

The Priesthood Of God (Part 6)

The Priestly Garments

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I Peter 1:13-16 Therefore gird up the loins of your mind, be sober, and rest your hope fully upon the grace that is to be brought to you at the revelation of Jesus Christ; as obedient children, not conforming yourselves to the former lusts, as in your ignorance; but as He who called you is holy, you also be holy in all your conduct, because as it is written, “Be holy, for I am holy.”

The theme of the opening of the previous (I think it was two) sermons emphasized the importance of holiness to those who are called into this training for priesthood under Jesus Christ. God states the overall requirement so simply. He says, “Be holy, for [or because] I am holy.”

In one sense there is no other reason that needs to be given. What He is doing is straight out stating that His representatives—those who stand between Him and His worshippers—are to be as much like Him as possible.

This is not at all unreasonable. Human organizations want their members and/or employees to reflect the organization’s standards, do they not? Virtually every company holds training programs in order to make sure their employees follow procedures that the company has established.

One aspect involving the priests that is unusual, though, is that the priests and the worshippers are all worshippers and are all priests, at one and the same time. Therefore, they are being trained within the same program and helping in training each other at the same time.

This reality sets up the possibility of having interesting effects on our relationships with each other, as we all strive to submit to the commands of God. This is because as God calls people from various backgrounds, it sets up a unique, quite varied fellowship.

I want you to notice a few instructions:

I Peter 2:15-17 For this is the will of God that by doing good you may put to silence the ignorance of foolish men—as free, yet not using liberty as a cloak for vice, but as bondservants of God. Honor all people, love the brotherhood, fear God, honor the king.

To honor is to have respect for. Perhaps as high a regard as one might have for a king. Now in practical application, though, Peter is implying that you are to make yourself a servant to everyone. That should be the aim of every one of us. Strive to recognize the value of each person as a creation of God. This puts the regard for others into a category of responsibility, because making oneself the servant of all *is* honoring them.

However, there is a difference here. Only God is to be respected so highly that He is to be feared.

In terms of attention given, God is in a category all by Himself. In other words, there is sort of an edge of special attention and concern given to not miss any opportunity to submit to God in every circumstance, thus representing Him in the best way possible.

Peter's intent is that the Word of God is to penetrate every area of our life. Do you notice the broad spectrum of people he approached in those verses? I want you to notice, too, that Peter changed the wording regarding those in the fellowship—meaning those who are converted and in the church, and therefore also of the same family: God's family.

These are not only to be respected, but also served with a special care, because they are family. With no intent on their own, but solely because of God's calling, these first people (that are in the brotherhood, in the fellowship) have become a band of brothers all in training for the same basic future. To me, this means that those within the brotherhood are not only to be respected at least as highly as the "all men" earlier in the verse (at its beginning), but they are to be given respect coupled with affection. Notice the change from just respect to love. They are to be given respect coupled with affection and greater concern that may not be given to those outside of the brotherhood.

In other words, He is saying that this is an aspect of life with greater seriousness attached to it—how we treat one another. However, experience has shown that this family linkage has a tendency to raise our expectation of one another's conduct and attitudes within the relationship with each other considerably higher. It makes our judgments considerably sharper and more penetrating. For those who are outside the brotherhood, we are more likely to overlook and forgive. But, for those within the brotherhood, criticism may be the rule rather than the exception. We expect more from them, do we not?

Now this "familiarity breeds contempt" principle may be the rule rather than the exception; and all too often through experience, we have found that some take advantage of this unity within the brotherhood as a means of getting for themselves. This is the other side of the coin. That is people take advantage of the willingness of brethren to serve (an over-advantage).

So this command to love those in the brotherhood comes right from the top. It is not mere respect; it is love that He expects us to give one another.

John 13:33-35 Little children, I shall be with you a little while longer, you will seek Me; and as I said to the Jews, "Where I am going, you cannot come," so now I say to you. "A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another; as I have loved you, that you also love one another. By this all will know that you are My disciples, if you have love for one another."

Many organizations require their members or employees to wear distinctive clothing, such as a uniform or badge, to identify themselves. You are familiar with this in the military, police, nurses, priests, and ministers of various churches.

Now notice that Jesus says in verse 35, "By this shall all men know you." This what? By *love* shall all men know you. This command to love one another appears to be given in this context—almost as a badge or uniform to be worn to distinguish Christians from all others. Jesus intends this love to be an identification. This directive was not new in the sense of time.

We are going to go back to the book of Leviticus 19—a very familiar scripture.

Leviticus 19:18 You shall not take vengeance, nor bear any grudge against the children of your people, but you shall love your neighbor as yourself: I am the Lord.

Here is the foundation of what Jesus said in John 13. We are going to go from here to Deuteronomy 32, where it appears in a little bit different context.

Deuteronomy 32:35-36 Vengeance is Mine, and recompense; their foot [the enemy] shall slip in due time; for the day of their calamity is at hand, and the things to come hasten upon them. For the Lord will judge His people and have compassion on His servants, when He sees that their power is gone, and there is no one remaining, bond or free.

Now that is God's promise that He will take vengeance on the enemies of His servants, His people. We are going to advance this another notch higher to what He expects of you and me. We will go to Matthew 5:44 where Jesus says this.

Matthew 5:44 But I say to you, love your enemies, bless those who curse you, do good to those who hate you, and pray for those who spitefully use you and persecute you.

Jesus gives us a command: we are to love one another. This action of loving is to be a hallmark; it is to be an identification of His group of people. We then saw the foundation for this appears all the way back in Leviticus. Following that, we find a guarantee from God that He will take vengeance against the enemies of His servants. Then we advance from there and find—Jesus really puts the twist on our arm—love is to be given even to our enemies. Loving our brother ought to be easier than that.

But it also seems that it is not all that difficult for a brother to make himself an enemy of a brother. There are specific directions regarding those things, which we will not go into at this time, because I just want to hit on this enough for us to know that this is a part of the holiness that God expects of His people—that we will be set apart, we will stand out, we will be identified by our love for each other. So at least the groundwork for loving each other is laid by these directives.

What is new? Jesus said, “A new commandment I give unto you” It was never before strictly pointed out that any body of people should be distinguished by love consistently demonstrated for one another over a long period of time.

Christians are not known by any peculiarity of dress (like the Amish people); by wealth or striving for wealth; not by fame; not by learning; not by the wearing of phylacteries; not by the peculiar use of speech; not by earthly honors; but by an outgoing, tender, and constant attachment and concern for each other that surmounts all the distinctions of race, rank, or reputation.

Thus for those in training to be priests, the Bible places much emphasis on being diligent and becoming holy in love, patience, bearing with, humility, being kindly affectionate, forgiving, pursuing peace, mercy, exhorting, given to liberality, not holding grudges, and not taking vengeance.

Sometimes we can tell how important a certain command, scripture, or certain instruction is by how often it is repeated in other places in Scripture. The command to love one another is also referred to in the book of Galatians, in II Thessalonians, in I and II Peter, and also in I John. That command from Jesus appears seven times all together (just in the New Testament). I would have to say that that number is a pretty good indication that it ranks awfully high in His thinking.

In addition to the original command given there in John 13, it shows the extent of the love for one another. It is to be “as I have loved you.” Now I take it that you are still in John 13, but look now to verse 1.

John 13:1 Now before the Feast of the Passover, when Jesus knew that His hour had come that He should depart from this world to the Father, having loved His own who were in the world, He loved them to the end.

It did not mean to the end of His life. It is better understood, translated, as “to the fullest extent,” “to the uttermost,” or “to the conclusion of His purpose.” That is the end to the conclusion of the purpose. So that is the extent.

I John 3:16 By this we know love, because He laid down His life for us. And we also ought to lay down our lives for the brethren.

Now on some rare occasions, the “going to the uttermost” may come to that place where we actually have to give up our life for our brother, so that our brother may live. But every one of us is expected by God to lay our life down in obedience to God in service to our brethren. That is how that love is carried out.

What we can see, then, from Jesus’ example of His life, is a life of self-denial expressed for the benefit of His brothers. And, of course, He then did lay down His life.

There is a turn here in the sermon, because we are going to pick up where we left off last time describing the various aspects of the character revealed in the consecration ceremonies and the adornments of the high priest through the means or mode of his dress. Remember that these things all illustrate the character of Jesus Christ, our High Priest. It is in this that the instruction lies for you and me. We are to follow Him doing our best to be like Him.

I will review just very quickly. First we saw in regard to the priesthood that one must be called to the position of a priest, and you are. All of us are called to the position of a priest to the order or the rank of Melchizedek under our High Priest, Jesus Christ. The second thing is that all called must undergo a washing for the purpose of spiritual cleanliness to prepare us for service. Now this represents justification by faith in Christ’s blood. The third step was the consecration by blood of the right thumb, the right big toe, and the lobe of the right ear. I will review this a little bit.

The anointing of the right thumb indicates the faithful carrying out of one’s work in service to God. Now that means wherever you work, whether you are called to be a priest in your daily life, or you might be an automobile mechanic, that job is to be carried out faithfully before God because you are representing Him there. The way we work reflects Him in what we do. So the right thumb is to be anointed to let us know that we are not to be a klutz in the service of God. We are not to be a careless innovator like Nadab and Abihu were. They paid for that sin with their lives.

The anointing of the toe represents the priest’s walk or the manner of life—the conduct of his life before God and the other worshippers.

The one regarding the ear...this one is particularly important. Turn with me to Romans 10.

Romans 10:17 So then faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the word of God.

Now it is true that the greatest of the three—faith, hope, and love—is love by the Bible's own stipulation. However, faith is the foundation of *everything*. What is that faith going to produce? I will tell you what. It will produce what it hears of the Word of God with understanding. When Paul says faith comes by hearing, it includes when we are sitting silently, studying God's Word. Are we really hearing what He is saying?

Some of us may speed right through things. But the Bible is one of those books that should really be thoughtfully meditated upon, going from one place to another while we are actively involved in taking in its instructions, so that we get as much as we possibly can on that particular subject.

The ear is especially important because the Bible frequently uses it synonymously or equally with heart and understanding—those two combined. True hearing involves faithful seeking of understanding by faith carrying through with what one hears.

People can hear and not hear anything. They hear the sound, but they just do not get it. So the ear is the portal into the mind. We do not live by sight; we live by what goes into our ears. Do you get it? That is why the anointing of the ear is the most important of those three, because if we do not hear things right, we are most certainly not going to act right. So it is essential that we be very careful how we hear God's Word.

So the priest (this is another aspect of it), must be truly attuned to God's Word and the appeals of the people. Thus, hearing they must act and give counsel by faith.

Now the fourth thing (of these things we are looking into) has to do with being clothed for the office. Once the ear of the priest was anointed, they went right from that to dressing him so that he would be prepared—dressed—for the office.

In practical reality, being clothed represents the sanctification process and the period of our conversion.

Let us go to the book of Colossians 3. You will recognize this right away.

Colossians 3:12-17 Therefore, as the elect of God, holy and beloved [Listen to what we have to put on and be dressed with:], put on tender mercies, kindness, humility, meekness, longsuffering; [As we begin to see these qualities, I hope you will understand why I opened this particular sermon in the way that I did.] bearing with one another, and forgiving one another, if anyone has a complaint against another; even as Christ forgave you, so you also must do. But above all these things put on love, which is the bond [or glue] of perfection. [Love holds things together] And let the peace of God rule in your hearts, to which also you were called in one body; and be thankful. Let the word of God dwell in you richly in all wisdom, teaching and admonishing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord. And whatever you do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through Him.

We are about, brethren, to become dressed. We are going to be high priests as it were. Not Jesus Christ, but of the Aaronic rank.

Turn with me to Exodus 28—we will probably come back to Exodus 28 a couple of times to touch on something in particular that is said here. But, on this occasion we will read right through it. This was said to Moses:

Exodus 28:1-4 Now take Aaron your brother, and his sons with him, from among the children of Israel, that he may minister to Me as priest, Aaron and Aaron's sons: Nadab, Abihu, Eleazar, and Ithamar. And you shall make holy garments for Aaron your brother, for glory and for beauty. So you shall speak to all who are gifted artisans, whom I have filled with the spirit of wisdom, that they may make Aaron's garments, to consecrate him [set him apart; in other words so that he stands out from everybody else], that he may minister to Me as priest. And these are the garments which they shall make: a breastplate, an ephod, a robe, a skillfully woven tunic, a turban, and a sash [there is one thing missing in that list, breeches, it is listed somewhere else:]. So they shall make holy garments for Aaron your brother and his sons, that he may minister to Me as priest.

You get the inference from that last line: "that he may minister to Me." It is saying that if he did not have the clothing on, he could not minister before Him.

Now you just saw, in Colossians 3, the kind of things we are to be clothed with. Those things are representative of the clothing that Aaron had to wear. The clothing is a part of his consecration, his sanctification, his setting apart for the office, especially that of the high priest. This can be a very large subject all by itself, since clothing plays such a large role in the filling of all kinds of secondary details that appear in any given incident.

I will give you a quote from the *Dictionary of Biblical Imagery*. It says in the very first sentence of a fairly long article regarding clothing, "The imagery of garments and clothing is of major importance in the Bible." It goes on to say, a few paragraphs later, "It is no exaggeration to say that one can trace the whole outline of Biblical theology and salvation history through the motif of clothing."

If you think clothing is not important to God, I think you had better think again. I mean, even the clothing we wear daily is important to Him.

Clothing is first mentioned in the Bible as early as Genesis 3. The last mention of clothing appears in Revelation 19. That spans the entire Book, except for four chapters. It just keeps appearing over and over again.

Subjects like God's clothing, as in Revelation 1, is dealt with. The clothing that others wore, for instance Joseph's coat of many colors, Samuel's robe, Jesus' seamless robe. But despite all of the times that God touches on clothing, more attention is given to Aaron's clothing than anybody else's by far. There is no comparison. It is described in very great detail.

Clothing's overall function is as a covering; but it also protects, it conceals, it displays, it represents in the Bible things that are economic, social, moral, physical, and spiritual realities. The last one it covers most heavily.

Even the fact that garments wear out bears some importance in a couple of Bible contexts.

The actions of putting on or taking off is used fairly frequently by the Bible's writers. To put on or take off, as with clothing, is often used to illustrate significant spiritual changes or changes of

conduct. When a priest puts on his ordinary clothing and takes off his ordinary clothing and dons his priestly clothing, it means he is readying to perform his priestly functions at the tabernacle or temple. To do that in reverse means that he has ended his priestly duties and has stepped back into normal civilian life.

Clothing is used by God as a badge of office. You might have wondered...maybe thought people were high fallutin' because they wore certain things as a badge of their office. You see this with the military. They wear certain clothing and it has appropriate braid or brass or stars or whatever on it. Do not laugh at it. God started it. He started it with the high priest. He wanted this man to stand out, to be different and sanctified from everyone else. Why?

Because he, in his office and clothed for his office, is a picture of Jesus Christ. That picture has to be as good, character-wise, as it possibly can. If you are following with me, you can begin to see that judgments can be made regarding people by the clothing they wear.

I was just told the other day that someone went to an office. I believe it was a county facility or something of that nature; and one of the girls working there—one of the employees employed by the county—was wearing jeans in her office. She was taking information from the general public that was coming in there. They were not even nice jeans. They were jeans that were faded and had those big holes in them. What kind of representation is that for a public official? Maybe she does not have a high rank. But it immediately made me cringe, because she represents the government—this was in South Carolina that it occurred.

Now if we apply this principle to the high priesthood, or even the ordinary priesthood, if someone showed up for work like that—to work for God—He would probably strike them dead, like He did with Nadab and Abihu. Just execute them, because they were not dressed in the right way and because what they showed on the outside was indicative of what was in the heart.

Regarding the priesthood, and most especially the high priesthood, clothing symbolizes areas of character representations to God and the worshippers, because they were reflecting Jesus Christ.

Psalm 29:2 Give unto the Lord the glory due to His name; worship the Lord in the beauty of holiness.

This is one of a fair number of times that this phrase appears in Scripture. There is no doubt that holiness all by itself projects a striking beauty. The clearest illustration of this is the aura of the majestic awesome presence that God projects in His appearance. Revelation 1 is a good example of this. But, the beauty of holiness is not limited to God.

Many commentators believe that this phrase—here in Psalm 29:2—is a reference to the emotional majesty of the combination of all of the factors involved in the worship services at the tabernacle and temple. You and I might not think of that as being impressive. But, I will tell you, it made an impression on people, even the killing of an animal if they understood what was going on in the killing of that animal. I mean the spirituality that was behind the act. The crowning glory of the whole thing was the dress and the actions of the high priest.

But the clothing must have really been arresting to look at. That was part of its purpose, because that arresting clothing represented the character of Jesus Christ, so it had to be beautiful beyond virtually anything that was ever made in the way of clothing, at least up until that time.

In Exodus 25 is the beginning of the instructions that are given for the construction of the tabernacle. I want you to note this right at the very beginning. It said (verse 9), “According to all that I show you, that is, the pattern of the tabernacle and the pattern of all its furnishings, just so you shall make it.” That is God speaking to Moses saying to Him, “You shall not deviate one iota from these instructions; follow all of these instructions exactly as I tell you.”

There are five chapters devoted to the instruction given for the building of the tabernacle. They begin in chapter 25 of Exodus and go all the way through chapter 29—five full chapters. Two of those chapters are devoted to the high priest’s clothing. Forty percent of the instructions are just for the high priests clothing—the man that the people were going to see as the direct representative of God before the people—*he symbolized Jesus Christ*.

So this clothing was in no way a minor consideration to God. Thus, some of the beauty of holiness that Psalm 29 is referring to is what was apprehended, what was understood, and what was viewed by the people who were watching the service.

Exodus 28:1-2 Now take Aaron your brother, and his sons with him, from among the children of Israel, that he may minister to Me as priest, Aaron and Aaron’s sons: Nadab, Abihu, Eleazar, and Ithamar. And you shall make holy garments for Aaron your brother, for glory and for beauty.

I do not think we need to go any further. I want you to go to Leviticus.

Leviticus 8:6-9 Then Moses brought Aaron and his sons and washed them with water [we have advanced a little bit here]. And he put the tunic on him, girded him with the sash, clothed him with the robe, and put the ephod on him; and he girded him with the intricately woven band of the ephod, and with it tied the ephod on him. Then he put the breastplate on him, and he put the Urim and the Thummim in the breastplate. And he put the turban on his head. Also on the turban, on its front, he put the golden plate, the holy crown, as the Lord had commanded Moses.

Now as we begin to go through this, you will find that the same attention to detail that was given to the tabernacle is also given to the clothing for glory and for beauty. The quality of the priest’s vestments, whether of texture, material, or workmanship, was of the very best level. Fine linen, pure gold, precious stones, costly ointments, cunning workmanship, formed and joined together by wise workman, because nothing but the best would do.

Nothing was left to chance because all of it was a type of Christ’s character. He was, after all, God manifested in the flesh. He was divinity manifested in humanity, and Aaron was clothed so that any time he was performing his responsibilities, they lent to him dignity he did not otherwise possess. It was truly a circumstance of clothes making the man.

An interesting sidelight is that the clothing was of the exact same color and materials as the tabernacle. Everything in the surroundings of the dwelling place of God was harmoniously blended. These things have a practical application to us because, brethren, God dwells in us. We ought to be dressed harmoniously.

I hope that you will understand that in regard to us, we are serving God in the public at all times. Thus our manner of dress, too, must be appropriate in each and every situation, whether at work, play—colorful, but harmonious, modest, and discrete.

A priest would not wear everyday work clothing while he was serving at the tabernacle. It has to be the proper clothing for that place. Over and above, the character traits of Jesus Christ (that the clothing depicts) must become ours even as it was His. Because, brethren, does it not say in Ephesians 4 that we are “to grow to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ”? It does.

Now the priest vestments consisted of nine pieces. This is the order that they would be put on from the inside out. First went the breeches: they were underpants. That is all they were. The second thing is called (in the King James Version) a coat. Modern translations call it a tunic. Then there was a girdle. We will get to that, too. On top of all of those was the robe. On top of that was the ephod. Then there was also the curious girdle, or sash. Then on top of all that was the breastplate with the Urim and Thummim. Then up on his head were the mitre and the crown.

Notice the wording in here Exodus 28:

Exodus 28:39 You shall skillfully weave the tunic of fine linen thread, you shall make the turban of fine linen, and you shall make the sash of woven work.

I just wanted you to notice that even the underclothing was made of the best material available to them (of that day). Fine, woven linen. The breeches, the coat, and the girdle were all part of the undergarments. They went right against the skin. Now you might think that because it was completely covered over by other garments, it would not receive the best of care or the best of material. Not so! Not so at all. That is why I read this: “You shall skillfully weave. . .” even the undergarments.

There is a very good spiritual reason why even the undergarments had to be of the best material. It is because of what they symbolized.

So the placing of the coat right against the skin, how it was constructed, and what it symbolized were all very important. The material—the fine linen—gives the sense of what we would call a damask today. Damask is described in my dictionary as a rich patterned fabric of cotton, linen, silk, or wool.

If you are using a King James, they would call it an embroidered work. But, this embroidery work was a little bit different. It was not an embroidery work attached to the undergarment. The whole thing was an embroidery work from top to bottom—the coat, the girdle, and also the breeches as well.

Now you might ask yourself, “Where in the world did they get this material, and where did they get the workers to be able to do something like this?” Well, in one way there is an easy answer to that, which I will give you.

First of all remember that when they were in Egypt, they were the slaves. They were the ones that made that beautiful clothing in Egypt in the first place. There is also a secondary thing to consider. That is, remember when they left Egypt, they spoiled the Egyptians. Now when we say spoiled, we

immediately think of gold and silver. There is no doubt that they took an awful lot of gold and silver out of there. But, I would not doubt one bit that they took reams and reams and reams of those rich clothes that the rich Egyptian royalty had, and took that with them.

It is very interesting that archeologists, every once and awhile, find a new tomb; and in those tombs they will often find things that are quite interesting. Well, it was about fifteen, twenty, or thirty years ago that somebody stumbled across one of these tombs; opened it up; and, lo and behold, they came across material (preserved cloth material) that according to the archeologists was every bit as fine as the finest silk that we can make today.

So we think we are so smart. But, we are not as smart. We have not advanced all that much, as we might think we have. It is only in the last 50 or 100 years that we begin to get back to what the ancients were doing way back in Egypt and Babylon—and maybe even before the Flood they were making those things. It is certainly something to think about it.

There is no doubt in my mind that God put it in the minds of the people who mattered—that is the Israelites who were going to be carrying this out of Egypt and also the Egyptians who were giving of their wealth to the Israelites as they were going out—“Hey, give the Israelites that cloth, because I have use for it.”

So they carried those materials right out of Egypt, and they had the workers who were able to put it together in the way God wanted it put together. They knew already how to do it, because they were making the stuff while they were in Egypt.

The archaeologist who broke into that tomb and discovered the cloth that they said was as fine as any cloth we have today said it was described as “having a feel comparable to silk and not inferior to our finest cambric.” According to my dictionary, cambric is a modern finely woven linen or cotton. It is too bad we cannot look on this. But we can at least know a little bit about what it was made of and apparently what it somewhat looked like.

We are going to go to Ezekiel 16. We are still on the coat, here—the coat, the breeches, and the girdle. If you know what Ezekiel 16 is on, you will remember that it is the chapter in which God is describing Israel as this young maiden that He married.

Ezekiel 16:10 I clothed you in embroidered cloth and gave you sandals of badger skin; I clothed you with fine linen and covered you with silk.

He is talking about the time they were in the wilderness. Let us go to Revelation 19. You know the way they teach history, they teach us to look down on these people, as though they were nothing, as though they had no skill, as though they were clod hoppers, kicking clods all over the place. No they were not, brethren.

Revelation 19:8 And to her it was granted to be arrayed in fine linen, clean and bright, for the fine linen is the righteous acts of the saints.

We are beginning to get close to what those undergarments represented in that statement: “The fine linen is the righteous acts of the saints.”

Psalm 132:7-9 Let us go into His tabernacle; let us worship at His footstool. Arise, O Lord, to Your resting place. You and the ark of Your strength. Let your priests be clothed with righteousness, and let your saints shout for joy.

Let us apply this to Jesus Christ. What this is depicting about Him is that He was righteous from the inside out. Every aspect of His life was righteous, even that which we could not see whenever He was beyond us into a place, and we were not in His presence. All of His thinking, all of His attitudes, all of His conduct was always done within the framework of God's laws.

So the fine skillfully woven linen undergarment is a symbolic equivalent of the fine flour that Richard has described in the meal offerings and in the incense offerings. It symbolizes the spotlessly pure, perfect righteousness of our Savior who was found in the fashion of a man and yet without sin. He was without sin from the inside out, even in areas of attitude and conduct that could not be seen in public. Even as the linen undergarment could not be seen from the outside.

Despite all the mixing that He did amongst the worldly sinners of all stripes, He remained perfectly uncontaminated by them.

Let me give you some testimonies from God's Word regarding Him. Pontius Pilate said, "I find no fault in this Man." Pilate's wife said to Pilate, "Have nothing to do with that just Man." Judas Iscariot said, "I have sinned in that I have betrayed innocent blood." The thief crucified with Jesus said, "This man had done nothing amiss." The centurion said, "Certainly, this was a righteous Man." Paul said, "He was tempted in all points as we are, yet without sin."

The word coat, in Exodus 28, is the same word that is used in Genesis 3:21. Let us go back there and see that context.

Genesis 3:21 Also for Adam and his wife the Lord God made them tunics of skin, and clothed them.

It was not a fig leaf. It was a tunic. It was a coat that God made for both Adam and for Eve as well. What did He use it for? As a covering, in this case to cover their shame.

So for the high priest it served as an undergarment. Now here comes another interesting thing. For the regular priest...well let me put it this way, that was all he wore. He had the breeches on, he had the sash or the girdle on, and he had the coat on. That was his badge of office.

But with the high priest, since he represented Jesus Christ as our High Priest, that part of his clothing was just barely seen. The coat went all the way down, beginning at the shoulders and ending at his ankles. Now as we put the layers of clothing on, you will begin to see how all of these things blended together so that Christ's character could be pictured from the inside out.

Leviticus 8:7 And he put the tunic on him, girded him with the sash, clothed him with the robe, and put the ephod on him; and he girded him with the intricately woven band of the ephod, and with it tied the ephod on him.

So the coat, the symbol of righteousness, went on as soon as the priest was washed with water. We are going to look at this washing in Romans 3. This washing was very important.

Romans 3:20-22 Therefore by the deeds of the law no flesh will be justified in His sight, for by the law is the knowledge of sin. But now the righteousness of God apart from the law is revealed, being witnessed by the Law and the Prophets, even the righteousness of God, through faith in Jesus Christ, to all and on all who believe. For there is no difference [no difference between the Jew and the Gentile].

Romans 4:1-3 What then shall we say that Abraham our father has found according to the flesh? For if Abraham was justified by works, he has something to boast about, but not before God. For what does the Scripture say? “Abraham believed God, and it was accounted to him for righteousness.”

Romans 4:19-25 And not being weak in faith, he did not consider his own body, already dead (since he was about a hundred years old), and the deadness of Sarah’s womb. He did not waver at the promise of God through unbelief, but was strengthened in faith, giving glory to God, and being fully convinced that what He had promised He was also able to perform. And therefore “it was accounted to him [to Abraham, or imputed to him] for righteousness.” Now it was not written for his sake alone that it was imputed to him, but also for us. It shall be imputed to us [righteousness was imputed to us] who believe in Him who raised up Jesus our Lord from the dead, who was delivered up because of our offenses, and was raised because of our justification.

Jesus Christ was clothed with righteousness. We will probably go into that the next time. But we cannot go in to God because the Bible clearly says that God is holy; and we are not permitted into His presence as we are. The only ones permitted into God’s presence are those who are righteous.

What we just looked at very briefly, in Romans 3 and 4, is what makes it possible for us to go in before God. It is the righteousness of Jesus Christ that permits us access to God. We become clothed with righteousness as a result of our faith in the shed blood of Jesus Christ. And God imputes, then, the righteousness of Jesus Christ to us. The very thing that the white undergarment portrayed on the priest—the high priest—is the righteousness of Christ is then placed on you and me. It is this righteousness that we are clothed with. Christ’s imputed righteousness enables us to go in before God.