



[Genesis 3:7-21](#)

(7) And the eyes of both of them were opened, and they knew that they *were* naked; and they sewed fig leaves together and made coverings for themselves. (8) And they heard the sound of the LORD God walking in the garden in the cool of the day. Then Adam and his wife hid themselves from the presence of the LORD God among the trees of the garden. (9) And the LORD God called to Adam and said to him, "Where *are* you?" (10) And he said, "I heard You *walking* in the garden, and I was afraid because I *am* naked, and so I hid myself." (11) And He said, "Who told you that you *were* naked? Have you eaten of the tree which I commanded you that you should not eat?" (12) And the man said, "The woman whom You gave *to be* with me, she gave me of the tree, and I ate." (13) And the LORD God said to the woman, "What *is* this you have done?" And the woman said, "The serpent deceived me, and I ate." (14) And the LORD God said to the serpent, "Because you have done this you *are* cursed above all livestock, and above every animal of the field. You shall go upon your belly, and you shall eat dust all the days of your life. (15) And I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your seed and her Seed; He will bruise your head, and you shall bruise His heel." (16) To the woman He said, "I will greatly increase your sorrow and your conception—insorrow shall you bring forth children. Your desire shall be toward your husband, and he shall rule over you." (17) And to Adam He said, "Because you have hearkened to the voice of your wife and have eaten of the tree—ofwhich I commanded you, saying, 'You shall not eat *of* it!'—theground is cursed for your sake. In sorrow shall you eat of it all the days of your life. (18) It shall also bring forth thorns and thistles to you, and *thus* you shall eat the herbs of the field; (19) In the sweat of your face you shall eat bread until you return to the ground, for out of it you were taken; for dust you *are*, and to dust you shall return." (20) And Adam called his wife's name Eve because she was the mother of all *the* living. (21) And for Adam and his wife the LORD God made coats of skins and clothed them.

A Faithful Version

Here we have the Bible's first sermon. This is what Abel heard, believed, and submitted

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to. The same instruction merely informed Cain.

[Adam and Eve](#) were the first sinners to stand before [God](#) and be called into account. In this passage are four elements that apply to what Abel believed. The first element is that, in order for a sinner to stand before God, nakedness must be covered. Nakedness, both spiritual and physical, has wide usage as a symbol. At its best, it indicates innocence, child-like simplicity, and vulnerability. At its worst, it indicates humiliation, guilt, shame, and punishment. Adam and Eve were attempting to hide their humiliation, guilt, and shame when they grabbed a few fig leaves to provide covering.

An interesting spiritual lesson comes in understanding an application of the symbolism here. Adam and Eve threw together as a covering whatever was handy at the moment. What they chose to cover themselves with physically was totally inadequate as a spiritual covering. God immediately rejected their effort, which is the main instruction of this vignette.

A secondary teaching is that many carnal people today think it does not matter what they physically wear when they come before God at church services. Oh, yes, it does! These days, people arrive at church to worship wearing all kinds of casual clothing. In fact, many churches invite them to do so, advertising themselves as "casual"! Sometimes this reflects a matter of ignorance; they just do not know any better. At other times, it reveals a serious matter of disrespect for the primary covering—Christ's sacrifice, as we shall see shortly.

It is good to remember the overall principle to appear before God covered with acceptable covering. The symbolic instruction carries through to both physical and spiritual applications, and the person who cares what God thinks will do his best to conform to Him. God covered Adam and Eve with truly fine clothing. That is our example.

The second element Genesis 3 reveals takes us a step further spiritually in regard to the covering: What humans devise in terms of covering spiritual nakedness is, in reality, worthless. The third element clarifies this further: God Himself must supply the only covering that is spiritually adequate.

The fourth element is that the only adequate spiritual covering is by means of death. As in the first element, there are two lines of instruction. The first leads to the necessity of the second, if life is to continue. The wages of [sin](#) is death ([Romans 6:23](#)). The underlying principle is that we are always to give of our best to the Master. When we fail, the death penalty is imposed. This, then, brings forth a second teaching: In a

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spiritual sense, the entire human race sinned in Adam and Eve, who represented all mankind at the time. Since the wages of sin is death, and all have subsequently sinned, all of us must receive that wage—another, an innocent One on whom death has no claim because He never sinned, must substitute for us.

However, we find it clearly spelled out in Romans that there must be a link between us and the Substitute ([Romans 4:1-4](#), 11-12, 16, 19-20, 23-25; 5:1-2).

[Faith](#) in the sacrifice of [Jesus Christ](#) is the link between us and God's [forgiveness](#), which provides the acceptable spiritual covering necessary to be received into God's presence and receive the gift of life.

The second aspect of the fourth element also involves another death—ours. In this case, it is not a literal death but a spiritual one:

What shall we say then? Shall we continue in sin that [grace](#) may abound? Certainly not! How shall we who died to sin live any longer in it? . . . knowing this, that our old man was crucified with Him, that the body of sin might be done away with, that we should no longer be slaves of sin. For he who has died has been freed from sin. Now if we died with Christ, we believe that we shall also live with Him. ([Romans 6:1-2](#), 6-8)

This death is achieved through [repentance](#) because one believes he is a sinner in need of God's forgiveness, having broken His law and earned death.

What we have just reviewed must have been taught to Cain and Abel, probably by Adam. How do we know this? Because [Hebrews 11:4](#) tells us that Abel offered by faith, and faith comes by hearing. He heard the divine words given by God to Adam and Eve, which were passed to him, and Abel believed. Cain heard the same words, but did not believe as Abel did.

More proof is recorded following Cain's rejection. God says to him in [Genesis 4:7](#), "If you do well, will you not be accepted? And if you do not do well, sin lies at the door. And its desire is for you, but you should rule over it." God clearly indicates a choice between right and wrong. Good and evil faced Cain and Abel. The one brother by faith chose what was right in God's eyes, while the other chose what was right in his own eyes. In essence, he chose death.

— John W. Ritenbaugh

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