



CHRISTADELPHIAN ISOLATION LEAGUE

EXHORTATION

Date: 30th August 2020

SECTION LEADER:

BROTHER RODERICK TITLEY, HOLLIES FARM, ENGLISH FRANKTON, ELLESMERE, SHROPSHIRE. SY12 OJX, U.K.

Readings: 2 Kings 4, Jeremiah 52, 1 Corinthians 12, 13

Nakedness

The Bible deals with nakedness very clearly, from Genesis, to Revelation. It relates fundamentally to who we are.

In the beginning

"The man and his wife were both naked, and they felt no shame." (**Genesis 2:25** NIV). In the beginning, the concept of shameful nakedness did not exist. It's only after Adam & Eve sin that they become aware of their nakedness; telling Adam & Eve before this that they were naked, would have been meaningless. And yet we can understand the reason for this. God created creatures complete, why would he make them without clothes if clothes were needed? It's only when they sin and things go wrong that a remedy is needed.

When Adam and Eve sin and disobey God, it says: *"Then the eyes of both of them were opened, and they realised that they were naked; so they sewed fig leaves together and made coverings for themselves."* (**Genesis 3:7**). Nakedness now exists; it has now become an issue. Sin brings shame and guilt. Adam and Eve now have the knowledge of good and evil, knowing they have acquired this knowledge through disobeying the Lord God.

Adam and Eve try to cover their flesh with fig leaves but this was not good enough, instead we read: *"The LORD God made garments of skin for Adam and his wife and clothed them."* (**Genesis 3:21**). It's not that God is merely supplying a superior form of clothing but that in order to obtain animal skins, blood has to be shed. God is showing Adam the seriousness and tragic consequence of his sin, but with the aim that it should touch his conscience and his heart and so discourage him from sinning. This is the basis of all sacrifice from Genesis onwards (see **Hebrews 9:9; 9:14; 9:22**).

A warning from Revelation

"Behold, I come like a thief! Blessed is he who stays awake and keeps his clothes with him, so that he may not go naked and be shamefully exposed." (**Revelation 16:15**). We are not talking about physical covering here, as that does not protect us from being shamefully exposed before Jesus Christ who is coming. Instead we must be clothed in righteousness, by destroying the real problem within us, our sinful nature; that is real clothing indeed.

Revelation 19:7-8: *"Let us rejoice and be glad and give him glory! For the wedding of the Lamb has come, and his bride has made herself ready. Fine linen, bright and clean, was given her to wear."*

Colossians 3:12: *"Therefore, as God's chosen people, holy and dearly loved, clothe yourselves with compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience."*

Romans 13:14: *"Rather, clothe yourselves with the Lord Jesus Christ, and do not think about how to gratify the desires of the sinful nature" [KJV 'flesh'].*

The nakedness of the Lord Jesus Christ

John 19:23-24: *"When the soldiers crucified Jesus, they took his clothes, dividing them into four shares, one for each of them, with the undergarment remaining. This garment was seamless, woven in one piece from top to bottom. 'Let's not tear it', they said to one another, 'Let's decide by lot who*

will get it.' This happened that the scripture might be fulfilled which said, 'They divided my garments among them and cast lots for my clothing.'"

Scripture is written and fulfilled with incredible accuracy. Jesus' clothes were divided and lots were cast in order to remove all his clothes (both outerwear and underwear) and leave him naked, the intent being to bring as much shame and derision to the crucified man as possible. The imagery is so indecent, so wrong, so out of place for the son of God that we don't like thinking of him being stripped bare.

But in a spiritual sense nakedness and shame cannot be associated with Jesus. Just think about what has been said previously; that nakedness and sinful guilt are all connected. But where is the sin in Jesus? Pilate declares that he has no fault. The thief on the cross says that Jesus is suffering unjustly having done nothing amiss, and God (the judge who sees even in the inner parts) declares he is without spot and blemish. Perhaps this is why we are told that: "*Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith; who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God.*" (**Hebrews 12:2**). Jesus took upon himself the visible parable of naked sin exposed and was looked upon and mocked and yet he hung there for the sins of the world, exposing the mockers for what they really were.

As part of the Mosaic Law, Jews were circumcised, a literal cutting off of the flesh to symbolise the cutting off of the real flesh, that is, the wickedness of the human heart that is prone to disobey God.

Jesus was crucified, naked and exposed for all the world to see, with a sign above his head declaring the title "*king of the Jews*", whilst the religious authorities and the like, circumcised in physical flesh only, stood by physically clothed yet spiritually naked and worthless. The contrast is striking in that what Jesus looked like (a sinner) and what the mocking Jews looked like (the righteous judges) was in reality completely the other way round. But what is powerful is that Jesus suffered the shame and abuse at their hands in order to touch their conscience and heart, to save them!

And so once more we come to remember our Lord and saviour, the one who laid bare the sins of the world and crucified them upon the cross, so that we, through his sacrifice might be released from these bodies of sin and made righteous.

Brother John Hadfield: Stockport UK 30.08.20