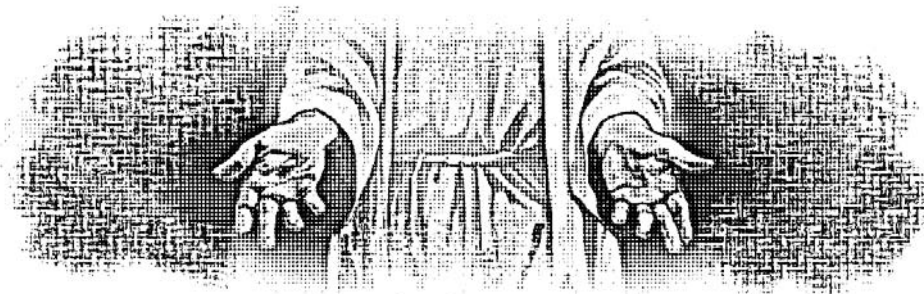


Clothed in Christ



SABBATH—JUNE 18

READ FOR THIS WEEK'S LESSON: Galatians 3:26–29; Romans 6:1–6; Colossians 3:1–10; Ephesians 4:22–24; 1 Corinthians 15:49–55; 2 Corinthians 5:1–4.

MEMORY VERSE: “Instead, put on the Lord Jesus Christ as your clothing. Don’t [do not] think about how to satisfy what your sinful nature wants” (Romans 13:14, NlrV).

MAYBE YOU HAVE DROPPED AN EGG AND WATCHED IT BREAK INTO MESSY PIECES. But have you ever seen the messy pieces of that broken egg turn back into an egg? Of course not. Real life just does not work that way.

A fundamental (basic) law of our sinful natural world is that objects wear out. For example, things left alone do what? Do they (1) grow in energy and order or (2) wear out and move toward disorder? The answer is clear. We see it all around us and even in ourselves (for example, our bodies grow old).

A lot of deep science goes into explaining this principle (important rule). But you do not need a PhD in science to see it. To quote a verse from an earlier lesson, “The earth will wear out like clothes” (Isaiah 51:6, NlrV).

But, among all this, we have the gospel (good news about Jesus). It offers the plan of salvation, which is about restoration (renewal), about taking the old and the broken and making it new.

This final week we will look at several special clothing symbols from the Bible that show these promises of renewal and restoration.

SUNDAY—JUNE 19**HEIRS¹ ACCORDING TO THE PROMISE (Galatians 3:26–29)**

The Christian church has had great struggles since its earliest days. Even today the church struggles with the question of how we are saved. With the church in Galatia, Paul had to deal directly with the issue. False theology² had crept into this church and threatened the purity of the gospel itself.



False teachings crept into the church and threatened the purity of the gospel.

What is the main point that Paul is making in Galatians 3:26–29? (As you read, note that the Greek word translated as “put on” comes from the word meaning “to be clothed.”)

In verse 27, Paul says that all those who are baptized “have clothed [themselves] with Christ” (NIV). All are sinners, but their sins have been washed away. Their old filthy (dirty) garments

(clothes) are gone. And these people are now “clothed,” covered in the righteousness (goodness) of Jesus. They can now claim Jesus’ life, His perfection, His character (holy life) as their own. All the covenant³ promises have been fulfilled in Jesus. They are now clothed in Christ and can claim those promises for themselves. They are heirs of the promise first made to Abraham (Genesis 12:2, 3). This is not because of who they are or what they have done but only because of their faith in Christ.

What is Paul saying in Romans 6:1–6? How can this help us to understand what it means to be “clothed” in Christ?

Being clothed in Christ is more than just telling the world that we belong to God. We Christians are united with Christ. We are surrendered to Him. And through Him we are being renewed and restored. Christians who refuse to change their old ways, their old habits, and their old lifestyle need to look in the mirror and see what they are really clothed in.

What are you wearing? Is what you wear in public different from what you wear when you think that no one is watching? What does your answer tell you about yourself?

1. heirs—receivers of an inheritance or property of a person after his or her death.

2. theology—a study of church doctrine and beliefs.

3. covenant—having to do with the promises God made to His people through Moses and Abraham.



Christians who refuse to change their old ways need to look in the mirror and see what they are really clothed in.

MONDAY—JUNE 20

NO ROOM FOR TEMPTATIONS (Romans 13)

For all of Paul's deep theology, he also can be very down-to-earth. Any theology that teaches "cold" religion misses the point. Christianity is all about Jesus. And it is about Jesus and what He has done for all human sinners through His life, death, and High Priestly ministry (work done in heaven to save sinners). It is not just about a change in how we stand with God according to the law. It is about a change in how we live. It is about a renewal, a new birth in us. It is about a new life in Christ.

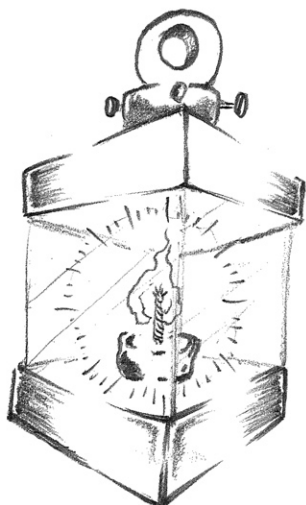
Focus daily on the useful points in Romans 13 that Paul is dealing with here for those who are Christians.

Most of the chapter deals with what could make a citizen and a neighbor good. It is a repeat of the principles (important rules) of the law, which ends with the famous words, "Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself" (verse 9).

In verses 11–14, the tone changes some. Paul begins the chapter by talking about obeying governments. Then he changes to the idea that the time is very short before Jesus' second coming. So, he warns the Romans to get serious about getting ready for this event. At the end of the chapter, Paul says to "clothe yourselves with the Lord Jesus Christ" (verse 14, NIV). Paul uses the same word here as in Galatians 3:27. (Remember how the Greek word translated as "put on" in Galatians comes from the Greek root for the word meaning "to be clothed"? Paul uses the same Greek root here in Romans 13:14). So, both verses say about the same thing.

Romans 13 makes it clear what Paul means. These verses show what it means to be clothed in Christ. It means living a life of faith and obedience. The same Greek root for "clothed" appears in verse 12 too. It carries the idea of Christians wearing the "armour of light." Christ is the light of the world. Those who walk in Him do not walk in darkness. They have "cast off the works of darkness." And now they walk in light. To "be clothed" in Christ also means showing Christ's character (goodness) through love and unselfish actions. In a way, while all things around us may get worse, those clothed in Christ should be getting better and better (read 2 Corinthians 3:18).

How different would your life be if you were fully clothed in Christ? What parts of your life have you held back from the Lord? How would your life be different if you were to make that complete surrender?



Christ is the light of the world.

TUESDAY—JUNE 21

PUTTING OFF, PUTTING ON (Colossians 3:1–10)

In Colossians 3:1–10, the verb, in verse 10, “to put on” is from the same verb, “to be clothed,” that Paul used in the verses we have studied before. With that in mind, what are these verses saying to us?

Bible thinkers find the idea of baptism in these verses. (Where in the verses do you find a hint of that?) So, we are shown again the idea of renewal and of something being made better than it was before. In Christ we are no longer the same people

we were before. We are not living as we once lived. Here, too, Paul very clearly connects what we experience of Christ now with what we will experience when He returns. How we think about Christ’s first coming will decide what happens to us at His second coming!

What point is Paul making in Ephesians 4:22–24? (Yes, the Greek verb in verse 24 is “to clothe.”)

Notice the difference between the “old man” and the “new man.” In principle, the “old man” is the former (old) self. It has died. Baptism symbolizes this idea. A “new man,” a new creation in Christ, comes forth. Here, too, the idea of being “clothed” in Christ or in the “new man” is connected with Christian behavior. Read the verses that come before and after. We are dealing with a change of a whole person’s character and actions. This idea is repeated often. As baptized Christians, we are new people in the Lord. Our being “clothed” in Christ is not just a symbol of forgiveness or of Christ’s perfection covering our sins. Being clothed in Christ means being a new person, one “created in Christ’s perfection and true holiness” (Ephesians 4:24).

Go back over the verses for today. Read again the commands about how Christians should act and behave. In what areas do you need change? If you are struggling, why not find someone you can trust and ask them to help you to better live out the principles (rules) taught in the Bible?

WEDNESDAY—JUNE 22**IN THE TWINKLING (BLINK) OF AN EYE (1 Corinthians 15:49–55)**

To be clothed in Christ is to become a new person in Jesus. “You are becoming more and more like your Creator” (Colossians 3:10, CEV). Countless lives have given and still today give testimony to what the Lord has done in and for them. In spite of our faults, struggles, and falls, many of our lives give witness to what it means to be clothed in Jesus.

But let us be honest. If what Christ did for us ended with this life here, the grave would still await us. It does not matter whether we are clothed in Christ or not. It would not matter whether we were clothed in Christ or not. Many have suffered a great deal in this life for Jesus and for their faith. Whatever the rewards are, they are small in comparison with the real reward awaiting us at the Second Coming.

What great hope is given in 1 Corinthians 15:49–55? As you read the verses, guess which words come from the same Greek root we have studied all week: “to clothe” or “to be clothed.”

In verses 53 and 54, the verb (often translated “clothed”) is the same one we have already read about. But the apostle (teacher) takes it to a higher level. Being clothed in Christ does not just mean to be like Jesus, to show His character, and to live

out the principles that He taught us. It is not a change in character only. It also includes a great *physical* change. Our human body, our aching and hurting and dying body, will be clothed with the same kind of eternal body that Jesus had when He rose from the dead. Talk about a change of clothing! Talk about wearing a new garment! That is the greatest hope that waits for us. It is the only hope that really makes our faith worthwhile (read 1 Corinthians 15:12–19).

As we grow old, most of us learn how weak and untrustworthy our human bodies are. If we have not felt that weakness in ourselves yet, we can see it in others. Think about the hope we have in Jesus, as shown in these verses. Could this world, in any way or manner, offer something better than the promise shown here?

THURSDAY—JUNE 23**OUR HEAVENLY HOME
(2 Corinthians 5:1–4)**

What is Paul telling us in 2 Corinthians 5:1–4? What hope is given again? How does the clothing symbol fit in with that hope?

As long as we are in this world, our body is the “house.” We are going to “groan [moan, cry in pain]” (from a word that means also “to sigh [breathe wearily] deeply”). Who among us has not groaned while in our “earthly dwelling (home),” which is our present

body? First Corinthians 4 talks about the sadness that followers of Jesus have faced in this life. After this short statement, Paul goes into the verses for today.

Yes, we groan, we suffer, and we die. But that is not the whole point. We have the promise of being clothed in “our heavenly dwelling [home].”



As long as we are in this world, our body is the “house” in which we live.

What two symbols does Paul use in 2 Corinthians 5:1–4 to show our present situation and the hope that awaits us?

In some writings from a long, long time ago, the idea of being clothed is almost the same as being inside a house. Both are outside of us. Both mean a certain amount of protection and covering. (In Paul’s time, the name of the garment worn by the poorer class came from a word that meant “little house.”) Whatever his reasons are, Paul uses different symbols to show the difference between two basic ideas—an earthly home (body) that is lived in for only a short time and an eternal heavenly home. Another symbol he uses is being naked as

compared to being clothed. And still another symbol is the fact that we will one day die as compared to the fact that we will live an eternal life in Christ. In the end, these symbols are talking about the same thing. It is the hope that we have of being clothed or housed in eternal bodies at Christ’s return. In other words, these verses are another way of explaining the promise of eternal life that we have in Jesus.

Think about death. Think about how final it seems to be. If there is no hope for eternity, what hope is there for any of us? Think about all the reasons we have for our hope that death does not have the final say. Bring your answers to class and discuss them there.

FRIDAY—JUNE 24

ADDITIONAL STUDY: “The Controversy [War] Ended,” page 665, in *The Great Controversy [War Between Christ and Satan]*.

“All saved people will be a happy, united family, clothed with the garments of praise and thanksgiving. The garments are the robe of Christ’s righteousness. All nature in its great and lovely beauty will offer to God continuing praise and worship. The world will be bathed in the light of heaven. The years will move on in gladness. The light of the moon will be as the light of the sun. And the light of the sun will be seven times greater than it is now. The morning stars will

sing together, and the sons of God will shout for joy. Meanwhile God and Christ will unite in announcing, 'There shall be no more sin. There shall be no more death.' ”—Adapted from Ellen G. White, *My Life Today*, page 348.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

- ❶ As a class, go over your answers to Thursday's final question. How can you help one another to find hope in this wonderful promise? How can you help those who might be struggling with doubt?
- ❷ So often in our day and age, people have put so much hope in science. Many have believed science to be the only way of coming to know truth. They also have believed science to be the only hope for all humans. Think deeply about why that is such a false hope, especially given what we have studied in this lesson over the last few days. What hope can science offer us for the greatest problem we face—death?
- ❸ Think about Paul's question in Romans 7:24, "Who shall deliver me from the body of this death?" This speaks of a terrible punishment in Paul's time in which a criminal had to wear a dead body chained to his body. What answer do we have that all the world's wisdom cannot give?
- ❹ Think deeply about what it means to be "clothed" in Christ if we are to live as Christians. Think through how you are living: your practices, your habits, your thoughts, and your attitudes (feelings) toward others. How well do you show Christ's character in these areas? Sin has been with us for a long time, so what choices can you make that would go a long way in helping you to live as you know you should? Also, how can we, as a group, help one another to follow the Bible principles as we have been taught?