

A Garment *of* Innocence



SABBATH AFTERNOON

Read for This Week’s Study: *2 Tim. 3:16, 17; Luke 21:36; Gen. 2:20–25; 2:15–17; 3:6–11, 21.*

Memory Text: “So God created man in his own image, in the image of God created he him; male and female created he them” (*Genesis 1:27*).

As we have studied, Lucifer’s fall wasn’t limited to heaven. He has brought his wiles and deceptions to earth, as well. What’s amazing, too, is how successfully he has perverted the most obvious truths of God’s Word and has made millions believe the opposite of those truths.

For instance, Genesis is so clear: humans started out at the top of the earthly “food chain.” They were created, immediately, in the “image of God.” This image wasn’t something that evolved over billions of years from natural processes. Evolution teaches the opposite—that humans started out at a lower level (as microbes) and eventually, through a brutal process of violence and death, clawed their way up the food chain. Scripture, in contrast, teaches that humans started out at the top, in the image of God, and through sin began a steady descent.

This week, with some garment imagery that appears in Genesis, we’ll take a look at how that descent began and what the only solution is.

**Study this week’s lesson to prepare for Sabbath, April 16.*

The First Days

Skim through the first two chapters of Genesis. Try to imagine what this earth, fresh from the hand of the Creator, must have been like, a world untainted by sin. In what overt ways does our world today differ from what it was like back then?

Adam and Eve were put in an environment beyond our wildest imaginations—a stunning home in a gorgeous garden with animals and other creatures as loyal friends. They reveled in the spectacular scenery, the scented flowers, the birds, and the animals, and in God’s love and in their love for each other. They neither wanted nor needed anything more, and they tended the Garden as they were bidden by their Maker. Adam and Eve surely looked forward to their Master’s visits as they strolled together in the Garden and actively communicated with Him. They knew that He loved them, and in return, their love for Him increased each day.

The connection that Adam and Eve had with their Maker and their Master developed and grew through these cherished daily contacts, in a world that didn’t know sin and the decay and devastation that sin always brings. How might we have a similar relationship with our Creator, but now in a world long corrupted by sin? *See 2 Tim. 3:16, 17; Luke 21:36; Matt. 6:25–34; John 17:3.*

Adam and Eve held open-faced communion with the Lord, a privilege that we don’t have now. However, we do have the privilege of living our lives in constant connection with the same God as did Adam and Eve. Sure, sin has gotten in the way. But, through Jesus, who has connected heaven to earth with bonds that never can be broken, a way has been paved for us to live as closely and intimately with our Creator as is possible.

How intimately and closely do you walk with God? As you mull over your answer, ask yourself, What things am I doing that strengthen that intimacy, and what things break it? What choices must you make if you want a closer walk with your Lord?

The Lesson in Brief

► **Key Text:** *Genesis 2:20–25*

► **The Student Will:**

Know: Compare the original clothing provided for Adam and Eve with the clothing the couple provided for themselves.

Feel: Sense what it feels like to be spiritually clothed in Christ’s garment of righteousness.

Do: Put on the spiritual clothing God has provided, rather than the covering you can provide for yourself.

► **Learning Outline:**

I. Know: Light, Leaf, and Lamb

A What were the differences between the clothing God provided before the Fall and after the Fall? What were the differences between the clothing Adam and Eve provided for themselves and the clothing God provided after the Fall?

II. Feel: Naked and Afraid

A What emotional state of being did Adam and Eve enjoy before sin entered the picture?

B What were the emotional results of the Fall, and how do we continue to suffer these effects?

C What are the emotional benefits of being appropriately covered?

III. Do: Covered by Blood

A What role did blood play in providing the clothing of Adam and Eve?

B What role has blood continued to play in providing for our covering to this day?

► **Summary:** The light that covered our first parents in innocent happiness was lost at the Fall. However, God provided another covering through the shedding of blood. This is all symbolic of what Christ does for us.

Naked But Not Ashamed

It's very hard for us—whose concepts of the world, of reality, of everything, actually, are filtered and tainted and distorted by sin—to imagine fully the moral condition of Adam and Eve in Eden. These were people who knew no pain, no suffering, no deception, no betrayal, no death, no loss, and no shame, especially sexual shame (which is perhaps the most prevalent kind in a world so steeped in the consequences of sin today).

Read Genesis 2:20–25. What kind of close relationship and intimacy between Adam and Eve is revealed in these texts?

As “one flesh” (*see Gen. 2:24*), Adam and Eve were close then, not only to God but to each other. The text is very clear, very unambiguous: they were naked and not ashamed (*vs. 25*). Talk about purity and innocence!

“The sinless pair wore no artificial garments; they were clothed with a covering of light and glory, such as the angels wear. So long as they lived in obedience to God, this robe of light continued to enshroud them.”—Ellen G. White, *Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 45.

Exactly what this light looked like, how it functioned, what its purpose was, we aren't told. Only that, even with it, they still were deemed “naked.” The fact that they weren't ashamed must have meant that this covering of light didn't completely hide their nakedness, but in that sinless environment it didn't matter, for no shame existed.

In a sense, the emphasis on nakedness seems to reveal the kind of physical closeness the sinless couple enjoyed. There was an openness, a transparency, an innocence about them and all that they did which allowed for this state of affairs. They lived in complete honesty, openness, and freedom before each other and before God. It was, after all, how the Lord had ordained it. How nice it must have been.

How much openness and transparency exist in your own life? Or are you constantly hiding things, cutting moral corners, cloaking yourself in coverings that don't reveal what's really going on? (*See Matt. 10:26.*) If the latter, what aspects of your life must you start to change?

Learning Cycle

► **STEP 1—Motivate**

Key Concept for Spiritual Growth: When Adam and Eve, our first parents, sinned, the innocence and blamelessness that made it possible for them to commune with God face-to-face were lost. Nothing we can do for ourselves can restore this state. We must depend on Christ to replace our garments of innocence with His robe of righteousness.

Just for Teachers: Emphasize God’s grace in preparing a way for Adam and Eve—and the whole human race that would follow—to be saved and restored to the lost state of innocence that was forfeited when they disobeyed God.

Have you ever said words that you’ve regretted, even as you were saying them? Words that you couldn’t take back? Words so hurtful or stupid that you were praying for the earth to swallow you so that you wouldn’t have to face the consequences of having said them?

Or perhaps you were faced with a choice of two courses of action: one clearly moral and right, the other clearly wrong but somehow hard to resist. In one crucial moment you made your choice, and it was the wrong choice. You knew it, but it was done. Maybe you destroyed a friendship, a marriage, or a job. Unless it was really bad, you were probably able to learn from the experience and—with God’s help—go on with your life, although perhaps not exactly the same life. But take comfort in this: so far, you haven’t corrupted a planet.

Adam’s and Eve’s decision to disobey God was one of those irreversible, regrettable decisions; the big one that led to all the others, including yours. Instantly, they knew something was different, and it wasn’t good. As promised, they knew good and evil. They also knew a few other things: guilt, shame, hypocrisy, cowardice, selfishness, and alienation from the God who created them. They lost—literally and figuratively—their garments of innocence. But God could turn even this to good. Where He could have abandoned them to fear, uncertainty, or hopelessness, He gave them the promise that He would cover them in robes of righteousness.

Discuss With the Class: What does God’s reaction to Adam’s and Eve’s disobedience tell us about His character? What kind of hope can we, in our own mistakes and acts of disobedience, draw from this?

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The Test

Last week’s lesson talked about a crucial truth: the freedom that God allows all His moral beings. Again, without that freedom, they might be able to do moral things, in the same way that a house alarm that protects people from crime does something “moral,” yet who would call the alarm itself moral? In the same way, beings who have no choice but to do the right thing aren’t moral either. Only free beings can be moral ones.

A simple test was given to Adam and Eve, to see whether they would—in their freedom—obey the Lord. It was, in a sense, a time of probation for these free creatures. Freedom means just that, *freedom*, and they had to prove that they would do the right thing with the freedom given them.

Read Genesis 2:15–17, the probationary test given to Adam (and, eventually, Eve). Think about the environment in which this test was given. Why did that environment make their transgression that much more egregious?

Read Genesis 3:1–4. Look carefully at what Satan said to Eve. What unfortunate truth did he mix in with all his lies?

It’s interesting that the tree was of both “good and evil.” God obviously didn’t want to keep Adam and Eve from good. Indeed, the whole world God had created, including them, was good, even “very good” (*Gen. 1:31*). It was from the knowledge of evil that the Lord wanted to spare them.

Which is not hard to understand, is it? Even in our fallen world, what parent doesn’t want to protect his or her children from the knowledge of evil? How much more so, then, did God want to protect Adam and Eve from evil, from the knowledge of the one thing that would cause them to lose their garments of light and to know shame, suffering, and death?

Evil doesn’t always come in blatant manifestations, which are so easy to see and detect and, often, avoid (after all, how many people are serial killers and the like?). There are, however, very subtle manifestations of evil. What might these be? How can we learn to identify these forms of evil and then to protect ourselves from them?

Learning Cycle CONTINUED► **STEP 2—Explore**

Just for Teachers: Emphasize that the innocence Adam and Eve lost is irrecoverable by our own efforts. Acceptance of the covering that God, through Christ, has purchased for us by means of His sacrifice on the cross is alone sufficient to allow us to commune with God and to restore His image in us.

Bible Commentary

I. “Their Eyes Were Opened” (*Review Genesis 3:7 with your class.*)

According to this passage, once Adam and Eve ate the fruit, their eyes were opened to the fact that they were naked. One can infer at least two possibilities from this: either they were always naked but previously had no basis on which to distinguish it from being clothed, or the eating of the fruit somehow resulted in their state of nakedness. Seventh-day Adventists have usually taken this text to mean that before the Fall, Adam and Eve were clothed in light, as are the angels. Taking the biblical passage strictly as it reads, one would tend to assume that they were naked, especially since, several verses back (*Gen. 2:25*), the text says that they were naked but not ashamed.

Whatever clothing the first couple may or may not have worn, it is clear that the function of their garments would have been quite different from that of clothing in the present world. Clothing today exists, at least partially, to conceal. Another purpose is to indicate social status or function in society. This was another thing that probably was not (yet) needed in the Garden of Eden, although it might have become desirable as the population increased. For example, angels traditionally are believed to have a hierarchy, and this might necessitate ways of distinguishing different ranks and functions by sight.

Essentially, before the Fall, Adam and Eve did not need that which clothing most basically provides: cover or concealment. One covers only what one is ashamed of, and shame did not exist. Any one of us can find any number of things to be ashamed of, whether or not they’re our fault. For example, people are ashamed of how their bodies look, and will pay others to tell them how to dress to minimize their flaws. We’ve all done or said things we’re ashamed of and rightly so. We all have thoughts we would never say out loud. Adam and Eve, on the other hand, were shameless because there was simply no reason for shame.

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A New Set of Clothes

As we know all too well, Adam and Eve failed their test, even one as simple as that. To call the results tragic would, of course, be the greatest understatement in human history. *Tragic* hardly conveys the horrible results of our first parents' disobedience.

Read Genesis 3:6–11. What was the first thing that happened to Adam and Eve (which is exactly what Satan, in verse 5, said would happen) after they fell, and what does that mean? What did it imply the results of their transgression were?

Their eyes were opened, just as Satan said they would be. Only now they were seeing the world and reality differently from how they ever had before. All through those verses, the theme of their nakedness reoccurs. It's the controlling motif in the section. Their fall from innocence, their transgression, and their new relationship to God and to each other are all expressed in the theme of their realization that they are naked.

Notice, too, the Lord's question to them: " 'Who told you that you were naked?' " (*vs. 11, NIV*). This implies that in their innocence they never realized their nakedness, that it just seemed a natural way to be, and so they didn't give it any thought. Now, though, not only did they think about it, they were dominated by the shame that it brought.

What is the significance of Adam's and Eve's response to their nakedness?

Imagine Adam and Eve hiding behind some bushes, looking at themselves with mouths agape and attempting to cover themselves before the Lord. Considering the possibilities for coverings, they must have decided that the fig leaves were the best. Thus, here we have the first lesson in salvation by works: humans attempting to solve the problem of sin by their own works and deeds. As pathetic as their attempts were then, they are no more so than are ours today.

Learning Cycle CONTINUED

None of this necessarily contradicts the idea that they were clothed in light. Clothing, as we know it today, conceals. Light does the opposite of conceal (*John 3:19, 20*). Whereas clothing would have hidden things the wearer didn't want seen and that others didn't want to see, Adam and Eve were clothed in light, the ultimate revealer, because everything about them was worthy of being seen. They had nothing to hide.

Consider This: As soon as Adam and Eve realized their nakedness, they rushed to cover themselves. They even attempted to hide from an all-knowing and all-loving God. How are you hiding from God? What difference does it make to realize that He already knows and wants to free you from sin?

II. Leaves or Skins? (*Review Genesis 3:7, 21 with your class.*)


After committing the first sin, Adam and Eve arrived at the first inadequate solution for sin and the associated shame and alienation. Like so many other such solutions, it was logical, simple, and intuitive. Perhaps they even felt a moment of pride at identifying a new problem and its solution almost simultaneously. They now felt newly naked and vulnerable, but they could handle it as long as they had fig leaves.

Up to that moment, the resources of the Garden provided all that was needed for their survival. If they could cover themselves with fig leaves, perhaps they could continue as if nothing had changed. No need to disturb God about this matter. In fact, perhaps it would be better to stay out of God's sight for a while.

But everything had changed. God appeared in the Garden, as He was accustomed to do, and the first couple fled in fear. With or without the fig leaves, they were no longer able to stand unashamed before God as they had before when they were naked. Like so many of our efforts to make ourselves right without God's help, the fig-leaf stratagem succeeded only in making Adam and Eve seem to be right, and then only to themselves. It was a form of self-deception, and even failed in accomplishing that when put to the test.

Adam and Eve could have their sin blotted out. They could be restored to a relationship with God. But it would hurt. Real, warm, mammalian blood would have to be shed—a symbol of the blood of God Himself in the form of Jesus Christ.

Consider This: Ever since the Fall, humans have attempted, in their own ways, to confront and solve the problems of sin, evil, and suffering. These

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Animal Skin

“And the Lord God made for Adam and for his wife garments of skins, and clothed them” (*Gen. 3:21, RSV*).

Yesterday we saw Adam’s and Eve’s response to their sin; today we’ll look at God’s. In the above text, we have, in a sense, the gospel message prefaced.

First, we can see that Adam’s and Eve’s fig-leaf covering was not adequate. If it were, there would have been no need to kill innocent animals in order to clothe the fallen couple. In the same way, all our efforts to keep the law well enough to be saved are inadequate. If working our way to salvation were adequate, Christ would not have had to die for us. Just as fig leaves would have been less costly and traumatic than the death of innocent animals, so, too, our works would have been cheaper than the death of Jesus. In both cases, our works, fig leaves, couldn’t suffice; that’s why Jesus had to die for us; that’s why innocent animals needed to be slain. It could be no other way (*Gal. 3:21, Rom. 3:21–28*).

Second, what’s the main difference between fig leaves and animal skins? What inevitably comes from the latter that doesn’t from the former? Of course, the answer is blood. That alone should tell us how the gospel appears in Genesis 3:21 (*see Lev. 17:11; Rev. 12:11; 1 Pet. 1:18, 19; Heb. 9:22*).

Third, perhaps the most insightful part of the text is the last part, which says, “[He] clothed them” (*Gen. 3:21*). The Hebrew is clear: it was the Lord who placed the animal skins on Adam and Eve. It was His act, it was what He did for them that covered the shame of their nakedness. As we saw yesterday, the immediate consequences of their sin were revealed in the nakedness motif; now, however, God Himself solves the problem by clothing them Himself, in a covering made from innocent slain animals. The text says only that a “skin” covered them; it doesn’t tell us what kind. It might not be hard to make a correct guess, though, would it? (*See Gen. 22:8, John 1:36, 3:16*.)

Thus, right from the start, the Lord revealed the plan of salvation. However horrible Adam’s and Eve’s sin, it wasn’t greater than God’s grace to save them from it, a point we should never forget ourselves.

Dwell on the wonderful promise of salvation by faith in Jesus. Dwell on the promise that our salvation is found in what He has done for us and not in what we can ever do for ourselves. How can we learn to make the promise of the gospel, of Christ’s righteousness as our own robe, the center and foundation of our lives and our walk with the Lord?

Learning Cycle CONTINUED

ways have uniformly proved to be inadequate. What “fig leaves” have you used to attempt to solve your problems without God’s help?

► **STEP 3—Apply**

Just for Teachers: Help your students to understand what Adam and Eve gave up when they listened to Satan in the Garden. Emphasize that God wants to return to us what we have lost.

Thought Questions:

- 1 What made the tree of which Adam and Eve were not to eat “the tree of the knowledge of good and evil”? Were Adam and Eve ignorant of good and evil? If so, how could they be trusted to make informed moral choices?
- 2 Why do you think the first thing that changed in the Garden after the eating of the fruit was shame of nakedness?

Application Questions:

- 1 God clearly had the option of protecting Adam and Eve from the responsibility of choosing to obey Him. He simply could have forbidden Satan access to the Garden, and, most likely, the issue would never have raised its ugly head. Have you, for example, as a parent, ever been in a situation in which you had to give your child the possibility of making the wrong choice when you would have rather protected him or her from it entirely?
- 2 Actions have consequences. Have you ever had to face the consequences of wrong, or ill-advised, words or actions where an “I’m sorry” wasn’t adequate?

► **STEP 4—Create**

Just for Teachers: Two themes become clear in the story of Adam and Eve: the beautiful and terrible burden of human freedom which allows us to love and serve God willingly and joyfully, yet also allowed our first parents to betray God at the earliest opportunity and necessitated the death of God’s Son; and the love and forgiveness of God, who was immediately at work engineering the salvation of the wayward human race. The following activity will illustrate these themes.

Mention how Adam and Eve failed their first and only test. In our human relationships, we may lose confidence or trust in a person over one spectacular betrayal, even after a lifetime of trustworthiness. Adam and Eve had no such record. God had every reason to abort the experiment, but He didn’t. What does this say about forgiveness and, literally, about a redemptive approach to human relationships?

Further Study: Read Ellen G. White, “The Creation,” “The Temptation and Fall,” and “The Plan of Redemption,” pp. 44–70, in *Patriarchs and Prophets*.

“The white robe of innocence was worn by our first parents when they were placed by God in holy Eden. . . . Nothing can man devise to supply the place of his lost robe of innocence. . . . Only the covering which Christ Himself has provided can make us meet to appear in God’s presence. This covering, the robe of His own righteousness, Christ will put upon every repenting, believing soul. . . . This robe, woven in the loom of heaven, has in it not one thread of human devising. Christ in His humanity wrought out a perfect character, and this character He offers to impart to us.”—Ellen G. White, *Maranatha*, p. 78.

“The Lord Jesus Christ has prepared a covering, the robe of his own righteousness, that he will put on every repenting, believing soul who by faith will receive it. . . . Then when the Lord looks upon the believing sinner, he sees, not the fig-leaves covering him, but his own robe of righteousness.”—Ellen G. White, *Advent Review and Sabbath Herald*, Nov. 15, 1898.

Discussion Questions:

- ❶ Read Genesis 3:6. Which avenues to Eve’s soul was the devil able to take advantage of as he was seeking to make her fall? How do these same things work for him today, as well?
- ❷ Dwell more on the centrality of nakedness in the Eden narrative. What else can we take from this idea that could help us understand what was going on in that situation?
- ❸ Read the two Ellen G. White quotes in Friday’s study. How is the wonderful truth of the gospel revealed in those words?
- ❹ Look at Hebrews 5:14: “But strong meat belongeth to them that are of full age, even those who by reason of use have their senses exercised to discern both good and evil.” Dwell more on the whole question of evil. What do we mean by the term *evil*? Is it something that is always absolute and unchanging? Or is evil a relative term, in that what some cultures deem evil other cultures might deem good, or that what was once deemed evil at an earlier time now no longer is? How much does culture itself influence our concept of what is and isn’t evil? How can we step beyond our culture and know for sure what is good and what is evil? How are we to understand Isaiah 5:20: “Woe unto them that call evil good, and good evil; that put darkness for light, and light for darkness; that put bitter for sweet, and sweet for bitter”?