

THE DIVIDED GARMENTS OF JESUS

The outer and inner garments of the Lord

John 19:23 Then the soldiers, when they had crucified Jesus, took his garments, and made four parts, to every soldier a part; and also his coat: now the coat was without seam, woven from the top throughout.

The Lord Jesus Christ had no houses, fields, horses or oxen when he left this earth. The only earthly possessions he had were the clothes he wore. This was perhaps the same garment that the woman with the blood issue for 12 years touched by faith and was healed. “And, behold, a woman, which was diseased with an issue of blood twelve years, came behind him, and touched the hem of his garment” (Matthew 9:20). Perhaps the Roman soldiers were aware of this story and wanted to possess this garment and its healing power. To me, the Roman soldiers represent the gentiles – they represent you and I. The Jews did not appear to be interested in the garments of the Lord Jesus. They considered him cursed of God and wanted nothing to do with him. But the four Roman soldiers wanted each a part of the garment of the Lord. They divided it into four parts. The four parts are symbolic of the four corners of the world – east, west, north and south. This represents the universality of the Gospel. All this appears to be prophetic: the gentiles coveted the garments of Jesus, and they were now going to take the Gospel to the four corners of the world. The Lord Jesus himself prophesied about this.

Matthew 21:42 Jesus saith unto them, Did ye never read in the scriptures, The stone which the builders rejected, the same is become the head of the corner: this is the Lord's doing, and it is marvellous in our eyes?

Matthew 21:43 Therefore say I unto you, The kingdom of God shall be taken from you, and given to a nation bringing forth the fruits thereof.

Next, notice that the Roman soldiers took the garments of the Lord by force. This was also prophesied in the Book of Psalms. “They part my garments among them, and cast lots upon my vesture” (Psalm 22:18). The Gospel is for those who understand its value and are willing to fight for it. This is what the Lord meant by the saying, “And from the days of John the Baptist until now the kingdom of heaven suffereth violence, and the violent take it by force” (Matthew 11:12). I pray the spirit of the four Roman soldiers will enter into us today! I pray we will demonstrate more zeal so we can inherit the garments of the Lord. Do you remember the zeal Elisha demonstrated in order to inherit the mantle of Elijah? No amount of persuasion could make him leave Elijah because he was determined to inherit his mantle and get a double portion of his blessing. “And he took the mantle of Elijah that fell from him, and

smote the waters, and said, Where is the LORD God of Elijah? and when he also had smitten the waters, they parted hither and thither: and Elisha went over” (2 Kings 2:14). How much more zeal ought we to demonstrate to inherit the garments of the King of Kings and Lord of Lords? By inheriting his garments I am speaking about receiving the anointing and favor of the Lord to evangelize the world.

The inheritors of the garments of the Lord were also soldiers. This was no accident. The Roman Empire was practically impossible to defeat because of the discipline, training and determination of these soldiers to conquer the world of the time. Let me remind you that the Kingdom of Jesus Christ is also comprised of soldiers who are disciplined, trained and determined to reach the four corners of the earth under the anointing of the Spirit of the Lord Jesus. Oh, when the saints, go marching in, oh when the saints go marching in ...! Paul told Timothy, “Thou therefore endure hardness, as a good soldier of Jesus Christ. No man that warreth entangleth himself with the affairs of this life; that he may please him who hath chosen him to be a soldier” (2 Timothy 2:3,4). We are like the Roman centurion who said to the Lord, “For I am a man under authority, having soldiers under me: and I say to this man, Go, and he goeth; and to another, Come, and he cometh; and to my servant, Do this, and he doeth it” (Matthew 8:9). We are soldiers who now have grabbed a portion of the Lord’s garments. We must now carry this mantle of the Lord to the ends of the earth. If the handkerchief of the Apostle Paul frightened demons, what would the garment of Jesus do?

Act 19:11 And God wrought special miracles by the hands of Paul:

Act 19:12 So that from his body were brought unto the sick handkerchiefs or aprons, and the diseases departed from them, and the evil spirits went out of them.

Finally, John wrote that the Roman soldiers did not divide the coat or tunic of the Lord. “They said therefore among themselves, Let us not rend it, but cast lots for it, whose it shall be: that the scripture might be fulfilled, which saith, They parted my raiment among them, and for my vesture they did cast lots. These things therefore the soldiers did” (John 19:24). In verse 23 we read that this coat (*chitōn*) was a seamless garment which was worn closest to the skin. Bible scholars believe this is the garment worn by the priests because it is not easy to tear a seamless garment. “And he that is the high priest among his brethren, upon whose head the anointing oil was poured, and that is consecrated to put on the garments, shall not uncover his head, nor rend his clothes” (Leviticus 21:10). Without knowing it, the Roman soldiers decided not to tear the coat of the Lord, but cast lots for it. The hand of God ensured they did not tear apart Jesus’ *chitōn* because he is the High Priest of the gentiles also. “For

such an high priest became us, who is holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners, and made higher than the heavens” (Hebrews 7:26). The outer (go out) garment represent the Great Commission to go into all the world, while the inner vesture represents the need to go into the Holy of Holies unto the High Priest, Jesus, who takes away our sins with his blood, intercedes for us and cleanses us. This is the Christian life in a nutshell – a continuum between the outer garments and the inner vesture: go out into the world and demonstrate the power of Jesus to make disciples, and the inner vesture which represents returning to sanctuary so the High Priest, Jesus, can minister to the needs of our souls. Amen!

The gentiles now have his garments – his anointing and his priesthood. What are we waiting for? Let us march onward Christian soldiers! We have inherited his spiritual garments to conquer the world for Jesus.