

# ***Garments of Grace: Clothing Imagery in the Bible In the Shadow of His Wings***

Lesson #7 for May 14, 2011

Scriptures: Exodus 19:4; 2 Samuel 11, 12; Psalms 17:8; 32:1; 36:7; 51:2; 57:1; 61:4; 63:7.

1. This lesson is about David's terrible sin with Bathsheba and murder of Uriah and the consequences. David described his relationship to God after that incident like being covered by God's wings. How much did David know about eagles?

The eagle is a live jet fighter. Armed with a hooked beak and razor's-edge talons, it is loaded like a jet fighter too. The eagle is wind and wing, bone, sinew, and blood. The eagle is scavenger, fisher, and thief. The eagle hurls itself from clouds toward water with the speed of a cyclonic storm. The eagle hobbles on balled-up claws in its nest to keep from dicing up its young. The eagle is majesty, power, and grace. The eagle is all these metaphors, yet greater than their sum. (*Adult Sabbath School Bible Study Guide*, for May 7, 2011)

2. So, why do you think David used the eagle as a metaphor in many of his Psalms? Or did he? Only Solomon in Proverbs specifically mentioned the eagle. Was David using an eagle as his metaphor for covering while Jesus when weeping over Jerusalem used the metaphor of a chicken? (Matthew 23:37; Luke 13:34) In what way is God like an eagle? Does He fly? Some eagles teach their young to fly by kicking them out of their nest and letting them flop around in the air as they drop. Then, at the last moment, the parent eagle flies under the young one and catches him only to take him to a high altitude and drop him again! Does God do that? Eagles fight over food, grabbing it from each other. Nations use eagles as symbols of power. But, that is not a particularly good picture of God.
3. Do we believe that God has wings and feathers? If not, what is implied by this metaphor?
4. While running from Saul, David had lived a fairly circumspect life under considerable adversity. Every day, he had to work hard just to get enough food to keep himself and his men and their families alive. But then, when they had conquered Jerusalem and David had a nice palace for himself, times of prosperity were present. Unfortunately, David—probably taking a cue from the other kings around him—seemed to have succumbed to the idea that kings could and should get away with anything.
5. David had become an incredibly successful king. After Saul's death, David first became king over the southern tribal area of Judah. Then, a short time later, he became king over all of the kingdom of Judah and Israel. With God's help he was so successful in his battles that he soon ruled all the territory from Egypt to the Euphrates.
6. Even before he became king, he already had several wives. (1 Samuel 18:27; 2 Samuel 2:2; 2 Samuel 5:13; 1 Chronicles 14:3) There is a very interesting verse discussing wives in 2 Samuel 12:8. What is implied by the statement that God gave David the wives of his predecessor? We do not even know how many wives David had.
7. Once again read the story of David's downfall in 2 Samuel 11. Unfortunately, one afternoon apparently after he had a nap and while the military was out fighting his battles, he strolled on his roof and looked over and saw a very beautiful woman bathing. Soon, he arranged for her to come to his palace. Within a month or two she announced that she was pregnant.

Notice how David got into even more trouble by trying to hide his sin.

8. When David found out that Bathsheba was pregnant, what was his initial reaction? How did he try to solve the problem? Why do you think Uriah refused to go home to his wife despite being urged by his king to do so? Was a soldier forbidden to be with his wife while the army was in battle? David managed to eliminate Uriah by using the arrows of the Ammonites. Then, after an appropriate period of mourning, he took Bathsheba as an additional wife. For almost a year, David apparently tried to cover his sins. But, the birth of the child over whom David wept and mourned certainly must have raised questions.
9. This should raise several questions in our minds. Bathsheba had apparently been married to Uriah for some time. Why had she never become pregnant by Uriah? If Bathsheba had been home with children, she never would have gotten into trouble. Why did she become pregnant from a single encounter with David? Or, were there others? Did God make sure she got pregnant so that David could not hide his sin? Or, did the Devil have something to do with that? There are a number of stories in the Bible that suggest that God controlled women's ability to become pregnant. Does God do that? (See Genesis 18:10-15; 20:17,18; 25:21; Consider Tamar in Genesis 38; Consider Ruth)
10. Was Bathsheba in any way responsible for what happened? Did she have any idea that she might be visible while bathing? Did she try to resist the king in any way? Or, did she believe that such actions would be impossible under the circumstances? Notice that the Bible does not say that David raped her. It says that David made love to her! (2 Samuel 11:4) Or, was that a euphemism?
11. Read 2 Samuel 12, the story about how Nathan came to David, told the parable about the pet lamb, and then revealed David's sin. Do you think the parable that Nathan told was made up by Nathan? Or, was it made up by God? What do we learn about God's attitude toward sinners when we read 2 Samuel 12:12,13? How long did it take David to admit his sin? How long did it take God to assure him of forgiveness? After Nathan's parable, did David hesitate in any way in admitting and confessing his sin? Psalm 32 and Psalms 51 are two penitential Psalms that David apparently wrote shortly after this experience. What do they teach us about confession and repentance?
12. Read Psalm 51. Is it true that David's sin was only against God? (Psalms 51:4) What was David trying to say by this expression? Was it true that he was evil from the time of his birth? (Psalms 51:5) In what sense can God give clean hearts and right spirits? (Psalm 51:10) Notice that this verse describes that the Holy Spirit was at work long before Pentecost!
13. After being so careful not to violate in any way the sanctity of the Lord's anointed when he had several opportunities to kill Saul, why do you think David so easily slipped into this terrible sin? The fiercest battles in the great controversy are not physical battles, but rather, they take place in the minds of human beings. When out on the battlefield wielding a sword, David was very effective and almost invincible so long as he stayed loyal to God. But, while walking on the rooftop, one small glance fell that giant king.
14. But, let us ask the major question now. In what sense was David's sin put away? (2 Samuel 12:13) Psalms 51 suggests that David's sin was washed away. What does that mean? Certainly, we understand that the consequences were not averted.
15. Many Christians believe that being forgiven by God takes care of everything. Was that true in the case of David? Did David lose his moral authority after this experience? Even though

he had been forgiven by God, David still had to live with the consequences of his sin! His sons—no doubt, some of them teenagers and maybe even older—figured out quickly what their father had been up to. The baby born of David’s sin with Bathsheba died. Amnon raped his sister Tamar and eventually was murdered for it. Absalom tried to carry out a coup and died in the battle over control of the nation. After David died, when Solomon had become king Adonijah was killed because he wanted to marry Abishag, the beautiful woman who had been David’s “hot-water bottle.” Thus, as a fairly direct consequence of David’s sin, four of his sons died. (Remember David’s statement after Nathan’s story?)

16. Let us look behind the scenes. Apparently, David thought he had gotten away with his sin without anyone figuring out what happened. He did not confess anything for about a year. (See *Patriarchs and Prophets* 723.4) So, why was he crying all day and worn out with his strength completely drained? (Psalm 32:3-5) Did David perceive that he was separated from God? Was that what troubled him most of all? Do we feel awful when we commit sin? Or, do we sometimes feel that we have gotten away with our sins? Do we mourn the separation that sin causes between us and God? Do we fully recognize what sin does to us?
17. Some day, in heaven there will presumably be a time when David, Bathsheba, and Uriah meet. Solomon may be standing nearby. What will David say to Uriah? What will Uriah say? Or, will nobody remember? Will all of the Bibles be burned at the second coming?
18. In Psalms 32:1 David stated, “Blessed is he whose transgression is forgiven, whose sin is covered.” Does this mean that forgiveness equals covering? *Salvation* means healing. Is that more than just covering? Notice some of the facts about David’s repentance:

(1) David makes no excuse for his sin; (2) he makes no attempt to justify himself; (3) he does not find fault with God’s law for condemning him; (4) he blames only himself for his sin; and, (5) he genuinely hates the sin that separated him from God and turns from it. (*Adult Sabbath School Bible Study Guide*, for May 10, 2011)

Then, God was free to cover over David’s sin, to no longer impute guilt to him, and to restore their relationship.

19. What would you say is the relationship between confession and repentance?
20. Other metaphors enter the picture. David spoke about “a clean heart” in Psalm 51:10. Was he talking about washing and whitening? That sounds like cleaning dirty laundry. How does God give us a clean heart? What happened to Saul when God gave him a new heart? (1 Samuel 10:9)
21. When David talked about a clean heart, was he talking about the muscular organ in his chest that pumped blood? Ellen White said:

When Jesus speaks of the new heart, he means the mind, the life, the whole being. To have a change of heart is to withdraw the affections from the world, and fasten them upon Christ. To have a new heart is to have a new mind, new purposes, new motives. What is the sign of a new heart?—A changed life. There is a daily, hourly dying to selfishness and pride. {*Youth’s Instructor*, September 26, 1901 par. 5}

22. David used hyssop for purging. What do we know about hyssop? How was hyssop used in the Bible? <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hyssop>; <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ezov>

**Hyssop.** [Heb. ‘ezôb; Akkadian *zûpu*; Gr. *hussôpos*.] The Hebrew and Greek

terms thus translated most probably refer to the gray-green marjoram (*Origanum maru*). The plant is small and has hairy stems ending in a mass of tiny white flowers. It has a pungent, fragrant smell, and its taste is not unlike peppermint. Its leaves and stems are succulent, and in modern times the plant has been used as a spice or condiment, even medicinally. It is found everywhere in Palestine, springing up among rocks, in terraces, and from walls (1 Kings 4:33). In addition to its use in the original Passover ritual (Exodus 12:22), hyssop was employed on the day of the cleansing of a leper or a house (Leviticus 14:6, 7, 49), in connection with the offering of the red heifer, and with the purification of men and items unclean through contact with the dead (Numbers 19:6,17,18). According to Hebrews 9:19, 20 Moses used hyssop at the ratification of the covenant. **To the psalmist hyssop was symbolic of cleansing (Ps 51:7).** There has been much discussion over the reading “hyssop” in Jn 19:29, for a plant with a long stem seems to be indicated. Some conjecture that the original reading was *hussos*, “javelin,” instead of *hussōpos*, “hyssop,” and an 11th-century manuscript actually reads *hussos*. Others conjecture that there is some connection with the hyssop of the original Passover (Ex 12:22). *Seventh-day Adventist Bible Dictionary*

23. Despite all the talk of confession, repentance, covering, forgiveness, etc. in this story, David still suffered terrible consequences as a result of his sin. It is even possible that Solomon—a product of the later union between David and Bathsheba—had either hereditary or environmental tendencies in the same direction. Certainly, his 700 queens and 300 concubines far exceeded David’s number of wives!
24. When we confess and forsake our sins, how often do we avoid the consequences? Or, are there always consequences to our sins even if we are forgiven? How many individuals and groups had their lives impacted by this sin of David? Can you think of any sins that you have committed that you sincerely repented of but which had serious consequences for yourself or others? What should we learn from these words from Ellen White?

David’s repentance was sincere and deep. . .

Though David had fallen, the Lord lifted him up. He was now more fully in harmony with God and in sympathy with his fellow man than before he fell. .

Whoever under the reproof of God will humble the soul with confession and repentance, as did David, may be sure that there is hope for him.—Ellen G. White, *Patriarchs and Prophets*, pages 725,726

25. Is our confession and repentance sincere and deep? Maybe our sins are not as public and memorable as were David’s; but, are they any less damaging? Was David better off because of his sin? Notice that Psalms 51:4 (from the Greek translation known as the *Septuagint*) is quoted in Romans 3:4 to talk about how God takes His Own case into court! Every day, God is being judged. Do we trust Him? Do we consistently vote for God.

**© 2011, Kenneth Hart, MD, MA, MPH. Permission is hereby granted for any noncommercial use of these materials. Free distribution is encouraged. It is our goal to see them spread as widely and freely as possible. If you would like to use them for your class or even make copies of portions of them, feel free to do so. We always enjoy hearing about how you might be using the materials, and we might even want to share good ideas with others. So, let us know.** [Info@theox.org](mailto:Info@theox.org)

Last Modified: April 10, 2011

Z:\My Documents\WP\SSTG-Hart\GarGrace\SS-7-GarGrace-2011\_05\_14-2011\_03\_29-Fin+.wpd