

Garments of Grace Clothing Imagery in the Bible Lesson 11 2Q 2011

Guten Morgen, Wir sind wieder da! Wir hatten eine tolle zeit in Deutschland. Danke zu unsere freunde in deutschland. Wir sind dankbar für alles, was Sie getan haben. Wir vermissen dich schon. Wir hoffen, Sie bald zu sehen

The Wedding Garment

SABBATH

Read memory text, Romans 8:1

What does it mean?

Why is there no condemnation for those who are in Christ? What are the possible explanations?

- The legal price has been paid by Jesus and God cannot legally condemn us?
- Jesus stands between us and the Father and when the Father looks at us He only sees Jesus and therefore we are not condemned?
- Jesus pleads to His Father for mercy and the Father acquiesces to the pleas of His Son and doesn't condemn?
- Those "in Jesus" are "in unity" of heart and mind with Him and have been recreated in heart, mind, attitude to be like Jesus thus when the Father looks at us He sees the perfection of His Son restored within the believer?

There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit. Rom. 8:1. {FLB 103.1}

If sinners can be led to give one earnest look at the cross, if they can obtain a full view of the crucified Saviour, they will realize the depth of **God's compassion** and the **sinfulness of sin**. {FLB 103.2}

As **your conscience has been quickened** by the Holy Spirit, you have seen something of the **evil of sin, of its**

power, its guilt, its woe; and you look upon it with abhorrence. . . . You long to be **forgiven, to be cleansed,** to be set free. **Harmony with God, likeness to Him--** what can you do to obtain it? {FLB 103.3}

It is peace that you need--**Heaven's forgiveness and peace and love in the soul.** Money cannot buy it, intellect cannot procure it, wisdom cannot attain to it; you can never hope, by your own efforts, to secure it. But God offers it to you as a gift, "without money and without price." Isa. 55:1. . . . {FLB 103.4}

Go to Him, and ask that He will **wash away your sins, and give you a new heart.** Then believe that He does this because He has promised It is our privilege to go to Jesus and **be cleansed, and to stand before the law without shame or remorse.** {FLB 103.5}

As you read the promises, remember they are the expression of unutterable love and pity. . . . Yes, only believe that God is your helper. **He wants to restore His moral image in man.** As you draw near to Him with confession and repentance, He will draw near to you with mercy and forgiveness.

What do you hear in this passage? Do you hear the healing, restoring, regenerating message of God? Do you hear from where pain, suffering and misery arise? It is sin! Let us be clear – sin severs our connection with God, damages us, and ultimately brings death. God is constantly and always working to destroy sin and save sinners. God is the source of love and life!

So why is there no condemnation for those who are in Christ? Because they no longer live after the flesh but are changed, healed and renewed to live in harmony with the Spirit!

Read first paragraph, “Christian history...” thoughts? How can this happen? What would you say are the errors or missteps required for Christians to do horrible things in the name of Christ?

- Unconversion passing as conversion especially in leadership
 - What contributes to this?

- Could it be a false idea of what conversion means?
- What is conversion?
 - For the first 300 years after Christ what did it take to be a Christian?
 - What happened after that?
 - Conversion is the change of heart away from the birthright we received from Adam – the natural self-centeredness, to a heart which loves others more than self – our inheritance from Christ?
 - Is anything more than this required for conversion?
 - So those who retain selfishness as the primary motivator of their character but join the church could do such things.
- Accepting false views of God
 - What happens when people believe God will use His power to inflict “punishments” for sin?
 - What happens when people forget sin severs and destroys and instead see God as the great executioner?
- Unforgiveness, resentment, grudge holding
- Distorted ideas of justice – pigeon holing God’s government into the mold of earthly governments.

SUNDAY

Read first two paragraphs, “Matthew 21...” then, last two sentences of today’s lesson, “How sad – those who should have been teachers of others were the ones who had the most to learn and, in many cases, never learned it. When they finally do, it will be too late (Rom. 14:10).” thoughts?

Do you believe this is true?

If this is true what does it mean? What would be wise application of this reality?

- "We **must study the truth for ourselves. No man should be relied upon to think for us. No matter who he is, or in what position he may be placed, we are not to look upon any man as a criterion for us.** We are to counsel together,

and to be subject one to another; but at the same time we are to exercise the ability God has given us, in order to learn what is truth. Each one of us must look to God for divine enlightenment. We must individually develop a character that will stand the test in the day of God." *Testimonies to Ministers* 109,110; first published in *Gospel Workers*, 1892 ed., pp. 128,129; cf. 2RH 311:3:1 (*RH*, June 18, 1889); CW 45; ST, Feb. 6, 1893

- Would this include prophets? Should we surrender our thinking to prophets?
- "Satan is constantly endeavoring to attract attention to man in the place of God. He **leads the people to look to bishops, to pastors, to professors of theology, as their guides**, instead of searching the Scriptures to learn their duty for themselves. . . (*Reflecting Christ* 369)
- "There are today **thousands of professors of religion who can give no other reason for points of faith which they hold than that they were so instructed by their religious leaders**. They pass by the Saviour's teachings almost unnoticed, and place implicit confidence in the words of the ministers. But are ministers infallible? How can we trust our souls to their guidance unless we know from God's word that they are light bearers?" 4SP 413-415 (1884); *Great Controversy* 595-597 (1888); *RH*, June 7, 1906

We must each one study out the evidence for ourselves and come to our own conclusion based on the evidence, not on the preaching or opinion of another.

What can we do to ensure we don't fall into this group of religiously callous people?

TUESDAY

Read the second paragraph, "Have you ever..." thoughts? How can this be?

What can we do to ensure we are not among this group?

What is the difference from “playing” church, and being a church?

Would it not be love? Isn’t the difference that a healthy church, a genuine church, the people love each other, they care about each other, they take care of each other, they protect each other, including their reputations – they don’t turn on each other, attack each other, gossip about each other?

Friends, I want to experience real church – God’s love in our lives, here and now. This is what God wants for all of us!

At the bottom of the page we read, “Who are we to judge hearts? We shouldn’t judge – but God does, should, and will (Rom 14:10...). Seventh-day Adventists call it the ‘investigative judgment,’ and it is revealed in this parable.”

GO TO THURSDAY

Read last three paragraphs, “It’s so important...” thoughts?

When God went into the Garden and asked Adam questions – was God conducting and “investigation”? Was God conducting a judgment? Some might argue this – He condemned the serpent to crawl, cursed the ground, pronounced birth pains and women to be subject to their husbands, and cast the pair out of the Garden.

Many have taken this as God investigating, judging and punishing, but is it?

The lesson acknowledges that God didn’t need to investigate. He already knew. It rightly points out the Great Controversy – but fails to refocus our attention on what the central issue in the controversy actually is – what or who is actually being investigated?

Who did Satan make His allegations against? Are the angels and intelligences in the universe primarily concerned about Adam and Eve, or how God deals with Adam and Eve?

It is a war over the knowledge of God (2Cor 10:3-5).

Who should our focus be upon? God – He is demonstrating His character, which has been misrepresented. And what do we see in this case?

- Even though God knows where they were hiding – He doesn't use that knowledge to overwhelm, incite fear, intimidate, but instead to prevent fear He calls out to Adam. What does this say about God?
- He asks Adam questions – for what purpose? To “uncover” some facts he doesn't know, or to reveal to Adam the mess Adam was in and why? Wasn't it to help Adam to see that God was not the one condemning Him? What does this say about God?
- Mankind is now altered from God's design and is motivated by fear and selfishness, and will eternally die if God doesn't intervene to save. God pronounces a curse on the ground, was the curse an infliction by God or an announcement of what will be?
 - **Not one noxious plant was placed in the Lord's great garden, but after Adam and Eve sinned, poisonous herbs sprang up.** In the parable of the sower the question was asked the Master, "Didst not thou sow good seed in thy field? how then hath it tares?" The Master answered, "An enemy hath done this." **All tares are sown by the evil one. Every noxious herb is of his sowing, and by his ingenious methods of amalgamation he has corrupted the earth with tares** (MS 65, 1899) [published in F. D. Nichol, Ellen G. White and Her Critics]. {1BC 1086.2}
- And why didn't God intervene to prevent the curse? Why was it permitted? To punish or to bless, to give man work to keep him busy so he will be less likely to be ruined by his own selfish nature?
 - To Adam the Lord declared: "Because thou hast hearkened unto the voice of thy wife, and hast eaten of the tree, of which I commanded thee, saying, Thou shalt not eat of it: **cursed is the ground for thy sake;** in

sorrow shalt thou eat of it all the days of thy life; thorns also and thistles shall it bring forth to thee; and thou shalt eat the herb of the field; in the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread, till thou return unto the ground; for out of it wast thou taken: for dust thou art, and unto dust shalt thou return." {PP 59.2}

Under the curse of sin **all nature was to witness to man of the character and results of rebellion against God.** When God made man He made him rule over the earth and all living creatures. So long as Adam remained loyal to Heaven, all nature was in subjection to him. **But when he rebelled against the divine law, the inferior creatures were in rebellion against his rule.** Thus the Lord, in His great mercy, would **show men the sacredness of His law**, and lead them, by their own experience, to see the danger of setting it aside, even in the slightest degree. {PP 59.4}

And the life of toil and care which was henceforth to be man's lot was appointed in love. It was a discipline rendered needful by his sin, to place a check upon the indulgence of appetite and passion, to develop habits of self-control. It was a part of God's great plan of man's recovery from the ruin and degradation of sin. {PP 60.1}

- Does this sound like a punishment to you? What does it say about God?

Who is really being judged, us by God or are we judging God?

Paul says in Romans 3:4, "God may you be proved right when you are judged."

- **They thought themselves passing judgment on Christ; but in rejecting Him they were pronouncing sentence upon themselves.** "He that is of God," said Jesus, "heareth God's words: ye therefore hear them not, because ye are not of God." {DA 468.1}

The lesson is true for all time. Many a man who delights to quibble, to criticize, seeking for something to question in the

word of God, thinks that he is thereby giving evidence of independence of thought, and mental acuteness. **He supposes that he is sitting in judgment on the Bible, when in truth he is judging himself.** He makes it manifest that he is incapable of appreciating truths that originate in heaven, and that compass eternity. DA 468.2

- The people who beheld the Saviour at His advent were favored with a fuller manifestation of the divine presence than the world had ever enjoyed before. **The knowledge of God was revealed more perfectly. But in this very revelation, judgment was passing upon men. Their character was tested, their destiny determined.** {DA 475.2}

How does judgment get passed upon us? Who passes judgment upon us?

I have found it helpful to think of God's judgment like a doctor and not a lawyer. Doctors make diagnosis, which are judgments, based on the evidence of the condition of the person. It is the person's condition which determines the diagnosis, assuming the doctor doesn't misdiagnose, and with God He never does. And when the doctor diagnosis, he also makes "judgments" about what is the best treatment course. This is how we understand the "judgments" of God from the Old Testament times. God's "judgment" in cursing the ground, in casting out of the garden, in not giving rain to Israel for 3.5 years. Elijah believed through these "Judgments" Israel would be brought to repentance.

These are not punishments but are therapeutic interventions, judged to be most beneficial in the circumstance, but never removing freewill of the sinner to be rebellious and non-compliant with the treatment plan.

Imagine an HIV infected man and woman have a child born HIV infected, what did the child do wrong? Nothing, will the child have symptoms? Will the child die if not cured? Is the child held to blame for the condition of its birth? And what if a free remedy is offered

but the adult child refuses? Will he be held to blame for that rejection and thus let go to die of his disease?

Under the demonstration of the Holy Spirit's power, the Jews saw their guilt in refusing the evidence that God had sent; but they would not yield their wicked resistance. Their obstinacy became more and more determined, and worked the ruin of their souls. **It was not that they could not yield, for they could, yet would not.** It was not alone that they had been guilty, and deserving of wrath, but that they armed themselves with the attributes of Satan, and determinedly continued to be opposed to God. Every day, in their refusal to repent, they took up their rebellion afresh. They were preparing to reap that which they had sown. **The wrath of God is not declared against men merely because of the sins which they have committed, but for choosing to continue in a state of resistance,** and, although they have light and knowledge, repeating their sins of the past. If they would submit, they would be pardoned; but they are determined not to yield. They defy God by their obstinacy. These souls have given themselves to Satan, and he controls them according to his will. {TM 74.2}

What is being described?

MONDAY

The King's Invitation –

- Who is the king?
- To what is the invitation? The wedding supper –
- When does the wedding supper take place? After the wedding.
- Who is the groom?
- What is symbolized by the wedding?
- A wedding is when the groom receives the bride.
- Who is the bride of Christ?
 - In the summer and autumn of 1844, the proclamation, "Behold, the Bridegroom cometh," was given. The two classes represented by the wise and foolish virgins were

then developed,--one class who looked with joy to the Lord's appearing, and who had been diligently preparing to meet him; another class that, influenced by fear, and acting from impulse, had been satisfied with a theory of the truth, but were destitute of the grace of God. In the parable, when the bridegroom came, "they that were ready went in with him to the marriage." The coming of the bridegroom, here brought to view, takes place before the marriage. **The marriage represents the reception by Christ of his kingdom.** The holy city, the New Jerusalem, which is the capital and representative of the kingdom, is called "the bride, the Lamb's wife." Said the angel to John, "**Come hither, I will show thee the bride, the Lamb's wife.**" "**He carried me away in the spirit,**" says the prophet, "**and showed me that great city, the holy Jerusalem, descending out of Heaven from God.**" [REV. 21:9, 10.] Clearly, then, the bride represents the holy city, and the virgins that go out to meet the bridegroom are a symbol of the church. In the Revelation the people of God are said to be the guests at the marriage supper. [REV. 19:9.] **If guests, they cannot be represented also as the bride.** Christ, as stated by the prophet Daniel, will receive from the Ancient of days in Heaven, "dominion, and glory, and a kingdom," he will receive the New Jerusalem, the capital of his kingdom, "prepared as a bride adorned for her husband." [DAN. 7:14; REV. 21:2.] Having received the kingdom, he will come in his glory, as King of kings, and Lord of lords, for the redemption of his people, who are to "sit down with Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob," at his table in his kingdom, [MATT. 8:11; LUKE 22:30.] to partake of the marriage supper of the Lamb. {GC88 426.2}

- What do you think? Is the bride the city and the believers are the guests? Or is the church both the bride and the guests?
- What happens at a wedding, two become one, at-one-ment. Can Christ become one with inanimate nature with a building? Doesn't a marriage require love? Isn't the bride to

love the groom? Can a city love? Then is it possible the New Jerusalem is a metaphor for the redeemed?

- Christ honored the marriage relation by making it also a symbol of the union between Him and His redeemed ones. **He Himself is the Bridegroom; the bride is the church**, of which, as His chosen one, He says, "Thou art all fair, My love; there is no spot in thee." {AH 26.2}
- Very close and sacred is the relation between Christ and His church,--**He the bridegroom, and the church the bride**; He the head, and the church the body. Connection with Christ, then, involves connection with His church.-- Education, p. 268. (1903) {Ev 318.1}
- **The church is the bride, the Lamb's wife. She should keep herself pure, sanctified, holy.** Never should she indulge in any foolishness; for **she is the bride of a King**. Yet she does not realize her exalted position. If she understood this, she would be all-glorious within (Letter 177, 1901). {7BC 986.1}
- **The church is the bride of Christ, and her members are to yoke up with their Leader.** God warns us not to defile our garments (Letter 123 1/2, 1898). {7BC 986.2}

What do you think? Is this a contradiction or is the New Jerusalem merely a metaphor for the Church – the bride of Christ? Could the bride and New Jerusalem be one and the same?

- "And I John saw the Holy City, New Jerusalem, coming down from God out of heaven, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband." "Her light was like unto a stone most precious, even like a jasper stone, clear as crystal; and had a wall great and high, and had twelve gates, and at the gates twelve angels, and names written thereon, **which are the names of the twelve tribes of the children of Israel.**" "The twelve gates were twelve pearls; every several gate was of one pearl: and the street of the city was pure gold, as it were transparent glass. And I saw no temple therein: for the Lord God Almighty and the Lamb are the temple of it." Revelation 21:2, 11, 12, 21, 22.

- **The wall of the city had twelve foundations, and on them were the names of the twelve apostles of the Lamb....**The wall was made of jasper, and the city of pure gold, as pure as glass.¹⁹ The foundations of the city walls were decorated with every kind of precious stone. The first foundation was jasper, the second sapphire, the third chalcedony, the fourth emerald,²⁰ the fifth sardonyx, the sixth carnelian, the seventh chrysolite, the eighth beryl, the ninth topaz, the tenth chrysoprase, the eleventh jacinth, and the twelfth amethyst.²¹ The twelve gates were twelve pearls, each gate made of a single pearl. The great street of the city was of pure gold, like transparent glass. Rev 21:14, 19-21
- Consequently, you are no longer foreigners and aliens, but fellow citizens with **God's people and members of God's household,**²⁰ **built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, with Christ Jesus himself as the chief cornerstone.**²¹ In him the whole building is joined together and rises to become a holy temple in the Lord.²² And in him you too are being built together to become a dwelling in which God lives by his Spirit. Ephesians 2:19-22
- Who makes all the wedding arrangement?
- What is our role?

Is this similar to being sick and a doctor preparing a cure and offering it free? What would our role be? To accept and receive what has been prepared for us.

FRIDAY

Read top two paragraphs, “But the plan...” thoughts?

What must we see? The difference between the character of God and the character of Satan! What would you say are the defining, demarcating differences between the two?

- God is love, Satan is selfish
- God is truthful, Satan a liar

- God is humble, Satan is proud
- God is kind, Satan is cruel
- God respects freedom, Satan coerces
- God is the source of life, Satan the source of death

Can we test our doctrines with this list?