

Garments of the Lord Jesus

1. Luke 2:12 Wrapped in swaddling clothes
2. Luke 8:44 She touched the hem of His garment
3. Luke 9:29 His garments white and glistening
4. John 13:4 He laid aside His garments
5. John 19:23 They cast lots for His vesture
6. John 19:40 & 20:5-7 The linen clothes lying

One of the essentials that any biographer would give of his subject would be a description of his physical appearance. He would tell us of his height, his physique – whether heavy or light, his hair, his eyes, his style of dress etc. It is remarkable then that the Bible contains four accounts of the life and times of Jesus of Nazareth yet there is nothing at all to describe His physical appearance. We can see one doctrinal reason for this omission. In II Corinthians 5:16, Paul writes:

Wherefore henceforth know we no man after the flesh: yea, though we have known Christ after the flesh, yet now henceforth know we him no more.

The Christian's view of Christ is to look up into heaven where He is seated at the right hand of God. He is our risen, glorified Lord. Perhaps also in His wisdom God knew that any details regarding the Lord's physical appearance would only add to the speculation and superstition surrounding His Son. His physical appearance therefore is of no consequence to us.

What we do read of in the gospels are various mentions of His garments. Even then, other than that they were white, we know nothing more. Yet the various mentions of His garments tell us much about His humility, His power, His future glory, His present ministry, His death, and His resurrection.

1. Luke 2:12

And this shall be a sign unto you; Ye shall find the babe wrapped in swaddling clothes, lying in a manger.

The greatest event that the world has ever known has taken place. The eternal Son of God has entered into humanity. The Creator of the universe is held in the arms of His mother. Yet it seems that this great event is to pass almost unnoticed. It is the dead of night and the world is asleep. Only a few shepherds are awake. They sit with their flock above the town of Bethlehem when suddenly the angel of the Lord reveals himself to them. He has a great proclamation to make. "Unto you is born this day in the city of David, a Saviour which is Christ the Lord." What great titles belong to this baby. This one angel is suddenly joined by a multitude of the heavenly host praising God etc. It is as if heaven cannot contain the joy of these angels.

But where would the shepherds find this child? Would it be in some great man's house or in some royal palace? In Matthew 2, when the wise men came at a later date, they came to Herod's palace, for where else could they expect to find a king? But in Luke 2 there was no grand house or great palace. So how could they distinguish this baby from any other in Bethlehem that night? The baby was indeed unique, not in the opulence or majesty of His surroundings, but in His humility. They would find the babe wrapped in swaddling clothes and lying in a manger. There was no other baby like it anywhere in Bethlehem. And why was He in a manger? There was no room for His parents in the inn. Apart from the inn being busy because of the Roman census, who would give a room to a poor carpenter from a place like Nazareth? Likewise, the world would soon have no time for this Jesus of Nazareth.

Luke is the gospel of the three inns. In chapter 2, we have the world's inn. In chapter 10, we have the inn of the Good Samaritan. In chapter 22, we have the guest chamber, to which the Lord brings His disciples.

Hence, the first mention of His garments is an evidence of His humility.

Luke in his gospel tells us of the poverty that marked His parents. When they brought the baby to Jerusalem to the temple, they offered their sacrifice, they offered a pair of turtledoves. Now if we refer back to Leviticus, we learn that the woman was to offer a lamb for her purification, but if she be not able to bring a lamb, she could bring two

turtledoves or two young pigeons. God in His grace made allowances for the poor among His people. Among such were Mary and Joseph.

2. Luke 8:44 The border of His garment

43 And a woman having an issue of blood twelve years, which had spent all her living upon physicians, neither could be healed of any,

44 Came behind him, and touched the border of his garment: and immediately her issue of blood stancheth.

45 And Jesus said, Who touched me? When all denied, Peter and they that were with him said, Master, the multitude throng thee and press thee, and sayest thou, Who touched me?

The Lord is in the midst of a crowd. He is no doubt being jostled from one side to another. But in the crowd there is a woman with a grave problem. She has had an issue of blood for twelve years, which could not be healed. She had spent all her living on physicians and was nothing bettered but only grew worse. As the Lord passes through, He suddenly stops and asks the question, "Who touched Me?" Peter is amazed that He should ask such a thing for the crowd was pressing itself upon Him. Many were touching Him, but this touch was different for it was the touch of faith. The woman was rewarded and immediately her issue is healed. The woman comes confessing what she had done and making known her healing.

It is a picture of the sympathetic Saviour. He felt the woman's touch and knew that virtue or power had gone out of Him. The Lord entered into the feelings of those whom He healed. Elsewhere men said of Him, "Surely He hath borne our griefs and carried our sorrows". It is a picture also of our great high priest. He is the One who can be touched with the feeling of our infirmities – not just with our infirmities but the feeling of them. The Greek word for feeling in Hebrews chapter 4 is indeed the word from which we get the English word "sympathy".

Finally, it is a picture of prayer. There are many voices being raised up to heaven, many of them the clamour of empty profession. But the Lord hears the cry of His own and responds to it.

The woman is sent away with the following words:

48 And he said unto her, Daughter, be of good comfort: thy faith hath made thee whole; go in peace.

Many were healed by the Lord Jesus but we do not always hear of the faith of those involved. When four men brought their friend to meet the Lord, they could not get into the house, so they removed the roof tiles and let him down into the room. "When Jesus saw their faith", He responded to it. Likewise we read of the faith of the Roman centurion who pleaded for his servant. "I am not worthy that Thou shouldst come under my roof. But speak the word only and my servant shall be healed". The Lord marveled at his faith.

3. Luke 9:29 The transfiguration

And as he prayed, the fashion of his countenance was altered, and his raiment was white

and glistening.

Out of the three writers who record this incident, only Luke records the fact that the Lord was praying on the mountain top. It is typical of Luke – it is the gospel of the perfect man, and the perfect man is also the dependent man. Hence in Luke's gospel, we find the Lord in prayer on no less than eleven occasions.

What is the transfiguration scene all about? We get the answer in the Lord's remarks to His disciples just 8 days earlier.

27 But I tell you of a truth, there be some standing here, which shall not taste of death, till they see the kingdom of God.

It is indeed a preview of the kingdom of God, in which the Lord will be seen glorified amongst His people. This will not be until the Millennium, some years after the Rapture.

We often think of prayer changing things but here we have an example of prayer changing the man. It was as He prayed that He was changed. If we were really men and women of prayer, no doubt this would be true of us also and prayer would change us. In Philippians chapter 4, Paul tells us to be anxious for nothing, but in every thing, by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, to let our requests be made known to God. As a result of so doing, we would be garrisoned by the peace of God.

The Lord is joined on the mountain by Moses and Elijah. Only Luke records the subject of their conversation. "They spake of His decease that He should accomplish at Jerusalem". The future glory had to be put aside for a little while until He has accomplished His death. Luke also records the fact that it was as Moses and Elijah departed that Peter suggested, "let us build here three tabernacles". Peter, I believe, was so enthralled by this scene of glory that he wanted it to continue. The erection of the tabernacles is reminiscent of the feast of tabernacles, the last of the feasts of Jehovah to be fulfilled, typical of millennial glory. Whether Peter was aware of this, we cannot tell – but this was not the time for the feast of tabernacles, for first the Passover had to be fulfilled.

So if the first mention of His garments speaks of humility and the second of His power to heal and His priesthood, this third occasion speaks of His future glory.

4. John 13:4

He riseth from supper, and laid aside his garments; and took a towel, and girded himself.

This is the well-known incident of the feet washing in the upper room. It is generally looked upon as an example of the Lord's humility, which it is of course, but I believe it has a deeper meaning than simply humility. The answer lies in the conversation that the Lord has with Peter. Peter begins by asking the Lord a question. "Dost Thou wash my feet?" Both the pronouns "Thou" and "my" are emphatic. Peter is thinking, "This is too humble a task for you to be doing to me. I should be washing your feet". But the Lord who can read Peter's thoughts, replies "What I do thou knowest not now but thou shalt know hereafter". In other words, "It's not what you think it is, Peter, but you will learn about it later". Peter's question, however, soon turns to a blunt refusal, "Thou shalt never wash my feet". The Lord replies a second time, "If I wash thee not, thou hast no part with Me". "No part with" suggests a loss of communion, and Peter, though still ignorant, replies quickly, "Not my feet only but also my hands and my head". He's saying almost, I don't know what this means but if it's that important to you, Lord, don't stop at my feet".

So what do we learn from the above? The feet washing is an illustration of the work of our Lord as an Advocate. The doctrine is stated later in I John chapter 2.

My little children, these things write I unto you, that ye sin not. And if any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous:

Peter, out of all the disciples, would soon be in the greatest need of an advocate. He would deny his Lord with oaths and curses. He would tell a blatant lie before the kinsman of

Malchus. Peter sinned so badly that it took a number of steps for the Lord to recover him.

1. The Lord prays for Peter Luke 22
2. The feet washing
3. A sign given
4. The sign fulfilled
5. The Lord's look towards Peter
6. The angel's message at the tomb for Peter
7. The private meeting after His resurrection
8. The public meeting in John 21

We can see now the importance of the frequent recurrence of the conjunction "and" in John 13. It occurs no less than 5 times.

4 He riseth from supper, **and** laid aside his garments; **and** took a towel, **and** girded himself.

5 After that he poureth water into a bason, **and** began to wash the disciples' feet, **and** to wipe them with the towel wherewith he was girded.

The "ands" suggest that each step was of equal importance and was an essential part of a sequence of events. The whole process could not be completed until each step had been carried out. So it was in the eight steps towards Peter's recovery. Likewise, the Lord will take steps in our lives to bring us back to Himself, if we stray.

5. John 19:23-24 The garments of His cross

23 Then the soldiers, when they had crucified Jesus, took his garments, and made four parts, to every soldier a part; and also his coat: now the coat was without seam, woven from the top throughout.

24 They said therefore among themselves, Let us not rend it, but cast lots for it, whose it shall be: that the scripture might be fulfilled, which saith, They parted my raiment among them, and for my vesture they did cast lots. These things therefore the soldiers did.

Now we arrive at Calvary. All four gospel writers mention the fact that they parted His raiment amongst them, casting lots. But interestingly, only John actually tells us who were involved in this incident – "Then the soldiers". Humanly speaking, we see the Roman soldiers picking over what was left of their victim's possessions ie the Lord's garments. But then they have a problem – what to do with His inner vesture. It was without seam, woven from the top throughout. Perhaps someone suggested tearing it, but the seamless coat made this difficult. Another perhaps had a bright idea. "Let's cast lots for it". Unwittingly, though, these soldiers were now fulfilling the words written a thousand years earlier by David in Psalm 22.

They parted my raiment amongst them and for my vesture they did cast lots.

The seamless coat and the conversation it resulted in are mentioned only in John. It is as though John is going to great lengths to describe the reasoning in the minds of these soldiers – why they did what they did. But what John is telling us is that the soldiers are not in command of the events that are taking place – it is God who is bringing things to pass in accordance with the word of God. "Christ died...according to the scriptures".

That is why John reveals to us in his account that the soldiers cast lots for His vesture. Only John goes on to describe the action of one of the soldiers. He did not break the legs of the Lord Jesus as instructed – for He was already dead – but instead, in an act of cruelty and disrespect towards his victim, he pierces the Lord's side with a spear. He refrains from one thing for the scripture has said, "Not a bone of Him shall be broken", but in a seemingly random action, he lays the basis for the future fulfillment of another, "They shall look upon Him whom they pierced". The soldiers seem to be in control but they are but pawns in the hands of God, who brings these things to pass.

6. John 19:40 & 20:5-7 Garnets in the tomb

40 Then took they the body of Jesus, and wound it in linen clothes with the spices, as the manner of the Jews is to bury.

5 And he stooping down, and looking in, saw the linen clothes lying; yet went he not in.

6 Then cometh Simon Peter following him, and went into the sepulchre, and seeth the linen clothes lie,

7 And the napkin, that was about his head, not lying with the linen clothes, but wrapped together in a place by itself.

The babe who began life wrapped in swaddling clothes is likewise wrapped in linen cloth at the end of His life. The Lord's body is taken down from the cross by Joseph and Nicodemus and wound in the linen cloth with the spices and laid to rest in Joseph's new tomb. There seemed to be no way that that body would ever come out again from that tomb. It had been bound with the linen cloth, it had been covered with one hundred pounds of spices. A great stone had been rolled across the entrance. The stone had been sealed, and four soldiers had been left on guard to make the sepulchre sure. Humanly speaking, the body was there to stay.

But the women, followed by Peter and John, come to the tomb and find it empty. John looks in and sees the linen cloths lying, followed by Peter. There was something special about the clothes. Had the disciples come and stolen away the body, why would they have unraveled the clothes from the body. For speed and ease, they would have taken the body still in the clothes. But more than that, there was an order about the clothes. They were not lying in a heap as though they had been removed from the body. The two angels sat, one at the head, the other at the feet, where the body of Jesus had lain. I believe they sat on either side of His clothes. It was though He had simply passed through them and left the clothes undisturbed. Even stranger was the fact that the napkin that was about His head was lying folded up and laid apart from the other clothes. All was in perfect order. No wonder we read in verse 8 about John :

8 Then went in also that other disciple, which came first to the sepulchre, and he saw, and believed.

I trust we have seen enough regarding the garments of the Lord Jesus from the first to the last, to see that they have a lot to tell us about His life, His death, and His resurrection.