

Sabbath School Today
With the 1888 Message Dynamic

Garments of Grace: Clothing Imagery in the Bible
Lesson 3: "A Garment of Innocence"

God created Adam and Eve "in the image of God ... male and female" (Gen. 1:27). They were given "dominion" over all creatures (vs. 26). "God blessed them" (vs. 28), and they were "very good" (vs. 31). "This sinless pair wore no artificial garments. They were clothed with a covering of light and glory, such as the angels wear" (*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 45). Adam did love God and his wife. A holy God created them in holiness.

Unbeknown to man, the Son of God is embroiled in a great cosmic conflict with Satan over good and evil. Satan puts God on trial. If Satan could have one try at tempting Adam and Eve, they would put God to shame. God does not forcibly push Satan aside in front of all the cosmic intelligences.

God grew "the tree of life" and "the tree of the knowledge of good and evil" "in the midst of the garden" (Gen. 2:9). Since God is only good, the source of evil for the tree of knowledge was the serpent (Gen. 3:1).

Satan asserts that holy beings,--both angels and man--do not need to obey God's law. "He [the rebel] reiterated his claim that angels needed no control, but should be left to follow their own will, He denounced the divine statutes as a restriction of their liberty, and declared that it was his purpose to secure the abolition of law; ... Satan has continued with men the same policy which he pursued with the angels" (*The Great Controversy*, pp. 499, 500).

In order to disprove Satan's charges God needs Adam and Eve,--in their innocence of the cosmic conflict,--to make the right choice "not [to] eat of it," i.e., the tree, for "thou shalt surely die" (Gen. 2:17). Their unfettered love for the God of all truth will lead them to worship and obey Him alone.

God only wants them to know the good and not evil. The serpent's enticement is: "Ye shall be as gods, knowing good and evil" (Gen. 3:5); "ye shall not surely die" (vs. 4). The lure is the autonomy of man as god with inherent immortality.

Eve ate the "apple." She is bitten by the serpent. He injects her with the poisonous venom of self-love.

Evil is the sin of unbelief. To *dis*-believe God is to make man god. The essence of sin is to plot the overthrow and murder of the Son of God. Man is now totally alienated from God. He gives the "dominion" over to Satan.

The unconscious function of the human mind was begun in the Garden of Eden when Adam and Eve first sinned. Their sin was far, far greater than merely eating an "apple;" deep inside was the guilt of deicide. That guilt would have killed them then and there if they had fully realized its dimensions. They were crucifying the Son of God, but didn't comprehend it! Therefore their human minds began a function of repression--"they did not like to retain God in their knowledge" (Rom. 1:28). All of us humans therefore share the corporate guilt of the crucifixion of Christ, but it's our great unconscious sin.

The dark machinations of evil begin their corrosive work in the human psyche. The self-destructive thoughts of murder haunt the conscience. The awful seed planted in their imaginations of deicide turns against them with instant self-loathing and thoughts of suicide. The human mind can only protect itself from evil forebodings by burying its plot in the deepest recesses of the unconscious. "The carnal mind is enmity against God: for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be" (Rom. 8:7).

Adam and Eve lost their garments of innocence. "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). Undoubtedly the leaves were beautifully woven and looked good from the outside, but they couldn't camouflage the ugliness that now resided within.

Only God could devise garments for them which required the shedding of blood. Adam must have been horrified as he witnessed the death of the first lamb. He now saw firsthand what his unbelief had caused. "... Ye were not redeemed with corruptible things, ... but with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot: Who verily was foreordained before the foundation of the world" (1 Peter 1:18-20). It was only by beholding that blood that Adam's heart could be changed.

Having lost his garment of holiness, Adam is incapable of loving Eve, and vice-versa. "But where sin abounded, grace did much more abound" (Rom. 5:20). After sin came in, man/woman became unfaithful by their very nature. And now a new definition of love is necessary--*agape*, a love that loves sinners, bad people, ugly people. Now sinful "Adam" loves sinful "Eve" with the same love wherewith the Savior has loved him in his

unworthiness and sinfulness. Now both Adam and Eve can love. In the Garden, Adam loved a perfect Eve; now, because of Jesus, he loves an imperfect spouse, and vice-versa.

The good news of the 1888 message is that the Everlasting Covenant was originally given to Adam and Eve (Gen. 3:15). God promised to "put enmity" where there would be no desire for good and right if God did not put it in the heart of everyone to some degree. When God made the promise to Adam and Eve it was Christ who was "slain from the foundation of the world" (Rev. 13:8). Christ became the Surety for the entire human race. He put Himself on the line to bring about all that He promised to Adam and Eve. God did not require from Adam and Eve a promise to obey Him; there is no record of any such transaction. All their power was gone. Adam, with his eyes wide open, in full knowledge, knew that eating the forbidden fruit would be sin (James 4:17). In unbelief he stepped out on forbidden ground. His very nature was changed by his willful, choice. At that moment he was no longer capable of doing good. He was condemned to eternal death. Adam had sold out to Satan.

Satan was fully aware that Adam had given over his right of dominion to him. In the temptations of Christ, Satan reminded Jesus that all the "power and grandeur" of the world was his by Adam's choice, "for it has been made over to me. ..." (Luke 4:6, Moffat translation). It was impossible for Adam to right himself again because sin had entered the world. "By the offense of one, judgment came upon all men," resulting in condemnation to an eternal grave (Rom. 5:12, 18). No hope of life, no hope of even one bite of food, or a breath of air, or a glass of cold water. Not one single thing was ours by Adam's one choice.

But thank God that "by the righteousness of One," the Lamb who was slain from the foundation of the world, who became the Surety for a lost race, by His one righteous act, "the free gift came upon all men unto justification of life" (Rom. 5:18). The 1888 message "presented justification through faith in the Surety; it invited the people to receive the righteousness of Christ, which is made manifest in obedience to all the commandments of God" (*Evangelism*, p. 190). Because of Jesus Christ's one righteous act we can eat food today, breath the air, and drink the water. If we do not refuse this gift of life we already enjoy, we will live forever in eternal life. We will be ever thankful that He saved us from the eternal grave that was ours by Adam's disobedience. He did it all by His own promise. He invites us simply: "harden not your hearts" (Heb. 4:7).

--Paul E. Penno