

# Christ & His Bride

Lesson #1

Sardis: Defiled Garment

Jan. 22, 2025

Acts 17:11 These were more noble than those in Thessalonica, in that they received the word with all readiness of mind, and Searched the Scriptures Daily, whether those things were so. Truth: All born-again believers since Pentecost comprise the Church, the Body of Jesus Christ. Jesus Christ is seen as the "head" of the body, which is the church, while the "members" of the body are seen as members of the Church, members of His body.

Consider: Adam #1's bride, Eve, was taken out of Adam's body. She was part of his body. To follow the pattern set forth in Genesis, should we consider that: Adam #2, Jesus Christ is the head of the church, His body. Will His Bride be taken out of His body?

## *God Has A Plan & Purpose For His Church*

I Pet. 2:9 But ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people; that ye should shew forth the praises of Him who hath called you out of darkness into His marvelous light; [written in AD 64-65]

Eph. 5:25-27 Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it; <sup>26</sup> That he might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word,

- Sanctification was seen as both a positional reality, achieved through Christ's sacrifice, and a progressive process, as believers grow in holiness.

<sup>27</sup> That he might present it to himself a glorious church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that it should be Holy And Without Blemish. [written in AD 60-62]

Rev. 5:9-10 And they sung a new song, saying, Thou art worthy to take the book, and to open the seals thereof: for thou wast slain, and

hast redeemed us to God by thy blood out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation;

<sup>10</sup> And have made us unto our God kings and priests: and we shall reign on the earth. [AD 94-96]

Rev. 3:1-6 And unto the angel of the church in Sardis write:

These things saith He that hath the seven Spirits of God, and the seven stars: I know thy works, that thou hast a name that thou livest, and art dead.

Be watchful, and strengthen the things which remain, that are ready to die:

for I have not found thy works perfect [complete, mature] before God.

Remember therefore how you have received and heard; hold fast and repent.

If therefore thou shalt not watch, I will come on thee as a thief,

and thou shalt not know what hour I will come upon thee.

<sup>4</sup>Thou hast a few names even in Sardis which have not defiled their garments;

and they shall walk with me in white: for they are worthy.

<sup>5</sup> He that overcometh, the same shall be clothed in white raiment; and I will not blot out his name out of the book of life, but I will confess his name before my Father, and before his

angels. <sup>6</sup> He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches.

Rev. 3:4 Thou hast a few names even in Sardis which have not Defiled their garments;  
and they shall Walk With Me In White: for they are Worthy.

Good News: It seems to be a small group in the church who have not defiled their garments.  
Found worthy is linked with not defiling their garments.  
How can I keep from defiling my garment? I want to walk with Him in white.  
How can I be found worthy?

Belief: I believe the Bible teaches there are 2 different garments for a justified believer.

Garment #1: Believers are given [imputed] the "Garment Of Salvation" at justification.

#5509/xitōn: the under-garment worn next to the skin

The garments of skin that God Himself made for Adam and Eve and placed upon them to cover their shame required the shedding of blood and were symbolic of the salvation we have been given in Jesus Christ. [Gen. 3:21]

Arthur Pink comments on the garments of skin God made for Adam and Eve: "It was the first Gospel sermon, preached by God Himself, not in words but in symbol and action. It was a setting forth of the way by which a sinful creature could return unto and approach his holy Creator. . . . It was a blessed illustration of substitution—the innocent dying in the stead of the guilty"

Rom. 3:10 As it is written, There is none righteous, no, not one:

We need Christ's righteousness imputed to us because we have no righteousness of our own.

We are sinners by nature, and we cannot make ourselves righteous—we cannot place ourselves in right standing with God. We need His holiness credited to our account before God.

II Cor. 5:21 For He hath made Him to be sin for us, who knew no sin;

that we might be made the righteousness of God in Him.

Rom. 4:6-8 just as David also describes the blessedness of the man to whom

God imputes righteousness apart from works:

<sup>7</sup> Saying, Blessed are they whose iniquities are forgiven, and whose sins are covered.

<sup>8</sup> Blessed is the man to whom the Lord will not impute sin.

- a. This imputed garment is without spot or wrinkle.
- b. Believers cannot defile this garment of justification. It is HIS righteousness!
- c. This garment provides us eternal life and entrance into heaven.
- d. This garment gives us eternal security.

No justified believer can be ejected from Christ's righteousness.

Spurgeon: There, poor sinner, take my garment and put it on;

you shall stand before God as if you were Christ, and I will stand before God as if I had been the sinner; I will suffer in the sinner's stead, and you shall be rewarded for works that you did not do, but which I did for you.

Garment #2 Sanctification Garment: #2440 himation= cloak; outer garment worn over #5509

I Thess. 4:3 For this is the will of God, your sanctification:

Obedience to His Call > Lifelong process

This garment speaks of internal sanctification of the believer.

Justification: Spirit is born again - Position Sanctification: Soul Is Being Saved; Progressive

Legal Standing	Internal Condition
Once for all time	Continuous throughout my life
Entirely God's Work	I cooperate with God
Perfect in this life	Not perfect in this life
The same in all believers	Greater in some than others

The righteousness of Christ is applied to man in two different ways—Imputed and Imparted. The righteousness by which we are justified is imputed. It is a One Time Act. The righteousness by which we are sanctified is imparted by the Holy Spirit. Progressive  
Kenton Beshore: "The Millennial Apocalypse"

"Christ must not only be on us as a robe, but He must be in us as a life."

Col. 1:27 To whom God would make known what is the riches of the glory of this mystery among the Gentiles; which is Christ in you, the hope of glory:

To be in Christ > Redemption; Justification	Christ in me > Sanctification
To be in Christ > makes me fit for heaven	Christ in me > makes me fit for
To be in Christ > Changes my destination	Christ in me > changes my destiny

The 2<sup>nd</sup> garment Christ requires for the Marriage festivities is the white, fine linen garment made up of the believer's "righteous works."

Rev. 19:7-8 Let us be glad and rejoice and give Him glory, for the marriage of the Lamb has come, and His wife has made herself ready." <sup>8</sup> And to her it was granted to be arrayed in fine linen, clean and bright, for the Fine Linen Is The Righteous Acts Of The Saints.

These are Spirit-led deeds performed after our justification; works of godliness and deeds of righteousness that the Holy Spirit PRODUCES through us.

Phil. 1:11 May you always be filled with the fruit of your salvation - the righteous character produced in your life by Jesus Christ - for this will bring much glory and praise to God.

Rev. 3:4 Thou hast a few names even in Sardis which have not Defiled their garments;

Note: Our 2<sup>nd</sup> garment can get defiled, stained, and blackened through our own choices.

Defiled: #3435 molunó: blacken oneself, to pollute oneself, dirty one's clothing

To color something by staining it; NOW it needs cleaning

The state of being impure, dishonored, desecrated

A present active condition of being spiritually unclean

It addresses issues of inner purity and holiness.

The root word for defilement = koinonia = from which we derive the word, fellowship.

Defiled = being out of fellowship and communion with the Lord. [clogged-up vessel]

I John 1:9 If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.

It refers to an internal condition = unfaithfulness & disobedience

Powerful Truth: We can defile our garment by not being faithful, by quenching the Holy Spirit and polluting our soul. We make choices that block God's Spirit & cause us to walk in darkness.

Under the New Covenant, born-again children of God are indwelt by His Holy Spirit.

[Acts 2:38; John 3:3]. Our body becomes His temple, His dwelling place.

The Apostle Paul addresses carnal Christians who defile the church which is the body of Christ as well as their individual body which is God's dwelling place.

Acts 18:11-12 Paul stayed 18 months in Corinth during his second missionary journey

I Corinthians was written about 4 years after Paul left Corinth.

The church in Corinth may have grown in numbers, in wealth, in giftedness, but the church had not matured spiritually. It looked too much like the world in which it existed. It was tragic.

It needed to change. Repentance was called for.

Paul pointed out: You are God's building. One day God will judge our labors as related to the local assembly. The fire will test the quality of each man's work. If we are going to build the local church & our lives the way God wants them built, we must meet certain conditions.

Gal. 4:19 My little children, of whom I travail in birth again until Christ be formed in you,

Eph. 4:13 Till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ:

Powerful Reminder: The church is a family whose goal is maturity. Goal of each believer.

Context of I Cor. 3: Characteristics of the Carnal Christian

I Cor. 3:1-4 And I, brethren, could not speak unto you as unto spiritual, but as unto carnal, even as unto babes in Christ. <sup>2</sup> I have fed you with milk, and not with meat: for hitherto ye were not able to bear it, neither yet now are ye able.

<sup>3</sup> For ye are yet carnal: for whereas there is among you envying, and strife, and divisions, are ye not carnal, and walk as men?

<sup>4</sup> For while one saith, I am of Paul; and another, I am of Apollos; are ye not carnal?

➤ There is weakness which comes from division; no spirit of unity.

Context: Consider: The Judgment Seat of Christ with Rewards and Loss

I Cor. 3:11-15 For other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ.

<sup>12</sup> Now if any man build upon this foundation gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, stubble;

<sup>13</sup> Every man's work shall be made manifest: for the day shall declare it, because it shall be revealed by fire; and the fire shall try every man's work of what sort it is.

<sup>14</sup> If any man's work abide which he hath built thereupon, he shall receive a reward.

<sup>15</sup> If any man's work shall be burned, he shall suffer loss: but he himself shall be saved;

➤ yet so as by fire.

The Bema Seat is for assessing the QUALITY of each man's works and not for examination of our sins in this life. Our sins were paid for in full in the finished work of Jesus Christ.

The individual's "works" are the basis of judgment there [I Cor 3:12-15; Rev 2:23].

➤ The issue at the Judgment Seat Of Christ is the awarding or withholding of "rewards" [Matt. 5:12; 6:4; 10:41; 16:27; I Cor 3:14; II John 1:8; Rev 11:18; 22:12].

- There will be those who will "suffer loss," who will be saved "as by fire" [I Cor 3:15], and those who will be "ashamed at His coming" [I John 2:28].

Rev. 3:11 Behold, I come quickly: hold that fast which thou hast, that no man take thy crown.  
II Cor. 5:10a For we must ALL appear before the Judgment Seat of Christ; that every one may receive the things done in his body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad.

I Cor. 3:16-17 Know ye not that ye are the temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you? <sup>17</sup> If any man Defile [Destroy] = the temple of God, him shall God DESTROY; for the temple of God is holy, which temple ye are.

Context: When Paul wrote, "If anyone defiles the temple of God," he was addressing a specific problem of division in the church [I Cor. 1:10-17; 11:18].

The Corinthians were split in their loyalties to different leaders of the church. Some were devoted to the teachings of Paul, others followed Apollos, and some aligned with Peter. The "super-spiritual" ones declared, "I follow only Christ." [I Cor. 1:12; I Cor. 3:4-6] Paul's warning not to defile the temple of God is meant for believers. Christians must be careful not to create disorder and ruin the church through cliques, jealousy, and division. The church is torn apart and destroyed when its members are divided. The most dangerous brand of defilement comes from the inside, not the outside.

Defile = destroy = 5351. Phtheiró=To destroy, to corrupt, to spoil = causing ruin or corruption  
 To make a mess of or create disorder in

Corruption is seen as a deviation from God's laws and commandments, leading to spiritual and communal decay. Literally means "waste away" [degenerate], "moving down from a higher level [quality, status to a lower form.]

Take this seriously. Destroy =moving down from a higher level, quality or status to a lower form  
 When Paul said, "God will destroy that person," he wasn't talking about eternal destruction but a punishment that would fit the crime.

Rev. 3:4 Thou hast a few names even in Sardis which have not Defiled their garments; and they shall Walk With Me In White: for they are Worthy. [axios]

White: 3022. leukos = bright, brilliant = Derived from the same root as the Greek word "light" of brightness or shining

It often symbolizes spiritual purity, righteousness, holiness, and divine presence. White garments were often worn by priests and were considered a sign of purity and holiness.

Romans 15:4 For whatsoever things were written aforetime were written for our learning, that we through patience and comfort of the Scriptures might have hope.

The Old Testament stresses: In order for the priests to stand before the Lord, they had to have on "Holy" Garments. [Ex. 28:1, 36-38]

- These garments were "for glory and for beauty." [Ex. 28:2, 40]
- These garments meant the priest reflected God's holiness.

- Without this garment of holiness, the priest was forbidden to come into God's presence [Lev. 21:6-8]

Lev. 7:21; 22:3 Many of the ceremonial laws God gave to Israel were to show them how to cleanse themselves from defilement so that they could commune with a holy God.

Lev. 5:2 Defilement of any sort, even when caused unintentionally, separated a person from the community and from God's dwelling place among them.

Num. 19:13, 20 No defiled person could enter the sanctuary of the Lord.

Ezek. 23:39; 44:7; Mal. 2:11 Anytime enemies or backslidden Israel desecrated God's temple with neglect or abuse, God considered it defiled.

II Chron. 29:16; Lev. 16:20 No one could offer acceptable sacrifices or prayers until the temple had been cleansed from its defilement.

Neh. 12:30; 13:30; Ex. 29:4 Priests had to go through a ritualistic cleansing process before ministering to the Lord, indicating that association with the world in any way brought defilement.

In Exodus, God chose the Levites to serve in His sanctuary continuously.

Israel did not take seriously the holiness of God, even in the temple, where the Holy of Holies was found. The Levitical priests, despite being chosen to act as ministers in the temple, couldn't fulfill their duties without corruption.

They allowed the unworthy to come into the temple and served as priests to idols.

Truth: God was serious! Keep His temple holy and have the right people ministering there.

Consider: What will happen to the Levitical priests in Christ's Millennial Kingdom?

### *The Levitical Caretakers In Christ's Millennial Kingdom*

Ezekiel 44:4-14 concerns the statutes, laws and holiness that must be observed in the Millennial temple. The LORD used the vision of the glory of the LORD filling the temple to impress upon Ezekiel the importance of these things.

V. 6-8 Israel is reminded of her never to be repeated sin of allowing unbelieving foreigners into the sanctuary, thereby profaning it and voiding the covenant.

V. 11, 14 These foreigners were used as caretakers so that the priests could focus on their more important duties.

It is now the Levites, demoted from being priests, who will become the temple's caretakers.

Defile or destroy: move down from a higher level, quality or status to a lower level!

v. 10 The Levites must face the consequence of seeking idols instead of God.

The Levites became a stumbling block of iniquity to Israel and they must bear that shame.

v. 11 The Levites will be disciplined because they didn't stand for what was holy and right in the years before the captivity. They will be allowed to kill the sacrifices, assist the worshippers, serve as gatekeepers, and help in the temple, but they will not have priestly privileges.

v. 12-13 They shall not come near to God, for they are no longer priests.

And they shall not come near unto me, to do the office of a priest unto me,  
nor to come near to any of my holy things, in the most holy place:

but they shall bear their shame, and their abominations which they have committed.

A faithful, covenant keeping God will keep His word to the Levites. He will restore the house of Levi to their responsibilities to work and to serve in His Millennial Temple. However, because of their years of rebellion, they will work the gates and keep the house. They will not come close to God, they will not enter the holiest places, nor come close to the holy objects.

Those who did not appreciate the importance of the job will miss out in the Millennial Kingdom.

Powerful Truth: How one lives his or her life results in very real repercussions  
for His coming kingdom.

### *The Zadok Priest in the Millennial Kingdom*

God will take away from them the privilege of priesthood and it will be given to Zadok who was faithful to God and faithful to David in days of declension and in days of apostasy.

Tremendous privileges are reserved for the sons of Zadok. Passages in Ezekiel describe their special role and position. The list of promised privileges is considerable.

Ezek. 40:46 *And the chamber whose prospect is toward the north is for the priests, the keepers of the charge of the altar: these are the sons of Zadok among the sons of Levi, which come near to the LORD to minister unto him."*

Ezek. 43:18-19 "And he said unto me, Son of man, thus saith the Lord GOD; These are the ordinances of the altar in the day when they shall make it, to offer burnt offerings thereon, and to sprinkle blood thereon. And thou shalt give to the priests the Levites that be of the seed of Zadok, which approach unto me, to minister unto me, saith the Lord GOD, a young bullock for a sin offering."

Zadok was a high priest during the time of King David and King Solomon, and his descendants were considered to be a part of the most faithful and dedicated line of priests.

By giving them the task of offering the sin offering, God is emphasizing the significance of faithful and obedient service in the worship of Him.

When the rest of Israel went astray, the Zadok family priests remained faithful to their temple duties. Therefore, they will be rewarded by continuing their faithful temple service, directly before the Messiah in the messianic kingdom.

Ezek. 44:15-16 But the priests the Levites, the sons of Zadok, that kept the charge of my sanctuary when the children of Israel went astray from me, they shall come near to me to minister unto me, and they shall stand before me to offer unto me the fat and the blood, saith the Lord God: <sup>16</sup> They shall enter into my sanctuary, and they shall come near to my table, to minister unto me, and they shall keep my charge.

The sons of Zadok are granted the privilege of coming near to God and ministering unto Him. This symbolizes the intimacy and closeness that is offered to those who are faithful and dedicated to God. It reflects the idea that those who are faithful in their service to God will have a special, close relationship with Him. It is a powerful message about faithfulness, loyalty, and the rewards of serving God. It highlights the importance of remaining faithful even in the midst of unfaithfulness, and the honor and privilege that comes with serving God faithfully.

Ezek. 44:17-18 And it shall come to pass, that when they enter in at the gates of the inner court, they shall be clothed with linen garments; and no wool shall come upon them, whiles they minister in the gates of the inner court, and within.

<sup>18</sup> They shall have linen bonnets upon their heads and shall have linen breeches upon their loins.

They shall not gird themselves with anything that causes sweat.

The linen garments symbolize purity and holiness. By wearing linen garments, the priests were outwardly demonstrating their holiness and their special consecration to God. Therefore, the directive for the priests to wear linen garments signifies their consecration and separation unto the Lord.

In Rev. 19:8, the Bride of Christ is given fine linen to wear, which represents the righteous acts of the saints.

Powerful Reminder: God desires holiness, reverence, and distinctiveness in worship.

As we seek to draw near to the Lord and serve Him, may we be mindful of the call to be clothed in righteousness and purity, and to conduct ourselves as a holy priesthood, set apart for His service.

Ezek. 48:10-11 And for them, even for the priests, shall be this holy oblation; [sacred offering]

- toward the north 25,000 in length, and [~8.3 miles]
- toward the west 10,000 in breadth, and toward the east 10,000 in breadth, [~3.2 miles]
- toward the south 25,000 in length: and
- the sanctuary of the Lord shall be in the midst thereof.

It shall be for the priests that are sanctified of the sons of Zadok; which have kept my charge, which went not astray when the children of Israel went astray, as the Levites went astray.

This speaks to the themes of faithfulness, obedience, and spiritual leadership. It underscores the importance of remaining loyal to God even in the midst of unfaithfulness and rebellion.

The allocation of land to the Zadokite priests symbolizes the blessings and rewards of faithful service, while the contrast with the Levites serves as a cautionary reminder of the consequences of unfaithfulness.

This verse serves as a call to all believers to remain steadfast in their commitment to the Lord and to uphold the standards of righteousness and faithfulness in their leadership and example.

Powerful Reminder: Those who remained firm, those who did not go with the crowd, those who did appreciate the holiness of the temple, the descendants of Zadok, would be lifted up as an example and given the jobs the less than faithful had forfeited.



### New Testament: Believers' Service In His Millennial Kingdom

Beginning in I Cor. 10, Paul talks about the negative side of obedience. We use our liberty, our freedom from the power of sin, as license to sin, to walk in disobedience. When we do, we become disapproved for service, a "castaway," which means in the Greek, "not approved." At that point, God will no longer use us to accomplish what He desires or at least to the extent that He would have, because we are walking in disobedience. That means we become disqualified from earning eternal reward and can even lose rewards. [I Cor. 3:15 Suffer Loss]

God will instead choose to use someone else for service who is walking obediently and the rewards we could have earned will go to them. [Tears of remorse; regret]

Parable of the 10 minas in Luke 19:11-27 > Teaches about the coming Kingdom on earth.

- Jesus is on His final trip to Jerusalem. Many people in the crowd along the road believed that He was going to Jerusalem to establish His earthly kingdom immediately.
- His face is set like a flint towards the cross.
- A nobleman leaves for a foreign country to be made king.
- Before his departure, he gave 10 minas to 10 of his servants. [Luke 19:12-13]
- He told them to "occupy until I come." Put this money to work.

Luke 19:14 But his citizens hated him, and sent a message after him, saying,

We will not have this man to reign over us.

When the man was crowned king, he returned to his homeland and called the 10 servants to give an account of how they had used the money.

#1: His mina had earned 10 more: Well, thou good servant: because thou hast been faithful in a very little, have thou authority over ten cities.

#2: His mina had earned 5 more: Rewarded with charge of five cities.

#3: Did nothing with his mina except hide it in a cloth. I was afraid of you.

- The king responded by calling him a "wicked servant."  
His mina was to be given to the one who had earned 10. [Luke 19:22-24]

Some bystanders: "Sir...he already has 10!"

Luke 19:26 For I say unto you, that to everyone who has, more will be given,

And as for the one who has nothing, even what they have will be taken away.

1. The nobleman represents Jesus who left this world but will return as King.
2. He charges his followers with a valuable commission.
3. We must be faithful to serve Him until He returns.
4. Upon His return, Jesus will evaluate the faithfulness of His own people. [Rom. 14:10-12]
5. He has promised rewards for those who are faithful in their charge.
6. Our future roles will be in direct proportion to how faithful we have been with our assets.
7. If we don't invest what God has given us on earth, we will "suffer loss" at the Judgment Seat of Christ. [I Cor. 3:15]

Powerful Truth: How one lives his or her life results in very real repercussions for His coming kingdom.