

Title: **COVERS TO WRAP YOURSELF IN**

Text: Exodus 26:1-14

Subject: *The Tabernacle Coverings*

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Tape: Exodus #89

Readings: *Larry Brown and David Burge*

Introduction:

Let's begin tonight in Isaiah 28. As soon as Adam sinned in the Garden, he sought a refuge from God. He made some fig leaves and tried to hide from God among the trees of the Garden. Men have been making refuges ever since. Every sinner has a refuge, something by which he tries to hide himself from an angry God. When the Lord God comes in saving mercy, when God comes to save a sinner by his grace, the very first thing he does is a work of demolition. He tears down every false refuge in which the sinner seeks to hide. That is what we read about in Isaiah 28:14-20.

(Isaiah 28:14-20) “Wherefore hear the word of the LORD, ye scornful men, that rule this people which *is* in Jerusalem. (15) **Because ye have said**, We have made a covenant with death, and with hell are we at agreement; when the overflowing scourge shall pass through, it shall not come unto us: for we have made lies our refuge, and under falsehood have we hid ourselves: —

(16) **Therefore** thus saith the Lord GOD, Behold, I lay in Zion for a foundation a stone, a tried stone, a precious corner *stone*, a sure foundation: he that believeth shall not make haste. (17) Judgment also will I lay to the line, and righteousness to the plummet: and **the hail shall sweep away the refuge of lies, and the waters shall overflow the hiding place.**

(18) **And your covenant with death shall be disannulled, and your agreement with hell shall not stand;** when the overflowing scourge shall pass through, then ye shall be trodden down by it. (19) From the time that it goeth forth it shall take you: for morning by morning shall it pass over, by day and by night: and it shall be a vexation only *to* understand the report. (20) For **the bed** is shorter than that *a man* can stretch himself *on it*: and **the covering** narrower than that he can wrap himself *in it*.”

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Tonight, I want to show you a better refuge. I want to show you better covers, covers to wrap yourself in. In fact that is the title of my message — **COVERS TO WRAP YOURSELF IN**. Turn with me to Exodus 26. Here, in verses 1-14, the Lord God tells Moses to make four thick coverings for the tabernacle. These coverings, called “curtains” in our Authorized Version, are great, instructive pictures of our Lord Jesus Christ and his great salvation.

Here’s the first covering (vv. 1-6). It is actually ten coverings of fine twined linen, bound together as one, with cherubs of cunning work interwoven in it. Remember, the tabernacle in the wilderness was typical of Christ himself, the Word made flesh, who dwelt among us full of grace and truth (John 1:14), of the church of God in this world (1 Corinthians 3:9) and of every believer (Ephesians 2:19-22).

(Exodus 26:1-14) “Moreover thou shalt make the tabernacle *with* ten curtains *of* fine twined linen, and blue, and purple, and scarlet: *with* cherubims of cunning work shalt thou make them. (2) The length of one curtain *shall be* eight and twenty cubits, and the breadth of one curtain four cubits: and every one of the curtains shall have one measure. (3) The five curtains shall be coupled together one to another; and *other* five curtains *shall be* coupled one to another.”

These curtains were coupled together with loops because God’s people are one, coupled together by the love of Christ, in one body (Ephesians 2:21-22; 4:16). Our Lord says of his church, “*My dove is but one: the daughters saw her and blessed her*” (Song of Solomon 6:9).

(4) And thou shalt make loops of blue upon the edge of the one curtain from the selvedge in the coupling; and likewise shalt thou make in the uttermost edge of *another* curtain, in the coupling of the second.

The coupling of these two great curtains together, to make one tabernacle, seems to suggest that God’s elect both in heaven and earth are but one body, one church, one people (Ephesians 1:10 3:15).

(5) Fifty loops shalt thou make in the one curtain, and fifty loops shalt thou make in the edge of the curtain that *is* in the coupling of

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the second; that the loops may take hold one of another. (6) And thou shalt make fifty taches of gold, and couple the curtains together with the taches: and it shall be one tabernacle.

These fifty “*taches*” (buckles) of gold might have reference to “*the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace*” (Ephesians 4:3-5).

Here’s the second covering (vv. 7-13). This was a covering made by combining eleven coverings made of goats’ hair.

(7) And thou shalt make curtains of goats’ hair to be a covering upon the tabernacle: eleven curtains shalt thou make. (8) The length of one curtain shall be thirty cubits, and the breadth of one curtain four cubits: and the eleven curtains shall be all of one measure. (9) And thou shalt couple five curtains by themselves, and six curtains by themselves, and shalt double the sixth curtain in the forefront of the tabernacle. (10) And thou shalt make fifty loops on the edge of the one curtain that is outmost in the coupling, and fifty loops in the edge of the curtain which coupleth the second. (11) And thou shalt make fifty taches of brass, and put the taches into the loops, and couple the tent together, that it may be one. (12) And the remnant that remaineth of the curtains of the tent, the half curtain that remaineth, shall hang over the backside of the tabernacle. (13) And a cubit on the one side, and a cubit on the other side of that which remaineth in the length of the curtains of the tent, it shall hang over the sides of the tabernacle on this side and on that side, to cover it.

John Trapp observed that — “The tabernacle was goats’ hair without and gold within. God hid his Son under the carpenter’s son. ‘*The king’s daughter is all glorious within*’ (Psalm 45:13). And all her sons are princes in all lands. (Psalm 45:16). Howbeit, they must be content to pass to heaven as Christ their Head did, as concealed men. ‘*Therefore the world knoweth us not, because it knew not him*’ (John 1:10). ‘*Our life is hid with Christ*’ (Colossians 3:4) as the life of flowers in winter is hid in the root.”

The third and fourth coverings are given in the very brief statement of verse 14.

(14) And thou shalt make a covering for the tent of rams’ skins dyed red, and a covering above of badgers’ skins.”

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There were four “curtains” or coverings for the tabernacle. Each one was different from the other. Like the four Gospels, each represented different aspect of the character and work of our blessed Savior, whose name is Wonderful. Just as we have four independent records describing the Savior in the four Gospels, so we have before us in these coverings, four pictures of our great God and Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ. — Each Gospel narrative, like each curtain, is complete in itself, but all four are needed to give us a full revelation of the God-man, our Mediator.

1. In the “**badger’s skins**” covering, as in Matthew’s Gospel, we see Christ our King; but his royalty is disguised in humility.
2. In the covering of “**rams’ skins**” dyed red our Lord Jesus as Jehovah’s suffering, as he is presented in the Gospel of Mark.
3. In the third covering of “**goats’ hair**” the Lord Jesus is set before us as the Sacrifice God requires, as the Son of Man, pure and holy, obedient and pleasing to God, as he is portrayed in the Gospel of Luke.
4. And in the innermost covering of “**fine-twined linen**” our Savior is portrayed, as he is in the Gospel of John, as God the Son, who is one with his people.

Let’s look at these coverings briefly. As we do may God the Holy Spirit take the things that are Christ’s and show them to us.

THE COVERING OF FINE-TWINED LINEN

This gorgeous covering of blue, scarlet and purple, with its cherubim interwoven in it, was actually ten coverings made into one. Because this is the innermost covering, seen from within the tabernacle, and because it is made of ten curtains looped together, it seems obvious to me that it refers to the law of God given in the ten commandments at Sinai. This covering was laid over the golden boards and formed the interior roof of the house, or, the “*covering of the tabernacle*” as seen from the inside. — **Christ, who is the End of the law** (Romans 9:30-10:11). **is here exhibited in all the perfection of his glorious character** as Jehovah-tsidkenu, the Lord our Righteousness (Jeremiah 23:6). This covering represents Christ our Savior and all the fulness of his redemptive grace and glory.

(Romans 9:30-33) “What shall we say then? That the Gentiles, which followed not after righteousness, have attained to righteousness, even the righteousness which is of faith. (31) But

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Israel, which followed after the law of righteousness, hath not attained to the law of righteousness. (32) Wherefore? Because *they sought it* not by faith, but as it were by the works of the law. For they stumbled at that stumblingstone; (33) As it is written, Behold, I lay in Sion a stumblingstone and rock of offence: and whosoever believeth on him shall not be ashamed.”

(Romans 10:1-11) “Brethren, my heart’s desire and prayer to God for Israel is, that they might be saved. (2) For I bear them record that they have a zeal of God, but not according to knowledge. (3) For they being ignorant of God’s righteousness, and going about to establish their own righteousness, have not submitted themselves unto the righteousness of God. (4) For Christ *is* the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth. (5) For Moses describeth the righteousness which is of the law, That the man which doeth those things shall live by them. (6) But the righteousness which is of faith speaketh on this wise, Say not in thine heart, Who shall ascend into heaven? (that is, to bring Christ down *from above*;) (7) Or, Who shall descend into the deep? (that is, to bring up Christ again from the dead.) (8) But what saith it? The word is nigh thee, *even* in thy mouth, and in thy heart: that is, the word of faith, which we preach; (9) That if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved. (10) For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation. (11) For the scripture saith, Whosoever believeth on him shall not be ashamed.”

Notice the colors used in making this covering. **It was blue.** This points our eyes to the heavens. How calm and impressive is the deep blue of Heaven. Clouds may obscure it, but nothing can pollute it. It is high above all. No human eye can pierce it. It is illimitable, unchangeable and eternal. How like the divine nature of the Son of Man, how like him who was with the Father before the world was. In Christ the uncreated glory, the deep blue of unfathomable majesty of the Triune God is made visible to the eyes of understanding created in us in the new birth.

The covering was also scarlet. This color compels us to look downward and think of the red earth from which man at first was made. You will remember that the name of our father “Adam” means “red earth.” As the

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blue tells of our Savior's divinity, the scarlet proclaims his glorious humanity. The one points to him as the Son of God, the other as the Son of Man. The hunger, weariness and tears of our blessed Lord tell how truly human He was.

And this first covering was purple. Purple suggests royalty; but there is more than the implication of royalty here. Purple is a new color that is formed by mixing blue and the scarlet together. The union of these two colors forms a third and distinct one. How beautiful! Christ is divine, Christ is human, and Christ is both in one distinct Person. He is the God-man, the Man-God, our Savior, all God and all man in one Person, Jesus Christ the Godman! In the purple, then, we behold our Lord Jesus in his mediatorial glory, the only Mediator between God and men, the Man Christ Jesus.

CHERUBIM

This covering of fine twined linen had the figures of cherubs meticulously interwoven in it. What do these cherubs represent? Why are they interwoven into the covering that is seen from within the tabernacle?

Perhaps there is a suggestion here that our Lord Jesus is Lord also over the holy angels, as he certainly is. It may be that these cherubs represent Gospel preachers, who are the angels of the churches. But the seraphs overshadowing the mercy-seat represent God's messengers.

I think there is something very precious that is represented by these cherubs worked into, interwoven in the fine twined linen covering of blue, scarlet and purple. These cherubs represent God's elect, Christ's redeemed ones, the children of God who are so completely united to Christ that we are one with him, so truly one with him that we have been made part of him, "*bone of his bone and flesh of his flesh!*" We are described by the Spirit of God as "*his body, the fulness of him that filleth all in all!*" The Church was interwoven with Christ, "*the Lamb slain from before the foundation of the world*" (Revelation 13:8), by the will and decree of God, in the eternal purpose of grace which he purposed in himself. — Wonderful thought! — Oh, the unsearchable riches of his grace! — "*Chosen in him before the foundation of the world*" (Ephesians 1.4).

When I went to my concordance and tried to find out what the name "*cherubims*" means, I ran into trouble. Cherubims are simply defined as

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“angelic creatures.” What does the word itself mean? I want to know what the name “cherub” means. In Ezra 2:59, the word is used as the name of a city, a place. It is the same word; but as it is used to describe a thing, or used as a name, the word “*cherub*” means “blessing.”

These “cherubims” interwoven in the covering of fine twined linen of blue, scarlet and purple are blessings. Christ is “*the Blessed God*” and “*the Blessed and only Potentate*,” and we are in-Christed! We are one with him!

THE COVERING OF GOATS’ HAIR

This covering was made of goats’ hair spun by women whose hearts stirred them up in wisdom (Exodus 35:26). It was made from the white, downy wool at the roots of goats’ hair, the goats’ hair from which cashmere wool is woven. This goats’ hair covering was laid over and rested on the first one of fine-twined linen. Nothing wears more comfortably than cashmere, and nothing wears so comfortably on our souls as the gospel of Christ!

Here, in the goats’ hair covering, we see the **spotless righteousness and holiness of God’s elect in Christ**. Without this perfect righteousness and spotless holiness that is our in Christ, we could never enter into God’s holy hill in heaven (Hebrews 12:14; Psalm 24:3-4). But, blessed be his name forever, all who have washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb shall live with him (Revelation 7:14-15).

(Psalms 24:3-4) “Who shall ascend into the hill of the LORD? or who shall stand in his holy place? (4) He that hath clean hands, and a pure heart; who hath not lifted up his soul unto vanity, nor sworn deceitfully.”

Only righteousness can be accepted with the Righteous Lord. Only holiness can dwell in communion with the Holy Lord God.

- Christ is made of God unto us righteousness in free justification. He is the righteousness of God imputed to us, giving us a righteous standing before God.
- And Christ is made of God unto us righteousness in sanctification, too. He is our Holiness, without which no man shall see the Lord. He is the righteousness of God imparted to us in the new birth (1 Corinthians 1:30-31).

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(1 Corinthians 1:30-31) “But of him are ye in Christ Jesus, who of God is made unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, (**purity, purification, holiness**) and redemption: (31) That, according as it is written, He that glorieth, let him glory in the Lord.”

THE COVERING OF RAMS’ SKINS

Neither fine linen nor goats’ hair imply suffering, but skins cannot be gotten without sacrifice. “*Rams’ skins dyed red*” suggest **both death and transformation**.

The Lord Jesus is before us here as the “*Man of Sorrows*,” with dyed garments, as the Lamb of God which taketh away the sin of the world. Let us put the shoes off our feet as we enter **Gethsemane**, and see there the skin of the Sacrifice being dyed red with the blood of agony

Try to get a picture of our Lord Jesus when he rose up in Gethsemane and went forth to meet the soldiers. He went forth to meet those representatives of the law, with his garments dyed red in his own blood. Surrendering himself to his tormenters, he commanded his captors to let his people go their way, completely free!

- In this covering we have Christ our Redemption.
- In the “goats’ hair,” Christ our Righteousness.
- In the “fine linen,” Christ in the Salvation.

But these “*rams’ skins dyed red*” speak to us as believers, as sinners united to Christ by grace. — **We are indebted to the cleansing power of Christ’s atoning blood for our fitness to dwell in his holy presence**.

The white curtain was under the red one. Purity before God cannot be had, but by the blood of Christ. Under the blood we are pure! We must be crucified with Christ if we are to live unto God.

As the white covering was kept clean by the crimson covering, so may we be kept clean by a constant, ever-cleansing blood.

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(1 John 1:7) “But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin.”

(1 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.”

THE COVERING OF BADGER SKINS

The covering of “*badgers’ skins*” was designed to protect the tabernacle from the elements. It was not designed for beauty, but for protection. Here, again, we see our Lord. This covering pictures Christ in his humiliation.

(Isaiah 52:13-15) “Behold, my servant shall deal prudently, he shall be exalted and extolled, and be very high. (14) As many were astonished at thee; his visage was so marred more than any man, and his form more than the sons of men: (15) So shall he sprinkle many nations; the kings shall shut their mouths at him: for *that* which had not been told them shall they see; and *that* which they had not heard shall they consider.”

(Isaiah 53:1-3) “Who hath believed our report? and to whom is the arm of the LORD revealed? (2) For he shall grow up before him as a tender plant, and as a root out of a dry ground: he hath no form nor comeliness; and when we shall see him, *there is* no beauty that we should desire him. (3) He is despised and rejected of men; a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief: and we hid as it were *our* faces from him; he was despised, and we esteemed him not.”

Like our Savior, the badger skin covering had to bear the heat of the day. It was exposed to the storm and the tempest.

Think of our loving, gracious Lord Jesus: how he was misunderstood while being made a curse for us. Thank God, he bore it all. He answered not a word. Satan came, but found nothing in him. To the world there was no beauty in him; but to God the Father he is all-glorious, that One in whom he is well-pleased, with whom his delights have always been. And to all who know him in the experience of his saving mercy, he is precious!

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Those who only saw the “*badgers’ skins*” saw nothing of the hidden glory within. Though Christ is still, to the world, “*a root out of a dry ground*,” to the child of God, to the believing sinner who has access within the veil he is the altogether lovely.

Oh, that our hearts may be like the heart of the tabernacle, the habitation of God, or like the King’s daughter, “all glorious within.” Although our faces may have the uncomely badger’s skin appearance, yet in heart we may have the beauty of the Lord our God upon us.

OUR EXPERIENCE

These four coverings also show us a picture of the believer’s experience in relation to Christ.

1. In our natural state of spiritual ignorance blindness we could only see the blessed Redeemer as the “*badgers’ skins*” covering speaks of him: — no beauty, no attractiveness, because we had no sense of our guilt or need.
2. In the “*rams’ skins dyed red*” we have been cleansed and changed by the power of his atoning blood.
3. In the “*goats’ hair*” covering we experience what it is to be made the righteousness of God in Christ.
4. In the innermost curtain of “*fine-twined linen*” we are walking in the light, as he is in the light, beholding his glory, and filled with all the fulness of God.

Is this our experience? Do you know what it is to live within the Holy of Holies, in sweet, unbroken fellowship with the Holy One? This is our privilege in Christ Jesus.

Amen.