may be. It will be on Aaron’s forehead continually so that they will be acceptable to the LORD. ¹ NIV

And thou shalt make a plate of pure gold, and grave upon it, like the engravings of a signet, HOLY TO JEHOVAH. ³⁷ And thou shalt put it on a lace of blue, and it shall be upon the mitre; upon the forefront of the mitre it shall be. ³⁸ And it shall be upon Aaron’s forehead, and Aaron shall bear the iniquity of the holy things, which the children of Israel shall hallow in all their holy gifts; and it shall be always upon his forehead, that they may be accepted before Jehovah. ² ASV

“Make an ornament of pure gold and engrave on it ‘Dedicated to the LORD’. ³⁷ Tie it to the front of the turban with a blue cord.

¹ *The Holy Bible : New International Version*. 1996 (electronic ed.) (Ex 28:36–38). Grand Rapids: Zondervan.

² *American Standard Version*. 1995 (Ex 28:36–38). Oak Harbor, WA: Logos Research Systems, Inc.

³⁸Aaron is to wear it on his forehead, so that I, the LORD, will accept all the offerings that the Israelites dedicate to me, even if the people commit some error in offering them.³ GNT

What is represented by the golden plate?

Read last paragraph, “Notice, too...” thoughts? What does it mean for Jesus to bear our sins?

The guilt of fallen humanity He must bear. Upon Him who knew no sin must be laid the **iniquity of us all**. So dreadful does sin appear to Him, **so great is the weight of guilt which He must bear**, that He is tempted to **fear** it will shut Him out forever from His Father's love. Feeling how terrible is the wrath of God against transgression, He exclaims, "My soul is exceeding sorrowful, even unto death." {DA 685.2}

What does it mean for Christ to be our sin Bearer? Does it mean recorded sin gets put upon Him and God metes out a certain amount of punishment upon Christ?

Notwithstanding that the sins of a guilty world were laid upon Christ, notwithstanding the humiliation of taking upon Himself our fallen nature, the voice from heaven declared Him to be the Son of the Eternal. {DA 112.3}

What does this mean?

The angels of heaven witnessed every movement made against their loved Commander. They longed to deliver Christ. Under God the angels are all-powerful. On one occasion, in obedience to the command of Christ, they slew of the Assyrian army in one night one hundred and eighty-five thousand men. How easily could the angels, beholding the shameful scene of the trial of Christ, have testified their indignation by consuming the adversaries of God! But they were not

³ American Bible Society. (1992). *The Holy Bible : The Good news Translation* (2nd ed.) (Ex 28:36–38). New York: American Bible Society.

commanded to do this. He who could have doomed His enemies to death bore with their cruelty. His love for His Father, and His pledge, made from the foundation of the world, **to become the Sin Bearer**, led Him to endure uncomplainingly the coarse treatment of those He came to save. **It was a part of His mission to bear, in His humanity, all the taunts and abuse that men could heap upon Him. The only hope of humanity was in this submission of Christ to all that He could endure from the hands and hearts of men.** {DA 700.5}

Is this what it means to bear our sins?

Could it mean simply that he endured what our sinfulness brought with it and overcame restoring mankind to its perfect original ideal?

In quoting the prophecy of the rejected stone, Christ referred to an actual occurrence in the history of Israel. The incident was connected with the building of the first temple. While it had a special application at the time of Christ's first advent, and should have appealed with special force to the Jews, it has also a lesson for us. When the temple of Solomon was erected, the immense stones for the walls and the foundation were entirely prepared at the quarry; after they were brought to the place of building, not an instrument was to be used upon them; the workmen had only to place them in position. For use in the foundation, one stone of unusual size and peculiar shape had been brought; but the workmen could find no place for it, and would not accept it. It was an annoyance to them as it lay unused in their way. Long it remained a rejected stone. But when the builders came to the laying of the corner, they searched for a long time to find a stone of sufficient size and strength, and of the proper shape, to take that particular place, and **bear the great weight which would rest upon it.** Should they make an unwise choice for this important place, the safety of the entire building would be endangered. They must find a stone capable of resisting the influence of the sun, of frost, and of tempest. Several stones had at different times been chosen, but under

the pressure of immense weights they had crumbled to pieces. **Others could not bear** the test of the sudden atmospheric changes. But at last attention was called to the stone so long rejected. It had been exposed to the air, to sun and storm, without revealing the slightest crack. The builders examined this stone. It had borne every test but one. **If it could bear the test of severe pressure, they decided to accept it for the cornerstone.** The trial was made. The stone was accepted, brought to its assigned position, and found to be an exact fit. In prophetic vision, Isaiah was shown that this stone was a symbol of Christ. He says: {DA 597.5}

"Sanctify the Lord of hosts Himself; and let Him be your fear, and let Him be your dread. And He shall be for a sanctuary; but for a stone of stumbling and for a rock of offense to both the houses of Israel, for a gin and for a snare to the inhabitants of Jerusalem. And many among them shall stumble, and fall, and be broken, and be snared, and be taken." Carried down in prophetic vision to the first advent, the prophet is shown that **Christ is to bear trials and tests of which the treatment of the chief cornerstone in the temple of Solomon was symbolic.** "Therefore thus saith the Lord God, Behold, I lay in Zion for a foundation a stone, a tried stone, a precious cornerstone, a sure foundation: he that believeth shall not make haste." Isa. 8:13-15; 28:16. {DA 598.1}

What was the purpose of these tests and trials which Christ was to bear? Why was He "bearing" it? Was it related to building the Temple in heaven?

Tell him this is what the LORD Almighty says: 'Here is the man whose name is the **Branch, and he will branch out from his place and build the temple of the LORD.** ¹³ **It is he who will build the temple of the LORD,** and he will be clothed with majesty and will sit and rule on his throne. And he will be a priest on his throne. And there will be harmony between the two.' Zechariah 6:12,13.

If the temple was already built, then why is the Branch (Christ) going to branch out to build the temple of the Lord?

THURSDAY

Read first paragraph, “Therefore, since...” thoughts?

What does this mean? Does it mean Jesus is more sympathetic than the Father? Does it mean that Jesus learned something that He or the Father didn't previously know or understand until Jesus became human?

Does it mean Jesus achieved something, in a human brain, that He previously didn't possess in His Godly form? What was that? A perfect humanity! Why is this significant?

- Remedy for human sinfulness
- Revelation of truth to destroy lies about God
- Evidence that Christ did not make a manufacturer's defect in creating mankind

Read second paragraph, “Because Christ resides...” Thoughts?

What does it mean “he ever lives to make intercession” for us? Where is Christ interceding?

- Our hearts and minds – Genesis 3
- Principalities and powers of darkness (angels holding back 4 winds of strife)
- In the course of sinfulness in mankind by becoming sin for us and curing our condition

What does it mean “we know that we stand perfect before God”?

The lesson points us to Heb 8:10-12:

This is the covenant I will make with the house of Israel
after that time, declares the Lord.
I will put my laws in their minds

- and write them on their hearts.
 I will be their God,
 and they will be my people.
- ¹¹ No longer will a man teach his neighbor,
 or a man his brother, saying, 'Know the Lord,'
 because they will all know me,
 from the least of them to the greatest.
- ¹² For I will forgive their wickedness
 and will remember their sins no more.

Thoughts? Is this why we stand before God perfect – because Christ lives in us and writes His perfect law on our hearts and minds?

MONDAY

Read second paragraph, “As we saw yesterday...” thoughts? Who needed mediation? Why was it necessary? Is it God’s preference to have someone other than God speak to us directly? Who prefers it this way?

¹⁸ When the people saw the thunder and lightning and heard the trumpet and saw the mountain in smoke, they trembled with fear. They stayed at a distance ¹⁹ and said to Moses, “**Speak to us yourself and we will listen. But do not have God speak to us or we will die.**”

²⁰ Moses said to the people, “**Do not be afraid.** God has come to test you, so that the fear of God will be with you to keep you from sinning.” Exodus 20:18-20

Thoughts? What is God’s preference? Is it not to speak to us face to face as with a friend? Why doesn’t He? Because we can’t endure it!

Christ was about to visit our world, and to become incarnate. He says, "A body hast Thou prepared Me." **Had He appeared with the glory that was His with the Father before the world was, we could not have endured the light of His presence. That we might behold it and not be destroyed, the manifestation of His glory was shrouded.** His divinity

was veiled with humanity,--the invisible glory in the visible human form. {DA 23.1}

Why would men have been destroyed if Christ would have come with unveiled glory? Would it indicate anger and hostility on God's part? Would Jesus have had an unloving heart or was it that something is broken in sinful man that cannot survive in God's unveiled presence?

Will it be different when Christ comes a second time? Will sinful, unregenerate men now be able to live in God's unveiled presence without being destroyed?

FRIDAY

Read the two quotations on Friday - what do these mean to you?

How do you hear them? Could they be misunderstood? If so how?

Read and discuss questions 1-3

SUNDAY

Read first paragraph – “Jesus said...” thoughts?

Have we as SDA's been given much? Who in history sounds like us as a group?

- Sabbath
- Health message
- Sanctuary
- Gift of prophetic writings
- Looking for the Advent
- Tithes and offerings

Was it enough to know these truths? What was missing? Could persons know all these truths and still crucify Christ? How?

Do we need to understand what these truths tell us about God? If these truths are viewed through the lens of an arbitrary or punitive God then rather than blessings these become cursings and result in harder hearts. This is what happened two thousand years ago.

Could it happen again? What can we do to prevent ourselves from being caught up into a movement that places us as enemies of God?

Is it enough to worship on the “right” day? What is essential?

Read third paragraph, “However, and here’s...” thoughts? What is the lesson? What does it say about God that he works with people who make such mistakes? What if He didn’t? What should our attitude be toward people after they have sinned?