

- SPIRITUALLY CLOTHED -

"Let us rejoice and be glad and give the glory to Him, for the marriage of the Lamb has come and His bride has made herself ready.' It was given to her to clothe herself in fine linen, bright and clean; for the fine linen is the righteous acts of the saints." (Revelation 19:7-8)



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For the Body of Christ

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The Seven Churches (Revelation 2-3)

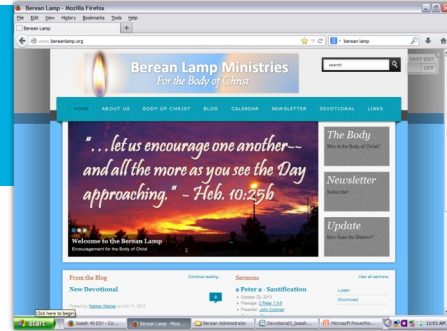


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The Berean Lamp Ministry seeks to:

1. Encourage and strengthen the Body of Christ by providing the means for each of its members to share their spiritual gifts with one another, rooted in the Word of God, thereby growing into deeper union with one another and with Christ (1 Corinthians 12:12-31).
2. Minister to non-believers; be a witness for Christ and a testimony to His Body in the world.

We would appreciate your help in contributing to the content and in spreading the work of this ministry. Thank you, and God bless.

- Pastor Scott Moller

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The Righteous Deeds of the Saints



An artistic depiction of the Church, the Bride of Christ, clothed in the Salvation of Christ and wearing as her wedding dress the righteous deeds of the Saints for her marriage to Jesus in Heaven.

2 Corinthians 5:1-3 — “For we know that if the earthly tent which is our house is torn down, we have a building from God, a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens. For indeed in this house we groan, longing to be clothed with our dwelling from heaven, inasmuch as we, having put it on, will not be found naked.”

Revelation 16:15 — “Behold, I am coming like a thief. Blessed is the one who stays awake and keeps his clothes, so that he will not walk about naked and men will not see his shame.”

The Garment of Salvation and the Church's Wedding Dress

By Nathan Warner

"Bless the Lord, O my soul! O Lord my God, You are very great! You are clothed with splendor and majesty, covering Yourself with light as with a garment, stretching out the heavens like a tent." (Psalm 104:1 ESV)

Would you believe that textiles are a \$3,000 trillion dollar industry? It is astounding that so much money is made from our shame – our need to "hide" our nakedness. Of that, the fashion industry makes up an extraordinary \$1.2 trillion globally.

Rudimentary textiles are purely functional, covering nakedness and providing comfort. Fashion, on the other hand, revolves around trends, styles, and ornamentation that bring the wearer added glory, either through artistic ideals of beauty or by association to something seen as important, valuable, or true.

Fashion is not about function – its aim is

to bring the wearer prestige and honor, clothing them in human ideas of majesty, nobility, and magnificence. It is about glory.

Perhaps this is why Jesus told us to *"consider the lilies, how they grow: they neither toil nor spin; but I tell you, not even Solomon in all his glory clothed himself like one of these"* (Luke 12:27 NASB). For the lily, "function" and "fashion" are one and the same – innately given to it by God. It is comfortable and content in its natural glory. Solomon's "glory," on the other hand, was not innate. It was taxed from nature, stripped by his servants from the glory of God's creation – fibers and dyes from plants, skins and furs from animals, precious stones and metals from the earth – all to "steal" their glory to add to Solomon.

But this is less about "adding" to glory we have and more about trying to "make up" for the innate glory mankind knows it has lost. It is no accident that the highest fashion of nobles and kings down through the ages sought to make them shine and sparkle with interwoven diamonds and costly threads of brightest colors and hues. It is a human approxima-



"Even the DARKNESS is not dark to You, And the NIGHT is as bright as the DAY. Darkness and LIGHT are alike to You." (Psalm 139:3)

tion of something we instinctively “know” from the deep past – that we were once innately clothed in glory – the glory of God’s presence. Unlike the Lily, we are missing our natural glory, and we long to be clothed in something infinite, eternal, and divine.

The textile and fashion industries are the world’s oldest business, and they have profited for millennia from the human race’s need to cover its nakedness and regain its glory—to make up for something it no longer has. And while many have argued that human fashion represents the height of materialism, it actually reveals a deep spiritual dilemma – a spiritual deficiency that Man expresses through the material and physical.

STRIPPED OF THE COVERING OF GOD’S PRESENCE

Of course, the origin of clothing was in the Fall of Man into rebellion against God. Before the Fall, Adam and Eve were clothed by fellowship with God. The thoughts of their hearts and minds were completely open to God and they felt no spiritual shame because there was no reason to hide their thoughts from Him. They were not open to judgment in the light of His presence, for they had no sin. They were justified to be with Him.

After our fall into rebellion, His light revealed our sin, our inadequacies, our unjustifiable state before Him. And in the presence of God, our ugly spiritual nakedness was exposed: “*Then the eyes of both of them were opened, and they knew that they were naked; and they sewed fig leaves together and made themselves loin coverings*” (Genesis 3:7), “*and the man and his wife hid themselves from the presence of the Lord God among the trees of the garden*” (Genesis 3:8b).

The shame they experienced was in relation to the presence of God. It was a spiritual deficiency. But their response was to try and physically “cover” that spiritual exposure and vulnerability—with dead leaves. In a similar way, many of us have felt “dirty” when we think, or do, something we feel is wrong. We may even wash our hands or shower ourselves

to try and cleanse this feeling away. We often act our spiritual problems out in the physical because the spiritual is a very real part of who and what we are.

But this was not enough and Adam and Eve hid from God’s presence. When confronted by the presence of God, Adam confessed, “*I heard the sound of You in the garden, and I was afraid because I was naked; so I hid myself*” (Genesis 3:10). Again, he felt the shame because of God. His sin was exposed in the gaze of holiness—he was unjustified to be in God’s presence and his deficiency was obvious to him. God responded, “*Who told you that you were naked?*” (Genesis 3:11a) How could Adam and Eve have felt vulnerable and exposed if they didn’t have a reason to feel shame? The only answer was that they did have a reason to feel shame—they had sinned and become unjustified and unholy: “*Have you eaten from the tree of which I commanded you not to eat?*” (Genesis 3:11b)

Even in his answer, Adam sought to lay his guilt on Eve and God—perhaps an even greater sin than his rebellion: “*The man said, ‘The woman whom You gave to be with me, she gave me from the tree, and I ate’*” (Genesis 3:12). And so, as the fallout of our sin became apparent, “*the Lord God made garments of skin for Adam and his wife, and clothed them*” (Genesis 3:21). God was teaching them that sin brought death—a terrible consequence, that was not entirely apparent to them yet. And “*the Lord God sent him out from the garden of Eden, to cultivate the ground from which he was taken*” (Genesis 3:23). Adam would no longer be in the direct presence of God, for the holiness of God cannot clothe what is unholy.

Mankind was plunged into spiritual darkness and exposed to the influence of the devil. Yet, even in this state, Man knows the thoughts of his heart are exposed in the presence of God. He is still naked to God! For “*no creature is hidden from His sight, but all are naked and exposed to the eyes of Him to whom we must give account*” (Hebrews 4:13 ESV).

“CLOTHED” IN SPIRITUAL DARKNESS

It is unbearable to have our unholy state nakedly exposed in the light of God’s Holy presence, so Man seeks to clothe himself in darkness — spiritual confusion, distortions, willing denial of the truth, depraved minds — anything to hide himself from the truth of the presence of the Lord. *“For even though they knew God, they did not honor Him as God or give thanks, but they became futile in their speculations, and their foolish heart was darkened”* (Romans 1:21). These are *“those who leave the paths of uprightness to walk in the ways of darkness; who delight in doing evil and rejoice in the perversity of evil; whose paths are crooked And who are devious in their ways”* (Proverbs 2:13-15). But *“woe to those who call evil good, and good evil; who substitute darkness for light and light for darkness; who substitute bitter for sweet and sweet for bitter! Woe to those who are wise in their own eyes and clever in their own sight!”* (Isaiah 5:21-22), for *“the way of the wicked is like*

darkness; they do not know over what they stumble” (Proverbs 4:19).

Darkness is not a “thing” – it is simply the absence of light. You cannot see your own nakedness in the dark, but you also cannot see the dangers around you or the way to safety. Yet this is Man’s “refuge” that he hopes will hide him from God. Unfortunately for him, when God draws near, the darkness vanishes in the glory of His Holy presence: *“If I say, ‘Surely the darkness will overwhelm me, And the light around me will be night,’ Even the darkness is not dark to You, And the night is as bright as the day. Darkness and light are alike to You”* (Psalm 139:2-3). Spiritual darkness is only a “covering” so long as there is no truth to reveal what is nakedly exposed under its rays.

Sooner or later, everything comes to light. Better to be clothed in the dark so that when the light is turned on you have nothing to be ashamed of: *“This is the judgment, that the Light has come into the world, and men loved the darkness rather than the Light, for their deeds were evil. For everyone who does evil hates the Light, and does not come to the Light*

“Prove YOURSELVES to be blameless and innocent, CHILDREN of God above reproach in the MIDST of a CROOKED and perverse generation, AMONG whom you appear as LIGHTS in the world.”

(Philippians 2:15b)

for fear that his deeds will be exposed. But he who practices the truth comes to the Light, so that his deeds may be manifested as having been wrought in God” (John 3:19-21).

CHRIST’S GARMENT OF SALVATION FOR OUR NAKEDNESS

You cannot enter into God’s presence unless you are justified to do so. An unjustified heart desires to flee from the light of God! And no man can make himself justified before God. He cannot undo the consequences of his rebellion.

Only one man is justified, righteous, and holy under the light of God’s throne. This is the Son of God – Jesus Christ, Who is God incarnate in human flesh. Jesus came into the darkness of the world to restore mankind’s justification: *“The people who were sitting in darkness saw a great Light, and those who were sitting in the land and shadow of death, upon them a Light dawned” (Matthew 4:16).* He *“was the true Light which, coming into the world, enlightens every man” (John 1:9).*

Just as a sinful life brought all Man into sin, a sinless life offered them justification: *“For if by the transgression of the one [Adam], death reigned through the one, much more those who receive the abundance of grace and of the gift of righteousness will reign in life through the One, Jesus Christ. So then as through one transgression there resulted condemnation to all men, even so through one act of righteousness there resulted justification of life to all men” (Romans 5:17-18).*

This one act of righteousness was Christ’s sacrifice of Himself in our place of guilt and shame. Once accomplished, it was in His power to “gift,” credit, or impute His sinless, justified standing before His Father to us – those who end their rebellion against God and entrust themselves to Him. We are “clothed” in His righteousness and we are no longer so naked and unholy that we cannot approach the throne of God, for He has clothed us in His Holy Spirit so that we can be justified in His presence.

A ROBE OF RIGHTEOUSNESS

The Church is the Bride of Christ, and it is composed of all Believers, each of whom has been betrothed to Christ. Every Believer is clothed in Christ, *“for all of you who were baptized into Christ have clothed yourselves with Christ” (Galatians 3:27).* When a Bride was betrothed to her husband in Jewish custom, she would immerse, or baptize, herself in a ritual pool of cleansing to signify her washing herself of her former life and her setting herself apart for her husband. She would then put on fresh garments. I would suggest that this signifies the garment of Salvation, spoken of by Isaiah: *“I will rejoice greatly in the Lord, My soul will exult in my God; For He has clothed me with garments of salvation, He has wrapped me with a robe of righteousness, As a bridegroom decks himself with a garland, And as a bride adorns herself with her jewels” (Isaiah 61:10).*

Indeed, the garments of Salvation are the only things that can cover our spiritual nakedness. They are substance and in them we have no need to be ashamed in God’s presence. We walk in this world carrying the light of His presence in us: *“Prove yourselves to be blameless and innocent, children of God above reproach in the midst of a crooked and perverse generation, among whom you appear as lights in the world” (Philippians 2:15b).*

THE CHURCH’S WEDDING GARMENT IS TO GLORIFY CHRIST

God’s work does not end by covering our nakedness with the functional garment of Salvation. He wants us to add beauty to this garment—with a garment of fashion, adorned with our works. He wants us to be devoted to spiritual fashion that reflects the beauty of His ideals—what is important, valuable, and true! This is not adding to our Salvation, for these ornamentations cannot cover our nakedness. They are added as an act of worship to our Beloved through the deeds we do for Him.

Of course, this is all referring to the Jew-

ish bride preparing her wedding garment for the arrival of her husband on their wedding day. One of the chief responsibilities of a betrothed woman in the Jewish marriage custom was to sew and prepare her wedding garment while she waited for her bridegroom to come for her and take her to the marriage supper. The more dedication and care she put into it, the more splendid she would appear for him.

In Heaven, John saw a vision of a wedding in the future when Christ's "*bride has made herself ready. 'It was given to her to clothe herself in fine linen, bright and clean; for the fine linen is the righteous acts of the saints'*" (Revelation 19:7-8). Again, these righteous deeds cannot clothe you with Salvation, for you have already "*clothed yourself with Christ*" (Galatians 3:27b) through the betrothal covenant established in His blood. Rather, these deeds of the Church are ornamentation that pleases Jesus and honors His Father.

These deeds can only be pleasing if they are the fruit of His Holy Spirit in us Who enables us to do the works that please our Bride-

groom: "*For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand so that we would walk in them*" (Ephesians 2:10). Are you preparing your "wedding garment" to honor His return?

May we "*walk in a manner worthy of the Lord, to please Him in all respects, bearing fruit in every good work and increasing in the knowledge of God*" (Colossians 1:10). "*Be steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, knowing that your toil is not in vain in the Lord*" (1 Corinthians 15:58). Indeed, "*Whatever you do, do your work heartily, as for the Lord rather than for men, knowing that from the Lord you will receive the reward of the inheritance. It is the Lord Christ whom you serve*" (Colossians 3:23-24), "*who gave Himself for us to redeem us from every lawless deed, and to purify for Himself a people for His own possession, zealous for good deeds*" (Titus 2:14). Until He returns for us, may we labor to present ourselves pleasing to Him. Even so, Amen.



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.

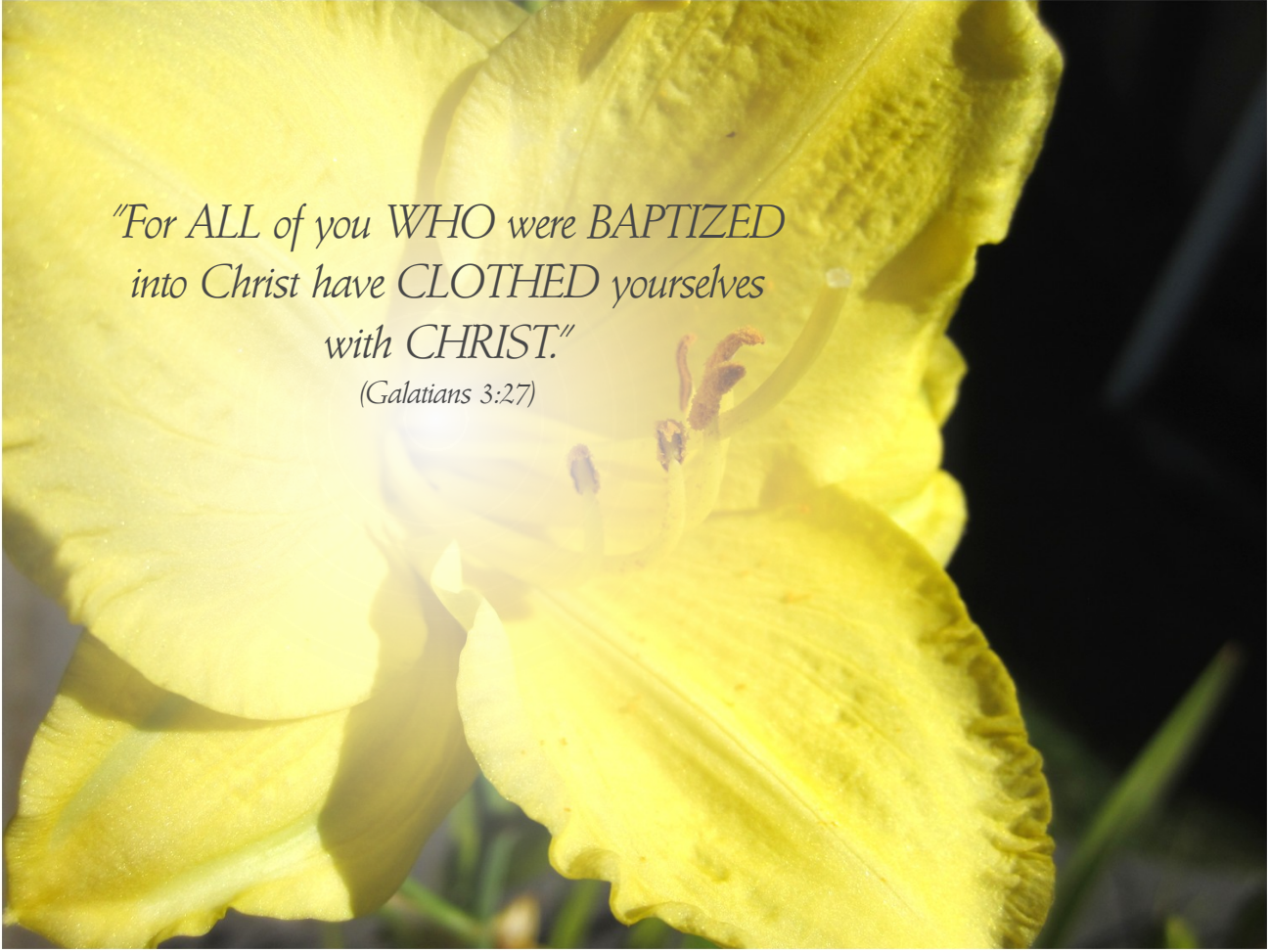
We've been given the clothes to wear, yet it is still our responsibility to "put them on" outwardly in our actions and attitudes as we walk by faith in that which has been given to us.

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.



*"For ALL of you WHO were BAPTIZED
into Christ have CLOTHED yourselves
with CHRIST."*

(Galatians 3:27)

*"For we that are in this tabernacle do groan, being burdened:
not for that we would be unclothed, but clothed upon, that
mortality might be swallowed up of life."*

(2 Corinthians 5:4)



By Lynn Warner

The Centrality of the Soul

By Jacob Palicka

Of all the themes which might have been chosen for a newsletter, few have less tendency to pique my interest and excite my imagination. How many times have I found myself under the dismal lighting of a clothing store growing languid of movement and vacuous of mind till I was inclined to believe that my soul had rejected its body, until at last, shopping was past and life could once more become tolerable. However, since it is not within the confines of courtesy to continue on about unsolicited quibbles, I will restrict all further remarks to whatever it is that can be said of clothing.

Insofar as clothing conceals our deformities and by decoration can impart some degree of magnificence, it is to mankind a signal aspect of our sublunary existence. Likewise, the soul receives its own covering: that of the body. So we find that all observations are made from within; howsoever altruistic one may be, the center of one's life is never from the perspective of another (Proverbs 14:10).

At once it becomes apparent that this would be devastating to the authenticity of empathy if affection necessitated shared experience and was therefore worth no more than circumstance would allow, becoming merely a byproduct of proximity. As the design of God would never be sustained under such a fundamental flaw, which deprives empathy of merit and secludes the heart from ever being entirely or perfectly understood, this partition obviously is not an insurmountable division (Psalm 34:10, 84:11).

Although it is not clear why this obstacle can be circumvented, we find that those who effectively sympathize do so simply by fervid concern, steadfast friendship, and discrete deportment. Consequent to the application of the above measures, we may have a basis from which to demonstrate charity to one another, albeit that bodily ailments constrain the soul to the humblest expression. For if our bodies are

the only conduit through which we bless others, it follows that any corruption to the former will be a hindrance on the latter. Therefore, let us not vigilantly guard the heart to the neglect of the body which is the vessel entrusted to us for the duration of life to be used in the service of our neighbor for the honor of God.



By Natalie Warner

You're Not Wearing That, Are You? (A Joyce and Rejoice Adventure)

By Jane Titrud

Rejoice: You're not wearing *that* to the picnic, are you? You'll look ridiculous!

Joyce: I'll look like you. We're twins, remember, identical twins? And you're wearing the same thing as I am.

Rejoice: That's the problem. I don't want to emphasize the fact that we're identical twins. We're not cute little girls any more. We're adults, and I think we should each have our own styles. Besides, I have been planning to wear this for days.

Joyce: But, what's the big deal about looking alike? When we go to be with the Lord, He's going to dress all the saved in garments of white and robes of righteousness. Sounds like we'll all look the same then, and that's forever. So, why does it bother you so much now?

Rejoice: I just want people to be able to tell us apart. It's embarrassing when people get us mixed up because we look so much alike. I even wonder how God will be able to tell us apart.

Joyce: Oh, He won't have a problem. He looks on the inside.

Rejoice: So, maybe if I am careful not to eat the same things as you do, He will be able to tell us apart?

Joyce: Now, you know that's not what I meant. I was talking about the heart. Besides, it sounds like we'll have new names assigned to us in heaven anyway. That would make us different—although I think He might give you and several other people your same name.

Rejoice: Why is that?

Joyce: Because the Scriptures say in Philippians 4:4: "*Rejoice, Rejoice! And again, I say rejoice!*" It sounds to me like He's calling at least three people by your name right there.

Rejoice: I believe the quote is: "*Rejoice in the Lord always; again I will say, rejoice!*" Anyway, the Scriptures seem to indicate that we will bear the new name of Christ. It's not clear that we will get new names ourselves. You should check out Revelation 2:17 and 3:12.

Joyce: Still, you must admit that true believers are said to be "in the Lord." So, you see, you technically *are* "Rejoice, in the Lord."

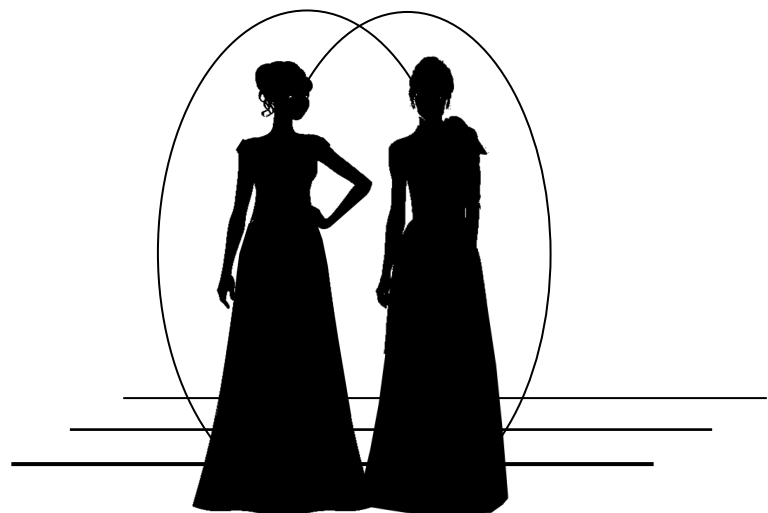
Rejoice: Very funny—or should I say "punny." I'm just glad we were born girls instead of boys. Otherwise, Dad might have named us Pete and Repeat!

Joyce: Yah, he had quite a sense of humor, and that's an old joke. But, "Joyce" and "Rejoice" both mean to be glad and joyous, so I think he and Mom were just overjoyed to have twin girls. Or, maybe they were extremely happy to have *two* babies that looked *exactly like me!*

Rejoice: Well, I told my boyfriend I was wearing this outfit today so that he could tell us apart. Let's see how joyful you are when he mistakes you for me! Anyway, I don't want us to look alike, so I've already decided to wear something else.

Joyce: No, that's OK. I'll change. You can wear what you have on. I'll wear the purple outfit we picked out last week.

Rejoice: But you can't! That's just what I decided to wear!



Story of a Girl.

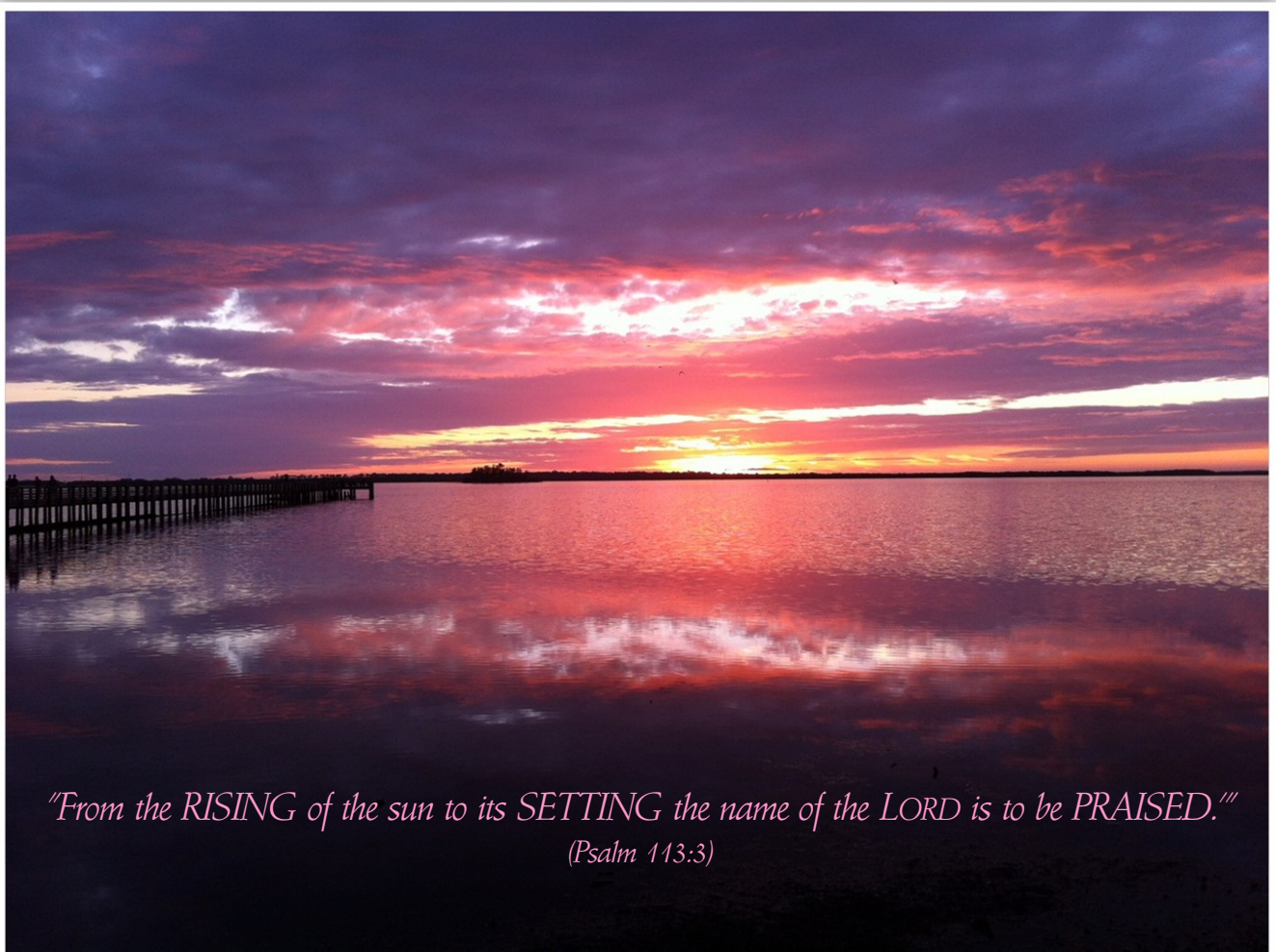
By Jenean Kim

*"Her priests also I will clothe with salvation,
and her godly ones will sing aloud for joy."
(Psalm 132:16 NASB)*

*"For indeed, in this house we groan, longing
to be clothed with our dwelling from heaven,
inasmuch as we, having put it on, will not be
found naked. For indeed while we are in this
tent, we groan, being burdened, because we do
not want to be unclothed, but to be clothed, so
that what is mortal will be swallowed up by
life. Now He who prepared us for this very
purpose is God, who gave to us the Spirit as a
pledge." (2 Corinthians 5:2-5)*

She took herself to their closet and peered in...the clothes poked at angles in disarray and a heap had been cast limply to the floor; she knew why. Few of them fit her two older sisters, and from many previous trips to this closet she also knew nothing would fit her either, because she was several years behind them in school, and that much smaller. Yet she desperately needed clothing—*any clothing*—to cover herself, get out the back door running, and not miss her bus.

Desperately, she grabbed one blue sock and one black sock from her sisters' closet, which she only realized were mismatched later, and pulled them onto her feet. She would *have* to wear the short dress, the only thing left in her *own* closet. All day, as she got off the bus and walked into the halls, she was careful; careful not to bend at her locker, lest



*"From the RISING of the sun to its SETTING the name of the LORD is to be PRAISED."
(Psalm 113:3)*

By Ron Thomsen

the dress be too short in back, and careful as she trekked up the school steps between classes, lest the eyes of those below her might try to peer up the steps. In each class she would sit just so, to keep the short dress from creeping up to the top of her legs. She day-dreamed of wearing her lime green sweatshirt, her knee-length, blue jean cutoffs, and her knee-high white socks that she had worn all summer, but shorts were not allowed at school, and for wearing a pair of overalls, she had already been sent to the office. *Perfectly practical pants precipitated an appeal—practically a punishment—to the parent, from the principal. Preposterous*, she thought. However, last summer, with her blue-jean cutoffs, and white knee high socks, just the caps of her knees showed—a compromise with the heat, and she had been able to do anything her heart desired—comfortable and free to move. It had been almost perfect.

With the uncomfortable school day behind her, she jumped off the bus and started down her long road, with no people around, but only nature. She breathed in a huge lungful of cool fresh air, listened intently as the meadowlarks

greeted her, and kept an eye on her “big and little tree” at the top of the hill across the small swamp. She was accustomed to taking all this in while running, and so she ran for half the 7/10ths-of-a-mile driveway. Around the second corner, in the middle of the way, the wild roses bloomed so fragrantly, and their pink color shined so welcomingly in the sun, that she stopped to take in their scent up close. Thorns pricked her legs as she stepped off the gravel road and into the rosebushes. She plucked an open flower. How royally they were clothed! And so simply. A bright pink petal with a touch of white and jaunty yellow dots in the middle.

She knew the ONE who clothed the flowers. It was as if HE Himself stood in the rose bushes, to wait for her to round the corner, and she felt HE was speaking to her, silently, the same way her world was silent. She did not hear HIS words, but only felt HIS Spirit. Her heart felt deeply comforted by Jesus, and in that moment, she didn’t know that HE intended to clothe her with a beauty and a fragrance that far out-lasts the rose.



September/October Newsletter Theme— TRIALS AND TRIBULATIONS Submission Deadline: September 30 Publish Date: October 9

Trials and Tribulations...

- Why do we face trials?
- What do trials produce in us?
- Why can we be confident in tribulation?

Verses on Trials and Tribulations (NASB)

James 1:12 — “Blessed is a man who perseveres under trial; for once he has been approved, he will receive the crown of life which *the Lord* has promised to those who love Him.”

Luke 22:28-30 — “You are those who have stood by Me in My trials; and just as My Father has granted Me a kingdom, I grant you that you may eat and drink at My table in My kingdom, and you will sit on thrones judging the twelve tribes of Israel.”

James 1:2-4 — “Consider it all joy, my brethren, when you encounter various trials, knowing that the testing of your faith produces endurance. And let endurance have its perfect result, so that you may be perfect and complete, lacking in nothing.”

1 Peter 1:3-7 — “Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who according to His great mercy has caused us to be born again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, to obtain an inheritance which is imperishable and undefiled and will not fade away, reserved in heaven for you, who are protected by the power of God through faith for a salvation ready to be revealed in the last time. In this you greatly rejoice, even though now for a little while, if necessary, you have been distressed by various trials, so that the proof of your faith, being more precious than gold which is perishable, even though tested by fire, may be found to result in praise and glory and honor at the revelation of Jesus Christ.”

Matthew 24:9-13 — “Then they will deliver you to tribulation, and will kill you, and you will be hated by all nations because of My name. At that time many will fall away and will betray one another and hate one another. Many false prophets will arise and will mislead many. Because lawlessness is increased, most people’s love will grow cold. But the one who endures to the end, he will be saved.”

John 16:33 — “These things I have spoken to you, so that in Me you may have peace. In the world you have tribulation, but take courage; I have overcome the world.”

Acts 14:21-22 — “After they had preached the gospel to that city and had made many disciples, they returned to Lystra and to Iconium and to Antioch, strengthening the souls of the disciples, encouraging them to continue in the faith, and saying, ‘Through many tribulations we must enter the kingdom of God.’”

Also see , Romans 5:3-5, Romans 8:35-39, Romans 12:10-13, 1 Thessalonians 1:6...