

ARE YOU WEARING YOUR SPIRITUAL CLOTHES?

Today I'd like to talk about what God says about clothing and how that applies to our lives, and ask the question "Are You Wearing Your Spiritual Clothing?" It's an important subject in the Bible, with hundreds of references to clothes. We can't look at everything the Bible says about it, but just the highlights.

It's not far into the Bible when clothes are first mentioned.

Genesis 3:5 "For God knows that when you eat from it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil."

Satan said if they ate the fruit, their eyes would be opened and they would be like God.

Verse 7 "Then the eyes of both of them were opened, and they realised they were naked; so they sewed fig leaves together and made coverings for themselves."

Their eyes were opened and the first thing they realised was that they were naked.

Their knowledge of good and evil that was to "make them be like God" actually resulted in the knowledge they weren't even like each other! They were ashamed of their nakedness, and made clothes to hide their differences from one another. Not only did they hide from one another in this way, they also tried to hide themselves from God (verse 8). So the first clothes ever made were in order to cover and hide guilt.

It seems that if Adam and Eve hadn't sinned, there would be no need to wear clothes (Gen 2:25). But they did sin, and we've all sinned since then, and the whole world wears clothes, so I'm not going to say we should all become nudists!

Once mankind made this choice, God backed it up, and in verse 21 He actually made clothes for them. He made them from skin, which was from animals, so that pictures the death of animals, and is a picture pointing ahead to the death of Christ, to cover our spiritual nakedness, our sins.

The next major mention of clothing in the Bible is the description in Exodus 28 of the clothing God commanded to be made for the Priests. The whole chapter is devoted to this.

Exodus 28:2, 4-5 ²"Make sacred garments for your brother Aaron to give him dignity and honour. ⁴These are the garments they are to make: a breastpiece, an ephod, a robe, a woven tunic, a turban and a sash. They are to make these sacred garments for your brother Aaron and his sons, so they may serve me as priests. ⁵Have them use gold, and blue, purple and scarlet yarn, and fine linen."

The clothes were quality garments, to give the Priests dignity and honour.

Verse 43 "Aaron and his sons must wear them whenever they enter the tent of meeting or approach the altar to minister in the Holy Place, so that they will not incur guilt and die." "This is to be a lasting ordinance for Aaron and his descendants."

An interesting flashback to Adam and Eve: these clothes were to be worn to cover guilt, just as Adam and Eve were given the skins to cover guilt. And God gives us clothes to cover our guilt too, as we will come to in a few minutes.

1 Peter 3:3-4 ³“Your beauty should not come from outward adornment, such as elaborate hairstyles and the wearing of gold jewellery or fine clothes. ⁴Rather, it should be that of your inner self, the unfading beauty of a gentle and quiet spirit, which is of great worth in God’s sight.”

It’s okay to wear beautiful clothes, but real beauty in God’s eyes comes from the inside. The inner beauty of a good attitude is more important than lovely clothes to God, who looks not only on outside appearances, but also on the heart.

There’s a similar sentiment to this shown in Matthew 6:28-33: ²⁸“And why do you worry about clothes? See how the flowers of the field grow. They do not labour or spin. ²⁹Yet I tell you that not even Solomon in all his splendour was dressed like one of these. ³⁰If that is how God clothes the grass of the field, which is here today and tomorrow is thrown into the fire, will He not much more clothe you—you of little faith? ³¹So do not worry, saying, ‘What shall we eat?’ or ‘What shall we drink?’ or ‘What shall we wear?’ ³²For the pagans run after all these things, and your heavenly Father knows that you need them. ³³But seek first His kingdom and His righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well.”

Clothes are only a physical thing—spiritual things are more important.

Matthew 22:1-14 is a parable showing how important clothes are.

Verse 2 gives the setting: “The kingdom of heaven is like a king who prepared a wedding banquet for his son.”

¹³“Then the king told the attendants, ‘Tie him hand and foot, and throw him outside into the darkness, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.’¹⁴“For many are invited, but few are chosen.”

The note in the Life Application Bible is helpful: “It was customary for wedding guests to be given garments to wear to the banquet. It was unthinkable (and arrogant) to refuse to wear those garments. The wedding clothes picture the righteousness needed to enter God’s Kingdom—the total acceptance in God’s eyes that Christ gives every believer. Christ has provided this garment of righteousness for everyone, but each person must choose to put it on in order to enter the King’s banquet (eternal life.)”

So here we are finding there is spiritual clothing that is much more important than any physical clothing. We must have on a certain spiritual wedding garment in order to be in the Kingdom of God. Are you wearing that clothing? Let’s read more about that clothing.

Isaiah 61:10 “I delight greatly in the LORD; my soul rejoices in my God. For He has clothed me with garments of salvation and arrayed me in a robe of His righteousness, as a bridegroom adorns his head like a priest, and as a bride adorns herself with her jewels.”

A beautiful verse! There are garments of salvation, and God clothes us with them.

Zechariah 3:3 “Now Joshua was dressed in filthy clothes as he stood before the angel.”

Joshua the High Priest was dressed in filthy clothes – representing his sin.

Verse 4-5 ⁴“The angel said to those who were standing before him, “Take off his filthy clothes.” Then he said to Joshua, “See, I have taken away your sin, and I will put fine garments on you.” ⁵ Then I said, “Put a clean turban on his head.” So they put a clean turban on his head and clothed him, while the angel of the LORD stood by.”

God can replace sin and cover the nakedness with beautiful clothes. How does this apply to us?

Colossians 3:8: “But now you must also rid yourselves of all such things as these: anger, rage, malice, slander, and filthy language from your lips.”

The imagery here is of putting off clothes, like stripping a dirty garment off yourself. The word “**habit**” refers to an article of clothing, a distinctive dress or costume of a religious order. But it also refers to a pattern of behaviour. When we do things often they become habits and if these things of Verse 8 are habits of behaviour, they need to be put off like a garment!

Verse 9 “Do not lie to each other, since you have taken off your old self with its practices ¹⁰ and have put on the new self, which is being renewed in knowledge in the image of its Creator.”

Take off the old habits, and put on (the imagery again is of clothes) the new suit of clothes of righteousness.

Verse 12 “Therefore, as God’s chosen people, holy and dearly loved, clothe yourselves with compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience.”

These are the clothes to put on! How do we put them on? They are the fruits of the Holy Spirit. Jesus gives us these garments when we are baptised, by giving us the Holy Spirit. When we receive the Holy Spirit and yield to its work in our lives, we are putting on this clothing, and we will be there at the banquet. Note that God gives us the clothes—it’s up to us to put them on.

Verse 14 “And over all these virtues put on love, which binds them all together in perfect unity.”

Love is the ultimate accessory—our single most important piece of outerwear, which pulls the whole outfit together—binds the other virtues together in perfect unity.

Romans 13:12 has an interesting picture of this.

“The night is nearly over; the day is almost here. So let us put aside the deeds of darkness and put on the armour of light.”

A Christian is like someone who gets up early in the morning and takes off his night clothes (the past life of darkness) and puts on good clothes, which is compared to armour—because the Christian life is a fight against evil.

Verse 14 describes this as “clothing ourselves with Jesus Christ.” To be clothed with Jesus means if others see us, they see Jesus.

But this is talking of the inside, not our outward appearance. The spiritual clothing is worn in our hearts and minds, when Jesus and the Holy Spirit are in there.

Galatians 3:27 “for all of you who were baptised into Christ have clothed yourselves with Christ.” This is an interesting description of what happens at baptism—we are clothed with Christ. We put on the robes of righteousness that Christ gives us through the Holy Spirit.

Let's wrap up the whole subject of clothing by looking at some scriptures in the book of Revelation.

Rev. 1:12-13 ¹²“I turned around to see the voice that was speaking to me. And when I turned I saw seven golden lampstands, ¹³and among the lampstands was someone like a son of man, dressed in a robe reaching down to his feet and with a golden sash around his chest.”

Notice the beautiful clothing worn by Jesus in this vision of Him shown to John.

Rev. 3:4 “Yet you have a few people in Sardis who have not soiled their clothes. They will walk with me, dressed in white, for they are worthy.”

Dirty clothes picture sin. (Remember Joshua the High Priest in dirty garments.) (Sardis was renowned for its wool industry, and apparently people with dirty clothes were greatly looked down on.) White clothes are a symbol of a pure mind.

Verse 18 “I counsel you to buy from me gold refined in the fire, so you can become rich; and white clothes to wear, so you can cover your shameful nakedness; and salve to put on your eyes, so you can see.”

Spiritual nakedness pictures sin. We can obtain white clothes to wear to cover that sin. How? By being baptised and receiving the robes of righteousness, the clean white linen, pictured when we receive the Holy Spirit.

In a number of places in Revelation, the saints are pictured as wearing white robes. (E.g. Ch. 6:11, 7:9; 13; 19:14).

Notice Revelation 7:13-14 ¹³“Then one of the elders asked me, “These in white robes—who are they, and where did they come from?” ¹⁴I answered, “Sir, you know.” And he said, “These are they who have come out of the great tribulation; they have washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb.”

The blood of Christ covers our dirty clothes stained by sin, and makes them whiter than white!

Revelation 19:7-8 ⁷“Let us rejoice and be glad and give Him glory! For the wedding of the Lamb has come, and His bride has made herself ready. ⁸Fine linen, bright and clean, was given her to wear.”

(Fine linen stands for the righteous acts of God's holy people.)

To be at the banquet table at the marriage supper of the Lamb, to be in the Kingdom of God, we need these garments. They are given to us by Jesus Christ. All we have to do is put them on. To accept Him into our life to cover our sins, to take off the dirty garments of sinful thoughts and actions, and to yield to the Holy Spirit working in our lives to put on the glorious rich white clothes of pure and blameless thoughts and actions.

Revelation 9:13-14 ¹³“He is dressed in a robe dipped in blood, and His name is the Word of God.

¹⁴The armies of heaven were following Him, riding on white horses and dressed in fine linen, white and clean.”

His robe was dipped in blood, a reference to the crucifixion; the saints in white linen: this is only possible because Christ's white robe was dipped in blood.)

Revelation 21:2 “I saw the Holy City, the new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride beautifully dressed for her husband.”

The new Jerusalem beautifully dressed—like a bride.

Verses 9-10 ⁹ One of the seven angels who had the seven bowls full of the seven last plagues came and said to me, “Come, I will show you the bride, the wife of the Lamb.” ¹⁰ And he carried me away in the Spirit to a mountain great and high, and showed me the Holy City, Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God.

These verses show the new Jerusalem is the Church: it is we who are dressed beautifully like a bride for Christ, in the garments of salvation He has given us.

The last Bible reference to clothes is in Revelation 22:14: “Blessed are those who wash their robes, that they may have the right to the tree of life and may go through the gates into the city.”

We are blessed if we wash our clothes. How do we do that? In the water of baptism, when Christ’s blood covers our dirty clothes of sin. And so we put on the glorious rich white robes of righteousness and salvation that Jesus gives us, the beautiful robes we will wear to the marriage supper of the Lamb.

Let’s make sure we’re all wearing our spiritual clothes!