

Modest Apparel: for Men and Women



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Modest apparel: for Men and Women
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True Christian consistency does not consist in stereotyping our opinions and views, and in refusing to make any improvement lest we should be guilty of change, but it consists in holding our minds open to receive the rays of truth from every quarter and in changing our views and language and practice as often and as fast, as we can obtain further information. I call this Christian consistency, because this course alone accords with the Christian profession. A Christian profession implies the profession of candor and of a disposition to know and obey all truth. It must follow, that Christian consistency implies continued investigation and change of views and practice corresponding with increasing knowledge. No Christian, therefore, and no theologian should be afraid to change his views, his language, or his practice in conformity with increasing light.

- *Charles Finney*

Modest Apparel: for Men and Women

Introduction

Does modesty in dress make a difference? Some Christians today would answer in the negative saying that it is not our outward modesty that is important in our relationship with the heavenly Father, it is instead the heart of man that counts. Time and time again I've heard people say that we should not focus so much on the outside, but worry more about what is in our hearts. The problem with this is that our hearts are made manifest by our outward actions. What is on the inside is made known on the outside.

Many Churches today, professing faith in the Scriptures, are proclaiming that it is perfectly acceptable to wear immodest clothing. Rarely, if ever, is a message preached from the pulpit of a Christian Church that addresses the issue of decency and modesty in the clothing we wear today. It is often thought that dealing with such issues are at best straining at a gnat while swallowing the camel of other issues invading the church, like abortion, adultery, or even homosexuality. Is this the position that we should place ourselves in? Better yet, is this the Scriptural position?

In light of what Yeshua¹ the Messiah stated in Matthew 23, we should see that this is not proper stance His followers should take. "Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! You clean the outside of the cup and dish, but inside they are full of greed and self-indulgence! Blind Pharisee! First clean the inside of the cup, so the outside of it may also become clean. (Matthew 23:25-26)"

Yeshua does not say the outside of "the cup" is unimportant, but that our emphasis should be on having *both* the inside and outside clean, beginning with the inside. This is because holiness on the inside reveals itself on the outside. However, the opposite is true as well. A *wicked heart* will manifest itself on the outside.

Outward appearance is not the real issue, of course. Outward appearance which violates Scriptural guidelines is merely a very obvious symptom of a much deeper spiritual problem. The real problem underlying the abandonment of God's standards of dress and appearance is a problem that has its roots in compromise,

¹ Yeshua is the original personal, proper, Hebrew name of the Messiah, and is preferred by the author over the English derivative Jesus.

rebellion, and a desire for more independence than God is willing to give.²

Many professing Christians allow for just about anything. Their liberal attitude has "declared clean" a host of sins that Scripture condemns, and obedience is not believed to be a fruit of salvation. Bible verses which teach that Christians must obey their Lord are discarded (1 John 2:3-4; Hebrews 5:9; etc.). It is taught today that all a person needs to do is accept Jesus Christ into their heart, say a small prayer, and they have absolutely nothing to fret about. In truth, this modern teaching has led many people to believe that the Christian faith is nothing short of a faith of complacency, rebellion, and in some instances, sheer paganism.

Some people who will read the statements I've made thus far will cry aloud the term: Legalism! They state that such "legalism" is bondage, and is what we need to be liberated from. In essence they are saying we need liberation from God, because, as we will soon see, it is *God* which teaches that our clothing should be modest. I once heard a Pastor say that he would not give a dime to a church that teaches to observe God's laws, but would give everything he had to a church that teaches the grace

² *The Outward Appearance of God's People: Does it Matter?* Daniel Botkin, Gates of Eden periodical, Sept - Oct 1997, Vol. 3 No. 5, page 9.

of God. This same Pastor stated that to be under rules or regulations was nothing less than absolute bondage, and was not the desire of Yahweh³ for Christians under the New Covenant. In his mind the "Old Covenant God" was one of bondage, but under the New Covenant, this same Maker of the Old Covenant has freed us from all the ways of grievous living by the law. This man would have a hard time explaining to the Psalmist David how the commandments of Yahweh were bondage, or harsh laws that we should be liberated from. David stated that liberty was found by walking in Yahweh's precepts (Psalm 119:145). This squares with the Apostle James understanding of the law as one of liberty in James 1:25, "But the one who looks intently into the perfect law of freedom and perseveres in it, and is not a forgetful hearer but a doer who acts - this person will be blessed in what he does."

Turning back to the aforementioned preacher, grace in his mind is indeed a license to sin, and he has turned the grace of God into licentiousness, and thereby has denied the very Son of Yahweh (Jude 1:4). It is the grace of Yahweh that teaches us to live soberly and righteously in this present, evil world (Titus 2:11-14). Do not let such "buzz words" as

³ Yahweh is the personal, proper name of the Creator. Please consult our online publication titled, "Hallowed be Thy Name" for a detailed study concerning this name.

legalism frighten you. This word has become one which "liberal Christians" love to pin on conservative, faithful Christian people. There is nothing wrong with being legal or rather *lawful* according to the Scriptures. Let me ask you, would you rather be Biblically unlawful or Biblically lawful? I would choose lawful, seeing it is obedience to Yahweh's law that brings freedom and liberation.

Anyone reading this booklet who takes a stand on modesty in outward appearance is going to be labeled a legalist by the majority of the world, including modern day Christianity. Along with being labeled a legalist you may even be branded with the term Pharisee or be categorized as a hypocrite. Let me first give you an encouraging quote from one article entitled "*Legalism?*"

The terms legalism, legalist, and legalistic have been misused for far too long. Carnal Christians have used these words to slander their brothers and sisters who are doing their best to humbly walk in obedience to the Heavenly Father's commandments. By labeling these brethren as legalists, the carnal Christians seek to justify their own sinful habits. Anyone who suggests that these unlawful people need to repent of their sins is simply dismissed as a legalist. I would not be surprised to learn that even the sodomite "Christians" make use of these words

to justify their sins. The illegalists do not see the importance of obedience.⁴

On the flip side of this I do want to warn everyone of becoming hypocritical in their walk with Yahweh. I have known people in my years on this earth who appear to be holy or set-apart on the outside, but are very evil and wicked on the inside. We should not seek to be one of these people, as our Savior said in Matthew 23:2-4.

The scribes and Pharisees are seated in the chair of Moses. Therefore do whatever they tell you and observe it. But don't do what they do, because they don't practice what they teach. They tie up heavy loads that are hard to carry and put them on people's shoulders, but they themselves aren't willing to lift a finger to move them.

We must seek to have a heart pleasing to Yahweh. This heart obeys Yahweh no matter what the cost; this heart obeys Yahweh when no human is around to see; this heart seeks to always obey Yahweh. I should also make mention that although people in Christianity believe that the Pharisee's were avid strict law-keepers, the Bible tells us something quite the opposite. This group was

⁴ "LEGALISM!" By Daniel Botkin, Gates of Eden Periodical, July-August 1999, page 4.

condemned by the Messiah as we saw in Matthew 23 for their hypocrisy, self righteousness, and omission of the weightier matters of the law. They went about establishing their own righteousness by the traditions of men, while not submitting themselves to the righteousness of Yahweh.

For I tell you, unless your righteousness surpasses that of the scribes and Pharisees, you will never enter the kingdom of heaven. [Matthew 5:20]

Hypocrites! Isaiah prophesied correctly about you when he said: These people honor me with their lips, but their heart is far from me. They worship me in vain, teaching as doctrines the commands of men. [Matthew 15:7-9]

He began to say to His disciples first: Be on your guard against the yeast of the Pharisees, which is hypocrisy. [Luke 12:1]

Let's not become Pharisaical in our living; upholding the traditions of men and being hypocritical. However, let us uphold true heart-motivated obedience to the commandments and doctrines of Yahweh.

The road is straight and narrow to eternal life (Matthew 7:13-14), there will only be a few chosen by Almighty Yahweh. Our Savior said (Luke 6:46),

“Why do you call me Lord, Lord, and don't do the things I say?” In another place He made it clear that not everyone that called Him Lord would enter the Kingdom, but only those who did the will of His Father (Matthew 7:21). Let us then seek to obey Him in every aspect of our lives, including our outward apparel.

Yahweh has given us instructions in His word on clothing our bodies properly. For us to reveal or show our nakedness amidst society is shameful. Here are just a handful of passages to prove this point.

And when Moses saw that the people were naked; (for Aaron had made them naked unto their shame among their enemies:) [Exodus 32:25, KJV]

So Hanun took David's emissaries, shaved off half their beards, cut their clothes in half at the hips, and sent them away. When this was reported to David, he sent someone to meet them, since they were deeply humiliated. The king said, Stay in Jericho until your beards grow back; then return. [2 Samuel 10:4-5]

Go down and sit in the dust, Virgin Daughter Babylon. Sit on the ground without a throne, Daughter Chaldea! For you will no longer be called pampered and spoiled. Take millstones and grind meal; remove your veil, strip off your skirt, bare your thigh, wade through the streams.

Your nakedness will be uncovered, and you shame will be exposed... [Isaiah 47:1-3]

And they come to Yeshua, and see him that was possessed with the devil, and had the legion, sitting, and clothed, and in his right mind... [Mark 5:15, KJV]

I counsel thee to buy of me gold tried in the fire, that thou mayest be rich; and whit raiment, that thou mayest be clothed, and that the shame of they nakedness do not appear... [Revelation 3:18, KJV]

This booklet is the fruition of a study I formally began in May 2004, on proper, Scriptural apparel for women. I grew up in a household that believed pants where an acceptable outward garment on both men and women. Later in life I began to examine a few passages in Scripture and came to the conclusion that a woman should *not* wear pants for any reason. My conclusion was based on a surface deep interpretation of Deuteronomy 22:5.

A woman is not to wear male clothing, and a man is not to put on a woman's garment, for everyone who does these things is detestable to Yahweh your God.

Anyone reading this passage with a 21st century mindset will most likely believe that it is prohibiting

a woman from wearing pants and a man from wearing a dress or skirt. This is because we consider pants to be a man's garment and a dress to be a woman's garment. The question is, why do we believe this? Is it because we have studied the Scriptures and come to this conclusion, or is it because this is the way we have been trained to think in our current society?

Genesis 3 and the Kethoneth

In the beginning, man and woman were without and apart from sin. After sin entered (Genesis 3:6) Adam and Eve realized their nakedness and sewed fig leaves together, and made themselves aprons (Genesis 3:7). Yahweh then reprimanded the two as well as the serpent for the actions which had taken place. We then find that the aprons which the man and woman made must have been insufficient in the eyes of Yahweh, for Yahweh replaced them with coats of skin which He made (Genesis 3:21).⁵ What exactly was the coat that Yahweh placed upon the two? Was this coat a generic garment, or was it a specific garment that Yahweh prescribed to adequately cover their nakedness? The underlying Hebrew word for coat is *kethoneth*, which is defined

⁵ The word made in Genesis 3:21 is taken from the Hebrew word *asah* which can be translated as "appointed" in our English Bibles (Psalm 104:19). The meaning would then be that Yahweh appointed them these particular garments.

by various lexicons as a tunic, robe, or long shirt-like garment.⁶ You may have seen this type of a garment being worn by those peoples who have grown up in the Eastern culture or by those of the Islamic faith. It is, in simplest terms, a long, loose shirt like garment which hangs anywhere from above the knees to the ankles, draping over the mid-section of the bodies of men and women.

This definition of the *kethoneth* is not completely learned by examining the Hebrew lexicons, but what we do learn is that it is not a garment divided in the middle such as modern day pants. This is clear from the English definitions of tunic, shirt, and long, shirt-like garment. Consider Noah Webster's definition of a tunic as found in the *1828 Dictionary of the English Language*.

TUNIC... 1. A kind of waistcoat or under garment worn by men in ancient Rome and the east. In the later ages of the republic, the tunic was a long garment with sleeves... 2. Among the religious, a woolen shirt or under garment...

⁶ *Strong's Exhaustive Concordance*: "From an unused root meaning to cover... a shirt:—coat, garment, robe." *Brown, Drivers, and Briggs Definition*: "1) tunic, under-garment / 1a) a long shirt-like garment usually of linen."

Websters Third New International Dictionary (1981) has this to add concerning the English definition of the tunic:

tunic... [L tunica tunic, integument, membrane, of Sem origin; akin to Heb kuttoneth coat – more at CHITON⁷] 1a: a simple slip-on garment made with or without sleeves and usu. knee-length or longer, belted at the waist, and worn as an under or outer garment by men and women of ancient Greece and Rome...

This is precisely the definition we get from *Eerdman's Bible Dictionary* when consulting their scholarship on what the Biblical *kethoneth* actually was.

The basic unit of clothing for both men and women was a shirtlike tunic (Heb. Ketonet; Gk. Chiton), an undergarment with long or medium sleeves which reached to the ankles.⁸

⁷ This same English dictionary gives the definition of *chiton* (a Greek translation of the Hebrew *kethoneth*) as follows: "...[Gk. chiton tunic, of Sem origin: akin to Heb kuttoneth coat, Syr kettana linen, Assyr-Bab kitu, kitinnu linen]... 3 [Gk. chiton]: the basic garment of ancient Greece worn usu knee-length by men and full-length by women and made in two styles..."

⁸ *Eerdman's Bible Dictionary*, 1987, page 224

The *Holman Bible Dictionary* has this to add on the basic, clothing for men and women in ancient Biblical times.

Clothing styles: The Bible gives only general descriptions of the types of garments worn in biblical times. Egyptian, Assyrian, Roman, and Hittite monuments provide extensive pictorial evidence of dress in the ancient world. The need for clothing derives its origin from the shame of nakedness experienced by Adam and Eve in the garden (Gen. 3:7-8). God's provision for His people is reflected in the animal skin garments given in response to human need. Men and women wore tunics made of linen or wool hanging from the neck to the knees or ankles. The Beni Hasan Tableau from the tomb of Khnum-hotep in Egypt depicts tunics worn by Semitic peoples as having diverse patterns and colors.⁹

The *International Standard Bible Encyclopedia* has somewhat to offer as well.

The three normal body garments, the ones most mentioned in the Scriptures, are sadhin, a rather long "under garment" provided with sleeves; ketoneth (Greek chiton), a long-sleeved tunic worn over the simlah... We may well begin here

⁹ *Holman Bible Dictionary*, CD Rom, Under Cloth, Clothing.

with the familiar saying of Jesus for a basal distinction: "If any man would go to law with thee, and take away thy coat (Greek chiton), let him have thy cloak (himation) also" (Mt 5:40). Here the "coat" (Hebrew kethoneth) was the ordinary "inner garment" worn by the Jew of the day, in which he did the work of the day (see Mt 24:18; Mk 13:16). It resembled the Roman "tunic," corresponding most nearly to our "long shirt," reaching below the knees always, and, in case it was designed for dress occasions, reaching almost to the ground... The well-known piece of Assyrian sculpture, representing the siege and capture of Lachish by Sennacherib, shows the Jewish captives, male and female, dressed in a moderately tight garment, fitting close to the neck (compare Job 30:18) and reaching almost to the ankles; which must represent the k^etho^oneth, or kutto^oneth of the period, as worn in towns at least.¹⁰

Further insight on the common garment for both sexes is found in the book entitled *Manners and Customs in the Bible*:

The basic dress for both men and women was the ketoneth, a shirtlike garment which is depicted in ancient art in a variety of styles. Usually made of wool, it could reach as far as

¹⁰ *International Standard Bible Encyclopedia*, Sword Searcher 5.3, under heading Dress, sections 3.1 and 4.2

the ankles or just to the knees; it might have either long or short sleeves. This garment is mentioned in the "Black Obelisk" inscription of the Assyrian king Shalmaneser III (842 B.C.). In a series of sculpted, captioned registers, Jehu, king of Israel, is depicted bowing down before the king; his servants are shown carrying gifts as tribute payments. Jehu is wearing a fringed kethoneth tied with a girdle which also has tassels hanging from it. His head is covered by a pointed cap, and his beard like those of the Israelite porters carved on this monument, is trimmed to a point.¹¹

This tunic (*kethoneth*) was given to both Adam and Eve, after their fall into sin, as appropriate modest apparel.¹² The question arises: if that is what

¹¹ *Manners and Customs in the Bible*, Revised Edition, by Victor H. Matthews, Hendrickson Publishers, March 2003, pages 117-119.

¹² Certain Bible Encyclopedia's make the assertion that someone clothed only in the *kethoneth* was considered as naked. Consider the *Easton's Bible Dictionary*, under the heading DRESS:

The "coat" (*kethoneth*), of wool, cotton, or linen, was worn by both sexes. It was a closely-fitting garment, resembling in use and form our shirt (John 19:23). It was kept close to the body by a girdle (John 21:7). A person wearing this "coat" alone was described as naked (1 Sam. 19:24; Isa. 20:2; 2 Kings 6:30; John 21:7); deprived of it he would be absolutely naked.

was considered modest by Yahweh then, should not the same be considered modest by Yahweh now?

I should briefly note that the mentioning of the material of the covering in Genesis 3:21 does not carry the meaning that animal skins would be the *only* appropriate covering. There are other materials that are just as modest in tunic form, and many other materials were worn in ancient, Biblical times (Genesis 41:42; Leviticus 13:47-49; Judges 14:12; 2 Samuel 6:14; Proverbs 31:22, 24; Ezekiel 16:10, 13; Mark 14:51-52; Luke 16:19).

From the first man mentioned in the Old Testament writings until the time of the Messiah, it can be shown that animal skin was not the only material used for making clothes. What cannot be demonstrated is that the *basic structure* of the garment made by Yahweh changed. The reason it did not change lies in the fact of its modesty. Yahweh designed and appointed a particular garment for both sexes that would not only cover their bodies, but *modestly* cover their nakedness. This means the issue is one of decency and moderation. Adam and Eve tried to cover with fig

In looking up each passage cited as proof of this by *Easton's* we find that they are not exactly correct. Yes, the word naked in the passages can have the meaning of partially or totally naked, but the fact remains that Adam and Eve's nakedness was covered adequately by Yahweh with the *kethoneth*. Therefore a person wearing this *kethoneth* alone was considered clothed, not naked.

leaves (aprons, Genesis 3:7) as many do (in similarity) today, but Yahweh saw the aprons to be insufficient (Genesis 3:21). He then clothed male and female with the same clothing; clothing which Yahweh, the Creator and Designer of mankind, considered as modest.

Breeches, Trousers, and Pants

Seeing that male and female were clothed with the same article of clothing who are we to say that pants should be considered as the apparel of a man? Does the Bible say this? Some students of the Bible point us to the five uses of the English word *breeches* in Scripture.¹³ Those who use these passages proclaim that they prove breeches to be specifically for men. However, that is not letting the Bible interpret the Bible. Each passage under consideration deals exclusively with the garments that the Levite priests were commanded to wear at designated times. Granted, priests were men and not women, but there is not one place in sacred Scripture where breeches are said to be pertaining to men in general. The priests were likewise commanded to wear a girdle or belt (Leviticus 16:4), but that does not automatically assign belts to the male gender. For us to make such declarations about breeches, pants, or belts is adding to the Word of Yahweh.

¹³ Exodus 28:42, 39:28; Leviticus 6:10, 16:4; Ezekiel 44:18 | KJV

Furthermore, the breeches are mentioned in the list of the *holy* garments which pertained to the priest.

He [Aaron] shall put on the holy linen coat, and he shall have the linen breeches upon his flesh, and shall be girded with a linen girdle, and with the linen mitre shall he be attired: these are the holy garments; therefore shall he wash his flesh in water, and so put them on. [Leviticus 16:4, KJV]

The breeches had a specific use for the priests just as the other garments mentioned. These breeches were to (1) cover their nakedness, and (2) prevent them from sweating. The breeches were hardly comparable to the common man's pants today. Yahweh describes them as extending from the loins to the thigh (Exodus 28:42). This is comparable to today's underwear¹⁴ or boxer shorts, which at the furthest would reach to the top of a man's knee. If we are going to say that breeches are the apparel of a man (which the Bible doesn't say) then we would have to say that a woman couldn't wear underwear, undergarments, or even shorts under her dress according to the modern, traditional interpretation

¹⁴Certain translations of the Bible, such as the *New Living Translation*, use the term underclothes or undergarments in each place where the *King James Version* has the word breeches.

of Deuteronomy 22:5. Consider now Exodus 28:42 in more detail.

And thou shalt make them linen breeches to cover their nakedness; from the loins even unto the thighs they shall reach.

I have encountered some, who in trying to maintain consistency in doctrine, tell me that the above passage shows what sufficiently covers the nakedness of males. The problem with this is that if you choose to believe that these breeches are sufficient to cover a man's nakedness, in a general sense, you must also say that men are allowed to wear thigh length shorts - by their self - as acceptable modest apparel. This is to be understood as without a shirt, because no shirt is mentioned here as covering the nakedness. You must also believe that it would be perfectly acceptable for a Pastor to preach in front of a congregation wearing nothing but thigh length shorts; wearing nothing but underwear. I think that this concept of consistency is one which is absurd when carried out to its logical conclusion.

My first understanding of the breeches was that they were worn by priests at certain times, but never without a robe over top. In limited cases the common people may have a chance to get a "quick glimpse" of what was under the priests robe, but

with the robe over top, people would not generally see underneath. Although the breeches were said to cover their nakedness, they were said to do so in the context of underneath the robe. Anything beyond this would be adding to the Scriptures.

I have come to believe that there is a much better, exegetical interpretation. In Exodus 20:26 the Israelites had a commandment telling them not to go up by steps unto an altar of Yahweh, that their nakedness not be seen, therefore, the Levite priests would not have to offer sacrifices in such a way as to have a common person see up under their robe in the first place. If we look at the context of each of the passages mentioning breeches, we see that the issue was not one of *another person* looking at their nakedness, it rather dealt with coming into the *presence of Yahweh* and ministering before *Him*. Exodus 28:42-43 and Leviticus 16:4 are the most explicit passages to go to. These breeches were holy garments¹⁵ to be worn while the priests came near to

¹⁵ The Hebrew word *kethoneth* is used a total of twenty-six times in the Old Testament. In fourteen of those times it is used in relation to one of the holy garments of the priests (Exodus 28:4, 39, 40; 29:5, 8; 39:27; 40:14; Leviticus 8:7, 13; 10:5; 16:4; Ezra 2:69; Nehemiah 7:70, 72.). This particular garment, used in relation to the priest, would at least have a similar appearance to the garment Yahweh clothed Adam and Even with in the beginning. This robe would be the holy *kethoneth* the priest was commanded to wear while performing priestly duties. The first century

the altar to minister in the holy place. Thus, the breeches were not to cover their nakedness in reference to other people looking upon them, but rather to cover their nakedness, i.e. their genital area, *in the presence of Yahweh*. This shows us that there are different contexts of covering nakedness in Scripture. One deals specifically with the sexual area of a person, as is the case in uncovering the nakedness of your father (Leviticus 18:8). The other deals with modest apparel, as in the case of Genesis 3:21 or 1 Timothy 2:9.

Jewish historian, Flavius Josephus, describes this particular garment of the priest in this fashion.

Over this [breeches] he wore a linen vestment, made of fine flax doubled: it is called Chethone, and denotes linen, for we call linen by the name of Chethone. This vestment reaches down to the feet, and sits close to the body; and has sleeves that are tied fast to the arms... it is girded to the breast a little above the elbows, by a girdle often going around, four finger broad, but so loosely woven, that you would think it were the skin of a serpent. It is embroidered with flowers of scarlet, and purple, and blue, and fine twined linen, but the warp was nothing but fine linen... The beginning of its wrap around is at the breast; and when it has gone often around, it is there tied, and hangs loosely there down to the ankles: I mean this, all the time the priest works hard, for this position appears to be most agreeable to the spectators... (Antiquities 3.7.2)

Someone may wish to present the case that pants were initially invented for the male gender. First of all, where is this found in Scripture? Did the Creator invent pants for men, or did man invent pants for men? I think you would have to agree to the latter. This is because pants did not become the *common*, lower, outer apparel for a man until the 16th to 19th century A.D. A small amount of research on the history of pants for men will show the following.

- We do not have any Scripture stating that pants or breeches were worn by men or women as appropriate modest apparel.
- Sailors, in the late 1500's wore a baggy "clown-type" pant which could be easily rolled up when wading to shore. These pants made it easy for sailors to climb the rigging on the ships.
- Around the late 1700's men began to frequent breeches or pantaloons similar in style to the lower apparel worn by some of today's professional golfers. These "pants" connected to stockings at the knee, which reached to the ankles.

- Pants, as we have them today became predominant in the 1800's and took complete hold for men in the 1900's.¹⁶

One particular encyclopedia stated the following concerning the history and origin of trousers or pants.

The Persians, based in what is now Iran, ruled an empire in the 6th century BC that included most of the Middle East and Egypt. They introduced two garments to the history of clothing: trousers and seamed fitted coats, both probably first made from animal skins. These tailored garments differed significantly from the woven rectangles of cloth generally worn in the Mediterranean region, and they served to protect people from cold weather. They were adopted for that purpose by peoples of Central Asia and northern Europe. People who rode horses valued trousers for use when astride, and in that capacity trousers spread to China and India, as well as to the Celtic peoples of northern Europe. It is worth noting that throughout most of history trousers have not been associated with men. In China, both men and women, especially those who worked the land, wore trousers. In the Ottoman Empire (based in what is now Turkey), women wore trousers. Only in

¹⁶ For verification of the above visit www.poloindia.com - www.histclo.hispeed.com.

European cultures did trousers become associated with men.¹⁷

Just because people think that pants are solely a man's garment does not mean that is how *Yahweh* considers the garment. We must not take modern day cultural or custom arguments and judge the inspired Word by these arguments. We should judge what we believe by the Scriptures, and the Scriptures *do not* define pants as a man's apparel.

What About Deuteronomy 22:5?

When I first began my study in regards to the proper, modest apparel for men and women, I felt help my study if I took the time to read articles or booklets on *both sides* of the issue. I obtained about four articles which believed it was okay for women to wear pants or trousers (as an outward garment), as well as four articles which believed it was a sin for women to wear pants or trousers. I found it interesting that in one article on the "pro-pant" side there was an argument used which claimed inconsistency on the part of the "no-pant" side. Notice the comment of one particular "pro-pant" author.

¹⁷ "Clothing," *Microsoft® Encarta® Encyclopedia 2000*. © 1993-1999 Microsoft Corporation.

Many who argue that women must wear dresses and men must wear pants ask: "What about Deuteronomy 22:5? Doesn't this plainly state that women cannot wear pants? After all, aren't pants men's clothing, while dresses are women's clothing?" There are several things wrong with this argument. Here is the verse in question... First of all, we are no longer bound to observe the Law of Moses, as the New Testament Scriptures plainly teach. Jesus came to fulfill the law of Moses.¹⁸

This author then goes on to quote certain passages as Matthew 5:17, Colossians 2:14, and Romans 7:4. This is done so as to "prove" his point concerning the Law of Moses. It is not my intention in this study to go into the fallacy of this mans argumentation, but let me assure you he is incorrect.¹⁹ For instance, the Apostle Paul definitely upheld the Law of Moses when he wrote in 1 Corinthians 9:8-9 "Say I these things as a man? Or saith not the law the same also? For it is written in the law of Moses (KJV)." Also notice a handful of New Testament passages:

¹⁸ *That Women Arrange Themselves With Well-Arranged Clothing*, by Bernie Parsons, 6.25.03, www.christianuniverse.com, pages 2-3

¹⁹ Please consult our online publications titled "*Learning to Love His Law*" and "*Oh How I Love Your Law*" for a detailed examination of why the Law of Moses has not been abolished under the New Covenant.

For the hearers of the law are not righteous before God, but the doers of the law will be declared righteous. (Romans 2:13)

Do we then cancel the law through faith? Absolutely not! On the contrary, we uphold the law. (Romans 3:31)

You see that a man is justified by works and not by faith alone. (James 2:24)

This is how we are sure that we have come to know Him: by keeping His commands. The one who says, I have come to know Him, without keeping His commands, is a liar, and the truth is not in him. (1 John 2:3-4)

Little children, let no one deceive you! The one who does what is right is righteous, just as He is righteous. (1 John 3:7)

For now let us notice that in the first twelve chapters of Deuteronomy 22 there is no reason to believe that each law is not just as binding today as it was when it was first given. I agree that someone who attempts to only obey Deuteronomy 22:5 would be inconsistent in their position, however, I obey every law in Deuteronomy 22:1-12 because I do not believe any of them have been abolished.

The question at hand is this: what is the true interpretation of Deuteronomy 22:5? Seeing that

both men and women wore the same basic apparel in Scripture, this passage could not be prohibiting a simple change in clothing, from pants to dresses or from dresses to pants. It is interesting to note here in this passage the English word *pertaineth* in the KJV. This word is taken from the following Hebrew word (*Brown, Drivers, and Briggs Hebrew Lexicon*):

H3627 / *keliy*

- 1) article, vessel, implement, utensil / 1a) article, object (general)
- 2) 1b) utensil, implement, apparatus, vessel / 1b1) implement (of hunting or war) 1b2) implement (of music) / 1b3) implement, tool
- 3) (of labour) / 1b4) equipment, yoke (of oxen) / 1b5) utensils, furniture
- 4) 1c) vessel, receptacle (general)
- 5) 1d) vessels (boats) of paper-reed

In realizing the actual meaning of the Hebrew word *keliy* we begin to receive deeper insight on the passage. Our knowledge is further increased when we examine the word for man in this text. It is a specific Hebrew word (*geber*) used in reference to a man's strength and ability to fight.²⁰

²⁰ *Strong's Exhaustive Concordance* definition: "...properly a valiant man or warrior; generally a person simply:—every one, man, mighty." *Brown, Drivers, Briggs*: "... 1) man, strong man, warrior (emphasizing strength or ability to fight)"

The Hebrew word *geber* is to be contrasted with two other Hebrew words *adawm* and *iysh*, the two words predominantly underlying the English translation *man* in our Bibles. The English word *man* is used approximately 70 times in the book of Deuteronomy, and Deuteronomy 22:5 is the *only place* where the word *geber* is used.

Now compare 22:5 with 22:13 where the word *man* is again used. The word *man* in 22:13 is *iysh*. This shows that Yahweh's inspiration *used two different Hebrew words* in verses 5 and 13. We can see that Yahweh could have specifically been prohibiting the woman from wearing the weapon, utensil, or dress of a warrior or a strong man. In fact, this is precisely the take one commentator gives on this passage.

...keli geber, the instruments or arms of a man. As the word גִּבּוֹר *geber* is here used, which properly signifies a strong man or man of war, it is very probable that armor is here intended; especially as we know that in the worship of Venus, to which that of Astarte or Ashtaroth among the Canaanites bore a striking resemblance, the women were accustomed to appear in armor before her. It certainly cannot mean a simple change in dress, whereby the men might pass for women, and vice versa. This would have been impossible in those countries where the dress of the sexes had but little to

distinguish it, and where every man wore a long beard. It is, however, a very good general precept understood literally, and applies particularly to those countries where the dress alone distinguishes between the male and the female. The close-shaved gentleman may at any time appear like a woman in the female dress, and the woman appear as a man in the male's attire. Were this to be tolerated in society, it would produce the greatest confusion. Clodius, who dressed himself like a woman that he might mingle with the Roman ladies in the feast of the Bona Dea, was universally execrated.²¹

While I agree that this precept in Deuteronomy is a good general precept understood literally, I refuse to interpret it in such a way as to allow culture or custom to contradict the standard that Yahweh gave to man and woman in the beginning. Yahweh decided what was morally acceptable to cover the nakedness of man and woman, do we think we are more moral than the heavenly Father?

I will say that I do believe the principle of Deuteronomy 22:5 would be a law against transvestites as well as sex changes; changes which do not allow a man to be differentiated from a woman. This in itself would not prohibit a woman

²¹ *Adam Clarke's Commentary on the Old Testament*, Deuteronomy 22:5

from wearing pants, because you can differentiate a woman from a man even if she is only wearing pants. This is easily done by appropriate, scriptural long hair on a woman, and a unshaven, bearded face on a man (1 Corinthians 11:1-16; Leviticus 19:27). The exception of differentiation would be in certain cases with the abomination of lesbianism (Romans 1:26) where the woman is purposefully attempting to appear as a man. We should also note the Jewish historian Flavius Josephus on Deuteronomy 22:5. This can be found in his work entitled Jewish Antiquities 4.8.43 where he paraphrases the passage as "Take care, especially in your battles, that no woman use the habit of a man, nor man the garment of a woman." He most likely represented the first century A.D. interpretation of this verse, or at least a first century interpretation.

In examining all of the available evidence on this text I have come to the conclusion that the passage is a Hebrew idiom. For a woman to wear anything pertaining to a man means that she is taking the position of authority upon herself that she is not rightfully given. This understanding finds weight in the fact of the word *geber* being used in the passage. The word *geber* is used to emphasize a mans strength or ability to fight in contrast to the femininity of women. Women are not to take the husbands role upon their selves. As we say in the South, "She wears the pants in the family!" The flip

side would be true as well; a man is not allowed to take on the feminine position of the woman, that is, put on a woman's garment. The Bible often uses idiomatic expressions which show forth other meanings. One such example is where we find Samson's new wife telling some men at the end of their wedding feast the answer to a riddle of his. When the men came back and told Samson the answer, he knew it had to have been his wife that gave it away seeing she was the only one he had propounded the riddle to. His proclamation to the men was that they had "plowed with his heifer" (Judges 14:10-20). Obviously Samson did not literally mean they had taken his cow and plowed a field, he rather idiomatically meant that they coaxed his wife into telling them the answer.

When Moses penned Deuteronomy 22:5 both men and women wore the same basic apparel, with the possible exception of a masculine and feminine look. Even Christian churches to this day dress men and women in robes or tunics for Biblical plays to make the setting seem truly ancient and authentic. Men's robes may not have had the same colors, textures, borders, or design as women's, and vice versa, but the basic apparel was the same. Pants were the furthest thing from Yahweh's or Moses' mind in Deuteronomy 22:5, therefore this passage does not prohibit a woman from wearing pants.

Many people have pointed me to the pictures on the bathroom doors attempting to prove the universal sign of pants on men, skirts on women. My objection is always, "Where are these pictures found in the Bible?" If we look to the Bible and lived in a holy society we would find the pictures on bathroom doors depicting a face with a beard and another face with long hair on the head, so as to not be confused as to which door you should enter. One author, whose article I've studied, makes the comment that the modern day pictures would be confusing to men such as the Apostle Paul, as he would walk towards the bathroom where the picture depicted the dress or robe because this is what he would be wearing.

We must not however come to a final conclusion yet. Just because Deuteronomy 22:5 is not forbidding a woman from wearing pants does not mean that she is automatically allowed to wear pants. Does Deuteronomy 22:5 teach that a woman *can* wear pants? This could not be so because the passage does not deal with pants for either gender. We have just shown that the passage is one which speaks *zero* about pants, thus it cannot be used to show that either gender *can* or *cannot* wear pants. Is there Scriptural authorization for a woman to wear pants as an outer, modest garment? Not to my knowledge. I do not know of a single Scripture that would authorize a woman to wear pants as an

outward garment of modesty. The standard set in Genesis 3:21 shows that a woman is not authorized to wear pants as an outer garment. Yahweh did not give the woman pants to wear as a replacement for the apron of fig leaves. Remember, Yahweh gave her a tunic or a robe to wear as an outward garment. If the woman wanted to wear another article of clothing, such as pants, *under* her modest garment, I see nothing in Scripture prohibiting such. Pants are immodest as an outer garment and must be covered by a tunic or robe which does not enable anyone to see the shape of the body as clearly on a woman. Woman has no right to remove the original garment Yahweh clothed her with for modesty.

Someone may be asking "Can you show me a Scripture where it says a woman shall not wear pants?" My answer is Genesis 3:21. You see, when Yahweh specifies a certain thing to be acceptable He is not obligated to tell you everything that is unacceptable. For instance Yahweh told Noah to build the ark out of gopher (acacia) wood (Genesis 6:14). This negated all other woods. Yahweh did not have to say, "Now Noah, do not use cedar, cypress, oak, and pine." The command of what *to use* was good enough. This is also the case with the Ark of the Covenant. Yahweh's law shows exactly how the ark was to be carried (Exodus 25:14; Deuteronomy 31:9, 25). This means that if the Ark was carried any other way than by the Levite priests it would be

unacceptable. We find that it was unacceptable when the ark was put on a cart and carried; this action resulted in death (2 Samuel 6:3-7).

We should also notice a verse in the Apostolic Scriptures, which can be classified as either a direct command or a necessary inference, prohibiting a woman from wearing pants; 1 Timothy 2:9. This passage teaches that women should adorn themselves in modest apparel. The underlying Greek word translated apparel is the word *katastole*, which is defined by *Vines Expository Dictionary of Biblical Words*²² as follows:

KATASTOLE... connected with *katastello*, to send or let down, to lower (*kata*, down, *stello*, send), was primarily a garment let down; hence, dress, attire, in general (cp. *stole*, a loose outer garment worn by kings and persons of rank, - Eng., *stole*; I Tim. 2:9, "apparel." See Clothing.

STOLE... (Eng., *stole*), denotes any stately robe, a long, garment reaching to the feet or with a train behind. It is used of the long clothing in which the scribes walked, making themselves conspicuous in the eyes of men, Mark 12:38; Luke 20:46; of the robe worn by the young man in the Lord's tomb, Mark 16:5; of the best or, rather, the chief robe, which was brought out for

²²*An Expository Dictionary of Biblical Words*, Thomas Nelson Publishers, 1984, pages 55, 191.

the returned prodigal, Luke 15:22; five times in the Apocalypse, as to glorified saints, 6:11; 7:9, 13, 14; 22:14. In the Sept. it is used of the holy garments of the priests, e.g., Ex. 28:2; 29:21; 31:10.

With Genesis 3:21 and 1 Timothy 2:9 we can conclude that it is not authorized for a woman to wear pants as an outward garment. If they found them selves in a situation where an undergarment such as breeches or pants were needed this would be acceptable,²³ but as an outer garment we have no authorization.

Normally the way that people justify a woman wearing pants as an outer garment is by (1) pointing out the true interpretation of Deuteronomy 22:5, and (2) recognizing that the Bible never defines pants as a man's apparel.

They reason that if we find it acceptable for a man to wear pants then it would be acceptable for a woman to wear pants, and in this assertion they are correct. *If* we allow the man to unclthe him-self of the original garment made for him by Yahweh

²³Such situations could include climbing a ladder or tree, cold or windy weather, or even fashion and style. All of these authorize a woman to wear pants so long as her modest garment is not removed. This modest garment based upon Hebrew linguistics, ancient pictures, and scholarship in Biblical dictionaries should be loose and hang any where from above the knees to the ankles.

(Genesis 3:21), *then* the woman would be allowed to do this. However, here is a question not often thought of: is a *man* allowed to wear pants as an outer garment?

The answer to this question is simple if us men humble ourselves and stay with the Bible. We have an approved Biblical example of what Yahweh requires man to wear to cover his nakedness (Genesis 3:21), and everyone acknowledges that men wore robes throughout Scripture; it can be easily proven. There is no reason why this appointed garment should change in the day in which we live. This garment is mentioned just after (1) the serpent's curse, (2) pain in childbearing, (3) the woman's submissive role in marriage, (4) the curse of the ground, and (5) the sweating of man while working (Genesis 3:14-19). Everything here mentioned has not changed because it is a result of the fall of mankind's representative, Adam. Modest clothing is likewise a result of this very same fall into sin.

We also find that the same Greek word used in 1 Timothy 2:9 describing the proper apparel for women, is used throughout the Apostolic Scriptures to describe apparel for men. The fact is that we have no authorization in Scripture for men to wear pants only, that is, without the robe or tunic over top as appropriate modest apparel. No Pastor has the right to preach to his congregation that women

cannot wear pants if he wears pants too, this is called inconsistency. Consistency demands that both parties stay within the Biblical realm for their apparel; this yields tunics or robes on both men and women. Are we willing to take a stand on what the inspired Scriptures teach on this issue?

“But men are never commanded to wear robes and not pants!” some will say. Please remember that this issue was dealt with previously. Yahweh shows in Genesis 3:21 the proper, modest apparel for both women and men, thereby excluding anything else as an outer garment. Furthermore, Yahweh did not ever command the common man to wear anything, but we do not only learn from direct command, but from approved examples and necessary inferences. One author eloquently stated the following in summary of this issue.

A thorough study into the clothing norms of the Bible reveals that there was no distinction between men's and women's clothing in the Bible beyond stylistic differences such as trim, color and size. In fact God Himself made clothing for Adam and Eve that was so similar that one word (*kethoneth*) could describe the specific garment he made for each of them. This same word describes the clothing worn by Godly men and women throughout the Bible from the Old Testament to the New Testament. Yet today, many Christians demand much more

than even the Bible did by requiring not only a difference in style but a difference in function and form as well. If God makes no such clothing demands on His people, then who are we to make them? Do we know better than God?²⁴

The above words come from a man who believes pants are an acceptable outward garment on both men and women. While he is being consistent, he fails to see that he actually proves that the *kethoneth* was and still is the only acceptable modest, outward garment for the male and female gender.

Answering Objections and Summary

Some men and women will not want to wear tunics or robes and argue that times have changed, and it is now culturally acceptable to wear pants. This is unacceptable in Yahweh's eyes. This reasoning would ultimately okay such practices as homosexuality. Homosexuality is now becoming morally accepted in modern society as a proper, cultural practice. However, this does not mean that Yahweh's divine ordinances in Scripture do not remain. Yahweh set the standard for clothing nakedness in Genesis 3:21, and that standard is everlasting. We could change a host of Biblical

²⁴ *The Truth About Deuteronomy 22:5*, by Jason Young, pg. 5, www.actseventeen.com/Articles/women-pants.htm.

precepts if we stick with the argument that times have changed.

The issue of this study is not one demanding that we go back to the ancient lifestyle, thus ridding ourselves of power tools, modern transportation, computers, technology, etc. If that was the issue then I would be preaching for everyone to take off their tennis shoes and start wearing sandals! That would indeed be ridiculous. The issue here is rather modesty and decency in outward clothing. The modesty shown in Scripture is something that does not change with time. Always remember, it's an issue of modesty, not changes in time and culture.

Someone may object by saying "Well, you'll have to do this too!" Concerning this objection I should share with the reader the following about myself. There have been several changes I've made in my walk of faith. These changes came from reading the Scriptures and discerning Yahweh's will for my life. Many times when I began to obey Yahweh in one area, someone would say to me, "Well, if you're going to do that then you have to do this!" But what does this argument prove? Let's say if I quit working on the Sabbath day and someone told me that if I'm not going to work on the Sabbath then I can't buy and sell either. Are they wrong? No. Does their argument prove that I *can* work on the Sabbath? No. As a matter of fact they are correct; if you are going to keep the Sabbath then

you must obey every statute, not just pick and choose.

At times people with this argument make analogies which are erroneous. For example, I know a man who began to keep the Sabbath and was told by a preacher that if he was going to keep it properly he couldn't even *eat* on the Sabbath. This preacher was trying to make the "But you'll have to do this!" argument. The preacher was incorrect. You do not have to fast on the Sabbath (Exodus 16).

I'm not saying that this teaching of both men and women wearing tunics or robes will not lead to other truths. I am saying that this argument people will try to use does not prove one iota that it is okay for either man or woman to wear pants as an outer garment.

Someone may also be wondering just how long a tunic must be to be classified as a tunic. Personally I think this question can come from two classes of people. The first class I will describe as the "Excuse Class." This group will do everything in their power to justify their current clothing in spite of what Yahweh teaches in His inspired Word. They may even see someone beginning to dress Scripturally and comment, "Well, if I was going to dress in robes, I wouldn't wear *that* kind of robe." I've heard this very statement from many people ever since I began to wear tunics. Such people have no right to condemn those who are trying to pattern

their lifestyle after Scripture. I've encountered the "Excuse Class" in many walks of faith. I can remember when I began to observe the dietary laws to the best of my knowledge. I was soon approached by an individual who wanted to "nail me to the floor" with Leviticus 11. "Well, Matthew, if I was going to keep the dietary laws I would be more serious about it than you are." This person did not have room, in my humble opinion, to make such a judgment. I was a "babe" when in came to the dietary laws then, and have made much growth and progress since. When I first began obedience to them I still ate certain things that I really would not *dream* of eating now, but growth had to be made. People should learn to remove the beam out of their own eye before making an attempt to remove the speck out of their brothers eye (Matthew 7:1-5).

The second class of people I would like to term the "Submissive Class." This class of people will be humble enough to say, "Yes, this is what the Bible teaches, and I will begin to practice it, or at least work towards putting it to practice." These people may not have all the particulars down to a tee from the very beginning, but because of their desire, motivated by nothing but the Spirit of a Holy Creator, they will grow in their knowledge, understanding, and practice of modest dress. My mind goes back to the Summer of 2004 when I first began to dress this way. It was difficult at first

because I looked very odd in the eyes of just about every person in the general public that I would meet. I remember the first time I walked through a department store. I was very nervous to say the least. Certain people would point and whisper and even some gave remarks of sarcasm. Not long ago I had someone ask me where I got my "hula skirt."

At one point in my early walk of this Scriptural precept, I was riding down the highway and thought to myself, "Why am I wearing this tunic? Everyone else dresses in pants, shorts, and t-shirts, what would be the harm in dressing the same?" Shortly after that thought, I began to remember that the world's standards are not Yahweh's standards. It is Sovereign Yahweh that makes the rules, not man. I realized that I had to cast down any thought in my mind that would lead me away from Genesis 3:21, as well as the remainder of Scripture right on down to the book of Revelation where those redeemed by Messiah's blood are wearing tunics. From that time forth I have grown in this area of my walk, even to the point of being asked by force to leave a county courtroom because of the way I was dressed. I refused to "tuck in" my tunic, and doing so caused me to not be able to have presence in a United States courtroom. The key is, my presence there *was* recognized by those watching the occurrence. People realized that I was taking a stand for modest apparel, or for a particular faith at

least, and that had the possibility of making a righteous impact here on earth for the kingdom of heaven (Matthew 5:16).

In asking ourselves just how long our tunic should be I would say that based upon archaeology, history, and scholarship in the area of Biblical dress, it should be anywhere from above the knee to the ankle. Ultimately, this is a question that you have to answer yourself. It's like asking me how long does a man's hair have to get before it is classified as a shame? Or how much wine does a person have to drink before he is considered a drunkard? Or better yet, how much food does a person have to eat before he is considered a glutton? I could go on and on with such questions, but the fact remains that tunics or robes were given for modesty and they are still to be worn today. My best answer would probably be to just allow the indwelling measure of Yahweh's Holy Spirit to guide you personally in this area. Seek His Word and seek Him through prayer.

This topic is really so simple that even a child could understand the logic behind it. If both men and women throughout the whole of Scripture wore robes for the sake of modesty in outward adornment, why not wear them now? "Knowledge has increased in the fashion arena." someone might say. Don't you think that someone would have figured that out before the 17 or 1800's? From the first man Adam to the last man Adam was

approximately *4,000 years*. The material for making tunics did change throughout Scripture, and thus is authorized, but the modest apparel placed upon man and woman did not change, and has not changed in Yahweh's eyes to this day. I am in no way teaching that in certain cases as climbing a tree, riding a horse, or swimming, that pants are not more practical. I actually believe that in many instances pants are more compatible with human actions. I'm not teaching that anyone must throw away their pants, but rather that we should seek to be modest and wear an acceptable, modest tunic or robe *over top of* our pants: both men and women. We are to fully cover our nakedness and not show the shape of our bodies. Pants alone outline the shape of a person's nakedness. The issue at hand deals with covering our nakedness (Genesis 3:7, 21), as well as the prevention of lust. Granted, some people will lust regardless of what we wear, but that is their problem as long as we meet Yahweh's requirements in dress code. If pants on a woman reveal her nakedness then pants on a man do as well. If Pants on a woman breeds lust in men, then pants on a man breeds lust in women. It's that simple.

We thus we have no Scripture whatsoever for the "pants-only" belief. We should speak where the Bible speaks and not wear anything strange to Scripture. Immodest clothing is strange to

Scripture,²⁵ mixed clothing is strange to Scripture,²⁶ clothing without fringes is strange to Scripture,²⁷ and in this study we have found that pants, as an outward garment, for both men and women, is strange to Scripture.

And them that are turned back from Yahweh; and those that have not sought Yahweh, nor inquired for him. Hold thy peace at the presence of the Master Yahweh: for the day of Yahweh is at hand: for Yahweh hath prepared a sacrifice, he hath bid his guests. And it shall come to pass in the day of Yahweh's sacrifice, that I will punish the princes, and the king's children, and all such as are clothed with strange apparel. [Zephaniah 1:6-8, KJV]

Brethren, let us follow the Scriptural way.

²⁵ Genesis 3:7, 21; Exodus 32:25; 2 Samuel 10:4-5; Isaiah 47:1-3; Mark 5:15; John 21:7; 1 Timothy 2:9; Revelation 3:18.

²⁶ Leviticus 19:19; Deuteronomy 22:11

²⁷ Numbers 15:37-41; Deuteronomy 22:12

