

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

THE GARMENT OF CHRIST

And in the midst of the seven candlesticks one like unto the Son of man, clothed with a garment down to the foot, and girt about the paps with a golden girdle.

Revelation 1:13

The very first "garment" or covering of man, which we read about in the scriptures, are those aprons which Adam and Eve fashioned, by their own hands, to cover their nakedness before GOD. *"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."* (Gen 3:7) Ever since that time men have devised many "coverings" for the same purpose, and all are completely unsuited to their need.

The foolishness of their endeavor is illustrated as the LORD HIMSELF clothed them with the first proper garment given to men, one which would stand the test of time and not only hid their nakedness but ministered comfort to them as well. *"Unto Adam also and to his wife did the LORD God make coats of skins, and clothed them."* (Gen 3:21) It is very likely that these skins came from animals which were sacrificed for their sake. This further illustrates the purpose of GOD to cover the sins of HIS people through a blood SACRIFICE which they could not provide themselves.

The mercy and kindness of GOD towards sinners is evidenced in HIS covering of them. HE had no obligation to do so, especially in light of the fact that they had shown themselves to be rebels against HIM and were those who despised HIS law and disobeyed HIS precepts. This covering of them is but a precursor of the kindness of the LORD to rebel sinners in every generation, which we now see, in the unfolding of the gospel which Paul describes to Titus. *"For we ourselves also were sometimes foolish, disobedient, deceived, serving divers lusts and pleasures, living in malice and envy, hateful, and hating one another. But after that the kindness and love of God our Saviour toward man appeared, Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost; Which he shed on us abundantly through Jesus Christ our Saviour; That being justified by his grace, we should be made heirs according to the hope of eternal life."* (Titus 3:3-7)

In all ages, this COVERING, is the only RIGHTEOUSNESS in which any man has ever stood accepted before GOD. It was in this RIGHTEOUSNESS that Enoch stood who walked with GOD and was not. It was this GARMENT which was wrapped around Noah as he found grace in the eyes of the LORD and was seen as righteous in his generation, as the multitude around him perished. It was this GARMENT in which Abraham was clothed even while yet in Ur of the Chaldees, as the LORD called him from darkness to LIGHT. It was in this RIGHTEOUSNESS that Moses was covered as he led the children of Israel out of Egypt and to the very brink of the promised land.

And it was while clothed in this COVERING that Joshua led the nation of Israel to victory in the conquest of that land of promise. Not one deed which any of these men accomplished enhanced their standing with GOD, nor did any failure they might have exhibited along the way, disqualify them in HIS sight, since HE had already made them "perfect" in the RIGHTEOUSNESS of JESUS CHRIST who bore their sin and clothed them in that GARMENT of holiness which belonged to HIM alone. They were and are complete in HIM even as every one of HIS children, both, before and after them. *"For in him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily. And ye are complete in him, which is the head of all principality and power: In whom also ye are circumcised with the*

circumcision made without hands, in putting off the body of the sins of the flesh by the circumcision of Christ: Buried with him in baptism, wherein also ye are risen with him through the faith of the operation of God, who hath raised him from the dead. And you, being dead in your sins and the uncircumcision of your flesh, hath he quickened together with him, having forgiven you all trespasses; Blotting out the handwriting of ordinances that was against us, which was contrary to us, and took it out of the way, nailing it to his cross; And having spoiled principalities and powers, he made a shew of them openly, triumphing over them in it.” (Col 2:9-15)

In John’s vision on the Isle of Patmos, he describes seeing HIM “*clothed with a garment*”. Now he had walked and talked with this MAN CHRIST JESUS for a period of about three years. He even described himself as the “disciple whom the LORD loved”. Yet this vision of HIM “*high and lifted up*” (to borrow Isaiah’s words as he described a similar vision) was overwhelming to him. “*His head and his hairs were white like wool, as white as snow; and his eyes were as a flame of fire; And his feet like unto fine brass, as if they burned in a furnace; and his voice as the sound of many waters. And he had in his right hand seven stars: and out of his mouth went a sharp twoedged sword: and his countenance was as the sun shineth in his strength.*” (Rev 1:14-16)

Rather than running to embrace HIM or seeking conversation with HIM he says, “*And when I saw him, I fell at his feet as dead.*” (Rev 1:17) While he had seen and talked with HIM for many days as the LORD walked among men clothed in the GARMENT of humility, yet now he sees HIM as HE is, the LORD of glory who dwells in the LIGHT to which no man can approach. It is impossible for men to stand in the presence of HIS glory except that HE should be pleased to reveal HIMSELF as HE walked among men. As HE told Moses, “*Thou canst not see my face: for there shall no man see me, and live.*” (Exo 33:20) John would have remained in this state of abject fear and silence were it not that HE who is the embodiment of GRACE and MERCY, reached down HIS HAND as John recounts, “*And he laid his right hand upon me, saying unto me, Fear not; I am the first and the last: I am he that liveth, and was dead; and, behold, I am alive for evermore, Amen; and have the keys of hell and of death.*” (Rev 1:17-18)

John saw firsthand, HIM who David extolled saying, “*Bless the LORD, O my soul. O LORD my God, thou art very great; thou art clothed with honour and majesty. Who coverest thyself with light as with a garment: who stretchest out the heavens like a curtain.*” (Psa 104:1-2) HE who could not be covered or bound with anything, in order to reveal HIMSELF unto men, clothed HIMSELF with LIGHT, that HE might be the LIGHT of the world, in order to draw HIS children unto HIMSELF in HIS own time. Paul describes this calling when he said, “*For God, who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, hath shined in our hearts, to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ.*” (2Cor 4:6) How else could we have known HIM? “*Canst thou by searching find out God? canst thou find out the Almighty unto perfection? It is as high as heaven; what canst thou do? deeper than hell; what canst thou know?*” (Job 11:7-8)

And so we are brought back to consider this “garment in which CHRIST is clothed”. A garment of LIGHT and LIFE which belongs to HIM and is representative of that RIGHTEOUSNESS which is HIS possession. No man can be covered by it except according to HIS mercy which HE has plainly declared HE will sovereignly dispense. At the same time HE has demonstrated HIS perfect willingness to show mercy to all who call upon HIS NAME. As the Psalmist has said, “*For as the heaven is high above the earth, so great is his mercy toward them that fear him. As far as the east is from the west, so far hath he removed our transgressions from us. Like as a father pitieth his children, so the LORD pitieth them that fear him. For he knoweth our frame; he remembereth that we are dust.*” (Psa 103:11-14)

It was this “pity” (i.e.; abundant mercy) that caused HIM to reach down HIS HAND and speak words of comfort and hope to John saying “*Fear not, I AM the FIRST and the LAST*”. Even now HE does comfort those who mourn for their sin and who feel their separation from HIM by sending the gospel of HIS free grace to their ears which HE opens to hear this glorious message. “*To appoint unto them that mourn in Zion, to give unto them beauty for ashes, the oil of joy for mourning, the garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness; that they might be called trees of righteousness, the planting of the LORD, that he might be glorified.*” (Isa 61:3) This is the garment of CHRIST which HE is pleased to give to those who tremble in HIS presence. Have you heard HIS glorious word and believed? HE’s the SAVIOR of sinners. mam