

"And They Cast Lots For His Garment"

by Phil LaSpino

How many robes did Jesus wear during his passion? The Jews were forbidden by law to wear any garment made of a mix of wool and linen. Only this mix was forbidden. Any other combination of materials was acceptable. The robe, cloak, or sometimes called a mantel, was a large loose-fitting garment. It was worn for both warmth and appearance. It existed in two varieties, the me-il, and the simlah. The me-il was a long, loose-sleeved robe, worn by men of official position, ministers, educators, and the wealthy. A robe of the professions, a dress of dignity, culture, and distinction. The simlah was a large, loose-fitting sleeveless cloak. Arab shepherds and peasants would be seen wearing this garment. It was worn in the day, and wrapped about the owner by night for warmth. These robes were not to be taken as a pledge unless returned to the owner by sundown.

Jesus wore four robes from the last supper, until He died on the cross. The **first robe**, is mentioned at the last supper when Jesus sat at bread with His disciples. He removed His outer garments, = (His robe) took a towel, and girded himself. Having removed His robe, Jesus took on the dress of a servant. He poured water into a basin and proceeded to wash the disciples feet. Jesus then wiped their feet with a towel, this was the towel He had girded himself with. After He had washed His feet, He took His garments, and put them on.

In Luke 23:10-11, we have reference to the **second robe**: "And the chief priests and the scribes stood by, earnestly accusing Him. And Herod with his army set Him at nought, = (treated Jesus with contempt) and mocked Him, putting on-(dressed) Him in a white (radiant) garment, and sent Him back to Pilate."

The **third robe**, is mentioned in Matthew 27:27-28, "Then the soldiers of the governor taking Jesus into the hall (governor's headquarters), gather together unto Him the whole band; and stripping Him, they poured a scarlet cloak, about Him. " And in Verse 31, "And after they had mocked Him, they took off the cloak from Him, and put on Him His own garments..."

The **fourth robe** that Jesus wore is recorded in John 19:1-2, "Then therefore, Pilate took Jesus and scourged Him. And the soldiers plating (twisted) a crown of thorns, put it upon His head; and they put on Him a purple garment."

What materials we used for robes and is there any significance in the colors? These garments, or habits, were fabricated from various materials. Wool was generally used for finer fabrics and the hair of goats, camels, and even horse hair were used for the manufacture of coarser garments. Sackcloth was manufactured from black goat's hair. This robe was a coarse garment made for the purpose of showing grief, such as for the loss of a loved one.

People of distinction could be seen wearing robes made of silk, and other rich cloth, they being shaded with the choicest colors, decorated by feathered work, and embroidered with gold. A white garment was the most common. These robes had not been dyed, but remaining the native color of the natural wool. White was not confined to the lower order of the population, but was held in great esteem among those of superior position, and were highly valued in Scripture as the emblem of knowledge, purity, gladness, victory, grace and glory.

The significance and the various colors of robes are as follows: **scarlet robes** were of bright red color. This color could be seen on Jewish nobles and courtiers. Courtiers were those who attended the courts of princes. These scarlet colored robes were worn for both the greater and more solemn occasions. These robes had been dyed with a shrub, whose red berries gave a bright Orient tinge to the cloth. Next we have the **crimson or vermilion colored robes**. These robes were a deep red color and were mainly dyed in the city of Tyre. Robes of many colors were worn by the children of wealthy and noble families. This mark of distinction could be traced back to Joseph, who was arrayed by his father in a coat of many colors.

Three times it is mentioned in the Gospels that people got healed by touching the hem of Jesus' garment. There was something special about the hem of Jesus' garment, so much so, that word got out that whoever touched the hem of His garment was getting healed. The woman with the issue of blood was set upon touching that hem. Large groups of people came to Jesus in hopes of touching His hem.

What is the significance of the hem of Jesus' garment? In the Old Testament every Israelite was commanded by God to have a **blue hem** made on tunics which had tassels hanging from them (Num. 15: 38-40). God commanded these to be made as a memorial to keep God's law and to be holy. In Jesus' day the Pharisees had broadened their hem quite a bit to draw attention to it. It was the sign that they were the keepers of God's law and were holy.

This was the hem which Jesus wore and people desired to touch because all who touched it were made perfectly well and delivered of their affliction. Why was such power being released through the hem and tassels of Jesus' garment? It was because they represented one's keeping of God's law and their holiness. It stood for their commitment to God's will and righteousness. The hems of the Pharisee's never healed anyone. This is because none of the Pharisee's fully kept the Law and all of them fell short of God's holiness and righteousness. They were all unclean to God and undeserving of His blessings. There was something different about Jesus' hem which truly represented the One who fully kept all God's