

The Clothing That God Alone Provides

By Ginny Larsen

To be clothed is to be covered with something, or to be empowered or endowed with something. The Hebrew word is “labash.”

“A very important figurative use of labash is found in Judges 6:34, where the stative form of the verb may be translated, ‘**The spirit of the Lord clothed itself** [was clothed] with Gideon.’ The idea seems to be that the Spirit of the Lord incarnated Himself in Gideon and thus empowered him from within. The English versions render it variously: ‘came upon’ (KJV, NASB, JB); ‘took possession of’ (NEB, RSV); ‘took control (TEV); wrapped round’ (Knox).” – Vine’s OT

How remarkable to think God clothes Himself with us when we become His children! We know in His Word, in many places, how God clothes the sinner. Adam and Eve sinned in the Garden of Eden. Right away they saw that they were not clothed. They were naked. But God made skins out of the sacrifice of an innocent animal and clothed them Himself. When we see our own sin in God’s light, we also see how naked we are before Him, as our guilt is completely exposed.

God clothes us with His righteousness: *“I will greatly rejoice in the LORD; my soul shall exult in my God, for He has clothed me with the garments of salvation; He has covered me with the robe of righteousness, as a bridegroom decks himself like a priest with a beautiful headdress, and as a bride adorns herself with her jewels”* (Isaiah 61:10).

Yet, the Bible also tells us that Christ is “in us” - being clothed with us as His dwelling place: *“Or do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit within you, whom you have from God? You are not your own”* (1 Corinthians 6:19).

“To them God chose to make known how great among the Gentiles are the riches of the glory of this mystery, which is Christ in you, the hope of glory” (Colossians 1:27).

God has empowered us in every way for His perfect Salvation. He becomes our clothing, and we become His temple, where He permanently indwells us (John 14:16), and He will never leave us or forsake us (Hebrews 13:5). If we don’t have the right clothing, we cannot be welcomed into His presence. It is only the clothing He provides that will be suitable. His presence could only indwell what is righteously clothed before Him, according to His standards alone. Since it is His perfect clothing supplied, not our own works, He is able to always indwell us.

“But when the king came in to look at the guests, he saw there a man who had no wedding garment. And he said to him, ‘Friend, how did you get in here without a wedding garment?’ And he was speechless. Then the king said to the attendants, ‘Bind him hand and foot and cast him into the outer darkness. In that place there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth’” (Matthew 22:11-13).

The only way to have the right clothing is to acknowledge our nakedness and then to simply ask Him, believing in His provision. But when we think to trust in our own, no matter how glamorous or rich it may look to us, we will not be properly clothed. *“For you say, I am rich, I have prospered, and I need nothing, not realizing that you are wretched, pitiable, poor, blind, and naked. I counsel you to buy from Me gold refined by fire, so that you may be rich, and white garments so that you may clothe yourself and the shame of your nakedness may not be seen, and salve to anoint your eyes, so that you may see”* (Revelation 3:17-18).

Many places in Scripture tell us to “put on” Christ or to “put on” certain actions or attitudes that are those of the Spirit Who indwells us. We cannot put them on unless they have been given to us. They are given to us by the blood of Christ, and we are empowered to “put them on” in the indwelling Spirit. It is not self-effort but walking in faith that “puts on” the clothing already given to us. We have been given a new position that places us “in Christ” when we are born again with an imputed righteousness that is His righteousness alone. We’ve been given the clothes to wear, yet it is still our responsibility to “put them on” outwardly in our actions and attitudes as we walk by faith in that which has been given to us. We also have the Holy Spirit indwelling us as our empowerment to clothe ourselves—it is not our flesh trying to copy the “clothing” of righteousness that only Christ can give. He alone IS our righteousness, and we are to clothe ourselves outwardly with the inward clothing He provided as He lives in and through us. *“I have been crucified with Christ. It is no longer I who live, but Christ who lives in me. And the life I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself for me”* (Galatians 2:20).

What a marvelous Salvation we have! All the clothing we need has been provided to live godly lives in this world and to prepare us for the eternal inheritance we have in Christ. We can never produce it ourselves. We can never imitate the right clothing in our flesh by our human striving. We can never change our own clothes, but when we turn to Christ in faith and believe Him for His Salvation, by grace alone through faith alone, we are clothed by Christ Himself for the perfect Salvation He has made for us.

We have had our filthy rags removed, and have been clothed with the perfect clothing He provides. We now *yield* to Him by faith and daily “put on” Christ as He abides in us. As we live in this world, the world can only recognize to Whom we belong if we are outwardly clothed in the King’s apparel, as we live daily by putting on what He has provided.