

# GRACE GAZETTE

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*Wherefore lift up the hands which hang down, and the feeble knees; And make straight paths for your feet, lest that which is lame be turned out of the way; but let it rather be healed.*

*Hebrews 12:12-13*

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## FIG LEAVES AND FUR

*And the eyes of them both were opened, and they knew that they were naked; and they sewed fig leaves together, and made themselves aprons.*

*Genesis 3:7*

Last week we commented on the fact that man is quite capable of sorrowing over sin in his flesh after a fashion. There is such a thing as a natural repentance which may be sincere insofar as a man may feel genuine remorse for the pain and suffering to himself and others caused by his indiscretions and transgressions. Judas is a good illustration of such remorse which was so severe as to drive him to suicide. We cited Esau as an example the scripture uses of someone who was brought to tears because he could not get his father to change his mind and bless him after he had disregarded the worth of his birthright.

The scripture indicates that there is a natural knowledge of the law of GOD which is recorded in the hearts of men by the hand of GOD. (see Rom.2:12-16). Joseph's brothers exhibit this very characteristic when faced with what they believe is a comeuppance for their sin against Joseph. (see Gen.42:21) Plainly, Adam and Eve were made aware of their nakedness in the garden after they ate of the forbidden fruit and the "eyes of them both were opened". Now the scripture says that they would die if they ate that fruit. When the Bible says "*in the day that thou eatest thereof*" the indication is that this is something that took place immediately and a change was wrought in them as they ate. Something in them died that day, but it was not their fleshly body (Adam lived to be 930 years old), although it began to decay in the normal progression of a mortal from that very moment. The curse which was placed upon them is evidence that they were separated from the ONE with whom it would appear they had fellowshiped with in the garden to some extent, prior to the incident recorded here in the third chapter. This is somewhat speculative since the scripture does not actually say so but it does say Adam recognized the voice of the LORD (v.10).

So Adam, moving in the darkness of his own fleshly understanding recognized his nakedness and sought to cover it by sewing together some fig leaves to make aprons for himself and his wife. It is interesting to point out that an apron is normally that which would cover the loins wherein are the sexual organs. Up until that point they were both naked but in their innocence (no knowledge of good and evil) they had no need in their own mind to cover any part of their body. Paul said, "*I know, and am persuaded by the Lord Jesus, that there is nothing unclean of itself: but to him that esteemeth any thing to be unclean, to him it is unclean.*" (Rom 14:14) Now he was primarily talking about meats and drinks but the principle is the same for all things. We are to call nothing which the LORD created; common or unclean. But the knowledge of sin which the natural man has is limited to the natural realm. Adam was embarrassed by his nakedness and perhaps the fact that he knew he had

disobeyed GOD, so he and Eve hid themselves. Man's problem with lust and concupiscence is not due to the fact that he has sexual organs but that his heart is corrupt and would desire to misuse the very part of his body which would perpetuate his own race.

Men are no different today than he was then. Adam thought he could adequately cover himself and make himself presentable by some effort of his own, therefore they became the first "tailors" on earth. Men have been doing the same ever since. Yet men cannot in their natural mind understand the nature of their nakedness before GOD. They think that the outward body is that which can be covered and made presentable with just a covering over those things that they judge to be "wrong". Some of man's fig leaves are:

**Morality.** This is probably the first tree he runs to in order to make himself presentable to men and to some extent to GOD. The Pharisees were such moralists, thinking that they were keepers of the law. They would not consider committing adultery in fact, but the LORD told them that if a man even looked upon a woman to lust he had already committed the act. Good deeds and general good neighborliness are considered quite valuable. Pay it forward, what would Jesus do, and send somebody some money to feed the poor somewhere

**Religion.** Men are convinced that their religions can act as a covering. This Sunday many church houses across the land will be filled to capacity as men exercise "religion". Most get enough of a dose on this one day that they don't have to come back for a whole year. Yet many who actually have the same notion of the importance of "religion" will faithfully gather each time the doors of the meeting house is opened. They will probably look down their noses at the "once a year" boys, thinking how much more devoted they are than these and sure that their fig leaf apron is sewn tightly.

**Religiosity.** This is very akin to "religion" but goes one step further, believing that the level of ones "devotion" is much more conducive to a proper covering. Those who wear this apron are convinced that sacrifice and fervor are the golden thread which holds their covering together. These are those who question the LORD in Mat.7:22. More hours of service, more money given, more prayer cloths and dedications, more reverence for days and seasons along with a little "sound doctrine", surely must help man's ability to be covered, in their mind.

None of these fig leaves are able to give men the covering that they need. These can only provide the type of covering a man thinks is sufficient. Adam's apron only covered the portion of himself that he perceived to need covering. He thought his nakedness was that which could be seen with the eyes of the flesh. What he could not see (nor can any other of his sons apart from divine illumination) was that his corruption was not visual (though it may produce symptoms that are) but was a matter of the heart. He had no idea what it was that separated between him and the LORD (see Isa.59:2) nor did he even have any inkling what could repair that breach or give him a right standing with GOD.

Yet GOD has provided a covering for HIS elect bride and we see HIM illustrate that. *"Unto Adam also and to his wife did the LORD God make coats of skins, and clothed them."* (Gen 3:21) HE has clothed HIS people by HIS own hand. Blood was shed to make this covering. HE has covered HIS people not just with an apron, but completely. The animals from which these skins were taken were made before Adam sinned. Redemption is not an afterthought. JESUS CHRIST who is our COVERING was the *"LAMB slain from the foundation of the world."* (Rev.13:8) The SPIRIT of GOD must quicken a man and teach him the folly of trusting in the arm of the flesh or in some righteousness of his own. Oh the sweet balm of Gilead which is applied by that SPIRIT as the gospel of the glory of the Blessed GOD is proclaimed and those HE has brought down to their knees to understand their abject poverty can rejoice in the free grace of GOD in supplying their need before they knew it.