

## **The Garment of the Holy Priesthood**

“Unto Adam and to his wife did I, Lord God make coats of skins, and clothed them”. (Genesis 3:21) Since the very beginning of this earth, the Lord has seen fit that his children are clothed – in this case, at least in part, to cover their nakedness.

The word “Garments” can be used in several different ways. Obviously, garments might be any article of clothing used in every day life. However, garments, as we know them in the church have reference to special under clothing that have importance religious significance. Within the church we refer to the garment as “The Garment of the Holy Priesthood”. It is a sacred topic and one about which we should not discuss in too much detail outside the temple.

There are several things of a general nature we can say. I want to discuss them with you because I feel that the garment is so important. For example, 1) The garment is a reminder to us about the temple covenants we make with the Lord, 2) The garment helps us to be modest, 3) The garment is a spiritual protection to us, and 4) The garment can be a physical protection to us. There will be times when we can discuss the garment within the walls of a temple and enjoy a more detailed conversation.

### **The Garment Reminds Us of Covenants**

I have been told that many of the orthodox Jews wear a prayer vest. From certain places on the vest are strings that hang down. These strings are to remind them to keep the various commandments of God. It is a physical reminder to them to be obedient. When we go to the temple and receive the garment, the special markings are designed to be a reminder to us of the promises and obligations we have with the Lord. Each day we put on our garments we should remember that we have made serious covenants with the Lord.

As we go through out the day, I think it would be a good habit to periodically feel with our hand the hem of our garments on our leg or around our neck as a way to remember that we wear the garment to help us honor our covenants. When temptation comes knocking on our door, as we feel the garment we can gain greater strength to overcome the adversary. When we stop and consider the significance of the garment we realize that we are different than the rest of the world. The Lord has different expectations.

### **The Garment Reminds Us to be Modest**

In both Genesis of the Old Testament and the Book of Moses in the Pearl of Great Price, the writer explains that the Lord clothed Adam and Eve. It has been the intention of the Lord from the beginning that we clothe our bodies with modesty and demonstrate our respect for them as the temple of God. It is the Lord’s design that we cover our nakedness. The garment helps set the standard for our modesty.

Unfortunately, there are many that do not wear the garment as they should. The garment should come down to the knee. How often do we see endowed members of the church with shorts that come well above the knee? Are they wearing garments? They seem to defeat the whole purpose for which the garment was designed! How is it some people wear sleeveless clothing? Either they are not wearing garments or they are wearing them incorrectly. We should not try to compromise the Lord's standard. This is truly a problem when you consider that the distribution center for garments at the Denver Temple has displayed a sign that says they do not sell garments made to wear with short pants.

A few years ago Elder Dallin H. Oaks came to Denver for a priesthood leadership meeting. He related that on the flight over to Denver from Salt Lake he visited with someone who was obviously an active, endowed member of the church. He went on to say that the individual was wearing short pants and from his vantagepoint the person was either not wearing their garments or they were wearing them incorrectly. When we promise to wear the garment we also promise to wear it properly. Let's not be guilty of offending the Lord by disrespectfully wearing such a sacred piece of clothing.

Too many people want both the world and the gospel. You cannot serve two masters. Let's not allow the fashions and fads of the world dictate what and how we wear our clothing. We must heed the counsel of the Lord and our church leaders. They know the way to peace and safety.

### **The Garment Can be a Spiritual Protection**

As we stop and remember the garment reminds us of the promises given us in the temple regarding salvation, we realize that this information is not available anywhere else upon the face of the earth. It is vital information. The endowment provides us the information we need to "pass by the angels, and the gods, which are set there, to their exaltation and glory in all things, as hath been sealed upon their heads, which glory shall be a fullness and a continuation of the seeds forever and ever." With such great blessings, how can we violate the commandments of god? We can fend off the "mighty winds, yea his shafts in the whirlwind, ... his hail and his mighty storm" because we have been given a wonderful endowment of knowledge and light. The garment helps us to remember that sacred endowment.

### **The Garment Can be a Physical Protection**

Brother Vickery is a temple worker in the Denver Temple. He told me of an experience in his family where the garment became an actual protection to his mother when he was just a child. As a young boy, their small Idaho farm house caught fire in the middle of the night. The parents tried to get all the children out of the house. As they stood out in the freezing cold of that snowy, December night, his mother realized that his little sister was still inside the house. With no thought for her own safety, she rushed into the little girl's bedroom through a broken window. She was no where to be found. The mother immediately thought to go to their room where she would sometimes come when it was

cold. As she opened the door of his sister's bedroom, the fire was right there. It literally jumped inside the bedroom. There was nothing they could do for the little girl. His mother had raised her arms to protect her face from the raging flames. Her face and hands and other exposed parts of her body were severely burnt. However, she was completely protected everywhere she was covered by the garment.

Elder Marriott, of Marriott Hotel fame, tells a similar story. During a boating accident, his clothing caught fire. He was seriously burnt with the exception of those areas covered by his garments. He bears testimony that the garment literally saved him from what could have been a much more serious accident.

I hope we will all honor the Garment of the Holy Priesthood. It is such a tremendous privilege and honor to wear this sacred, spiritual shield. We need to develop such a strong closeness to the garment where we feel very uncomfortable without it. If we have to remove them for swimming or a basketball game, etc., we should have the attitude that we want to put them back on as soon as possible. Think of the great love the Lord has for us in providing something like the garment to help us remember the important covenants and information we learn in his holy house.