

Wearing Fringes under the New Covenant

Erich Matthew Janzen

4101 Haralson Mill Rd. Conyers, GA 30012

770.860.0705 emjanzen@ministersnewcovenant.org

In the book of Deuteronomy 22:1-12 we find various laws that were given to the Israelites, by Yahweh¹, through the man Moses. We find that verse 4 teaches to show respect for property, love for one's brother, and to maintain responsibility. Verse 5 teaches a distinction between the sexes. Verses 6-7 teaches to protect one's food supply, and not allow a mother bird which had experienced liberty to be held captive. Verse 8 concerns itself with domestic protection, while verses 9-10 deal with the prevention of hybrids or mongrels as well as the prohibition of unequal yoking. In verse 11 we find that even a mixture of materials was considered wrong in Yahweh's eyes. Then we come to verse 12, a verse teaching to make fringes on the four borders of one's clothing or garment. The question arises, "Do we feel that these laws are still binding on those living under the New Covenant?" Certainly churches today do not throw out every law under consideration here, but some they may feel are no longer applicable. What about the fringes, should a believer under the New Covenant wear four fringes on his garment?

Numbers 15:37-40

We find the first command given concerning the fringes in the book of Numbers:

And Yahweh spake unto Moses, saying, Speak unto the children of Israel, and bid them that they make them **fringes** in the borders of their garments throughout their generations, and that they put upon the fringe of the borders **a ribbon of blue**; And it shall be unto you for a fringe that ye may look upon it, **and remember all the commandments of Yahweh and do them**; and that ye seek not after your own heart and your own eyes after which ye use to go a whoring: That ye may remember, and do all my commandments, **and be holy** unto your Almighty.

Notice first off that this law was given immediately after a man had been put to death for violating the Sabbath² law (Numbers 15:32-36). Yahweh then commanded the fringes for a reminder to the benefits of the nation of Israel. There was to be a fringe, with a twine of blue, to remind Israel of Yahweh's law so they could be holy unto Yahweh. They were also to be reminders of Yahweh's delivering them from the house of bondage, i.e. Egypt (Numbers 15:41). We should make brief note here that the fringes were not gender specific; the command was to the children of Israel, a term which could apply to both men and women (Exodus 14:22, Leviticus 11:1-2).

But They Were for Israel

Many, when approached with these verses proclaim that because they were meant for Israelites, they do not apply under the New Covenant. What is usually overlooked by this contention is that the New Covenant was made with physical Israelites (Romans 9:4-5; Hebrews 8:7-12).³ We must also acknowledge the fact that the entire law was only given to Israel (Psalm 147:19-20), but this does not mean that non-Israelite people were incapable of committing transgressions. The prophet Jonah told the Assyrian nation of Nineveh to repent (Jonah 1:1-2, 3:1-2); Daniel told the Babylonian King to put

away his iniquities (Daniel 4:27); Even the prophet Isaiah encouraged the non-Israelite stranger in keeping Yahweh's law (Isaiah 56:1-8).

Added Because of Sin

Some, possibly quoting the text of Galatians 3:17 might wish to say that any law added because of transgressions is now abolished under the New Covenant. This however is an improper interpretation of the text.

First off, take note that there were many laws that Yahweh implemented after the sins of people. There was no clothing for men or women before sin (Genesis 2:25), after sin Yahweh made both sexes long and sleeved tunics (Genesis 3:21). Manual labor for man (Genesis 3:17-19) and pain in childbirth for women (Genesis 3:16) were also instituted because of sin. The divorce clause of Deuteronomy 24:1-4 was implemented because of sin, but this clause stood firm in Messiah's day, and in our day as well. Last, but certainly not least, capital punishment was put in place because of sin (Genesis 9:5). This obviously is still needed because of fleshly, carnal men.

The law concerning fringes was not added to remove sin or atone for sin (as certain animal sacrifices and/or offerings) but rather for the purpose of a *reminder* not to sin. There is a distinct and important difference in a law that atones or forgives sin verses a law which helps a person *not* to sin.

We Now Have the Holy Spirit

Another rebuttal coming from the opposition is that we now have the Holy Spirit to remind us to obey Yahweh's law under the New Covenant, therefore a fringe is not needed. However, keep in mind that the law to wear fringes is also a commandment to be obedient to. In other words, the Holy Spirit reminds us to put on the fringes at the arrival of each and every day, and when one begins to wear the fringes, he or she cannot deny that when they look upon the fringes throughout the day, they are definitely a helper (even in this age) in reminding us of Yahweh's perfect law (Psalm 19:7).

Furthermore, we do find that even under the Old Covenant certain men had at least a portion of the Yahweh's Spirit. King Saul was said to have the Spirit come upon him (1 Samuel 10:5-11); Azariah had the Spirit come upon him as well (2 Chronicles 15:1-2). In Psalm 51:11 David prayed for Yahweh to, "...take not thy Holy Spirit from me." If David did not have the Holy Spirit somehow, why pray for Yahweh to not remove it? Even more interesting is the account in the book of Luke concerning John the Baptist. An angel of Yahweh spoke to the man Zachariah that the child that would be born of he and his wife Elizabeth would be:

...great in the sight of Yahweh, and shall drink neither wine nor strong drink; and **he shall be filled with the Holy Spirit**, even from his mother's womb. [Luke 1:15]

No one can deny that this prophetic utterance of the angel did not come to pass when the babe leaped in Elizabeth's womb (Luke 1:41, 44), and even Elizabeth was said to be filled with the Holy Spirit (Luke 1:41).

It does seem that there would be some kind of change in the giving of the Spirit at the glorification of Yeshua⁴ the Messiah (John 7:39), but we must remember that the Messiah indeed possessed the fullest portion of the Holy Spirit, in that he was filled with the Spirit without measure (John 3:34-35; Luke 4:1)

Did the Messiah Wear Fringes?

Surely the Messiah would not need a reminder to keep the law seeing He was filled immeasurably with the Spirit, right? We can indeed prove beyond any shadow of doubt that He was obedient to the law of Numbers 15:37-40 and Deuteronomy 22:12. "How can we know?" you might ask.

In Matthew 9:20, 14:34-36, and Luke 8:44 we find that there were various people who desired to touch the *hem* of the Savior's garment. We also find this recorded in the book of Mark 6:56:

And whithersoever he entered, into villages, or cities, or country, they laid the sick in the streets, and besought him that they might touch if it were but the **border** of his garment: and as many as touched him were made whole.

If you will notice the emboldened word border, take note that this is taken from a specific word in the Greek language. This word is defined by SEC as follows:

G2899... kraspedon: a *margin*, spec. **a fringe or tassel...**

Interestingly enough this word, *kraspedon*, is used in direct reference to the fringes in Matthew 23:5 where we find that the Pharisees, "...enlarge(d) the **borders** of their garments..." to be seen amongst men. This word is also used in the Septuagint texts of Numbers 15:37-40 and Deuteronomy 22:12 in direct reference to the fringes! We therefore find that the fullness of the Holy Spirit did not prohibit Yeshua from wearing fringes at all. The question now arises, "Could the Messiah have remembered Yahweh's commandments without the aid of the fringes?" The answer is, of course! Nevertheless, he still wore the fringes in obedience to the command given by Yahweh.

True Purpose and Intent

We should be overjoyed to have such a reminder as a fringe, especially when Yahweh has been so gracious to give us such a reminder. Yahweh shows mercy unto those that fear Him and, "To such as keep His commandment, and to those **that remember His commandments to do them.** Psalm 103:18" Yahweh will destroy all those that go a whoring after their own hearts and ways (Psalm 73:27), which, if you will recall, is one thing the fringes help us not to do. In 1 Peter 1:15-16 we find that we are to be holy even as He is holy, and the Apostle John tells us that "He that saith he abideth in him ought himself also to walk, **even as He walked.** John 2:6" Keep in mind that **He walked wearing the fringes.**

We do even find that under the New Covenant, people can still remain having problems with their fleshly and carnal ways. The Apostle Paul made this abundantly clear when he wrote:

For we know that the law is spiritual: but **I am carnal**, sold under sin. For that which I do I allow not: for what I would, that do I not; **but what I hate, that do I.** If then I do that which I would not, **I consent unto the law that it is good.** Now then it is no more I that do it, **but sin that dwelleth in me.** For I know that in me (**that is, in my flesh,**) dwelleth no good thing: for to will is present with me; but how to perform that which is good I find not. [Romans 7:14-18]

Surely, if Paul had problems with his flesh, he would have had no problem placing four reminders on the borders of his garment. We find that the Apostle Paul must have worn fringes, considering his words in Acts 25:8, as well in Acts 28:17 which states:

And it came to pass, that after three days Paul called the chief of the Judahites together: and when they were come together, he said unto them, Men and brethren, **though I have committed nothing against the people, or customs of our fathers,** yet was I delivered prisoner from Jerusalem into the hands of the Romans.

If Paul did not wear fringes, then he would have been called out as a liar here at his trial; plain and simple.

Healing in His Wings

A very enlightening verse to read after considering all that has been stated can be found in the text of Malachi 4:2.

But unto you that fear my name shall the Sun of righteousness arise with **healing in his wings**; and ye shall go forth, and grow up as calves of the stall.

The word we should consider here is the English word wings, which is translated from the Hebrew word *kanaph*, #3671 in SEC. Interestingly enough, this word, *kanaph*, is the same word translated borders in the text of Numbers 15:38. Tying this in with the healing which people obtained at touching the fringe of the Messiah's garment (healing in His borders or wings) we see an obvious parallel.

Furthermore, in Luke 1:78 we see that Messiah is described as the Day Spring, which most likely corresponds to the use of the word Sun in Malachi 4:2; both words dealing with a *rising of light*. Obviously, Almighty Yahweh is where healing power originates, but the hem of Yeshua's garment was the means by which the healing was accomplished. It is no coincidence that the fringe represents Yahweh's law which is said to be health to our navel, and marrow to our bones (Proverbs 3:8).

What Will You Do?

One must realize the Biblical definition of the New Covenant. The fault of the Old Covenant was not found in the perfect law of Yahweh, but rather with those with whom the law was made (Hebrews 8:7-8). The law was internalized upon the hearts and minds of physical Israel under the New Covenant (Hebrews 10:16-17). Certainly the fringe law has been seen to be a law applicable and binding under the New Covenant.



Endnotes

¹Yahweh is the personal, proper name of the Creator. Bible versions plainly admit that they have followed a Jewish tradition and replaced the name Yahweh with LORD, GOD, and Jehovah in our English Bibles. For more information write to our address for the book *Hallowed Be Thy Name*.

² For a discussion of whether or not the Sabbath and Festival laws are still binding today, write to our address at the end of this article for the CD set of the 2 hour public debate held at the West Walton Church of Christ entitled *Is the Sabbath Binding Today?*

³ Many people today do not understand that the Celto-Saxon peoples of the earth are the true descendants of Jacob/Israel. For more information write to Mission to Israel Ministries, P.O. Box 248, Scottsbluff, Nebraska 69363, for the book entitled *God's Covenant People* (missiontoisrael.org). This book will scripturally prove the above statement, while disproving the notion that many people known today as Jews are physical Israelites.