

(A Theological Reflection on Revelation 16:15)

"Behold, I am coming as a thief. Blessed is he who watches, and keeps his garments, lest he walk naked and they see his shame."

Revelation 16:15, NKJV

Spiritual Vigilance and Holiness: A Lifelong Calling

In this passage, Jesus offers both a **warning** and a **promise**: He is returning unexpectedly like a thief in the night and **blessed** are those who remain spiritually alert and **keep their garments**.

In biblical symbolism, *garments* often represent **righteousness**, **character**, or **spiritual status**. To be *clothed* in Scripture means to be covered in the **holiness of God** either imputed through Christ (justification) or expressed through our obedient life (sanctification).

The Garment of Righteousness

The “garment” referred to in Revelation 16:15 is tied directly to the believer’s conduct and standing before God. We see a more explicit definition in:

Revelation 19:8 (NKJV):

“And to her it was granted to be arrayed in fine linen, clean and bright, for the fine linen is the righteous acts of the saints.”

This verse defines the **fine linen** as **righteous deeds** not righteousness by works alone, but righteousness that flows from faith in Christ (cf. James 2:17). This aligns with Paul’s teachings that salvation is by grace through faith, but it produces fruit in a changed life (Ephesians 2:8-10).

A Biblical Example: The Young Man Who Fled Naked

A physical example of “losing one’s garment” is found during Jesus’

arrest:

Mark 14:51-52 (NKJV):

“Now a certain young man followed Him, having a linen cloth thrown around his naked body. And the young men laid hold of him,
And he left the linen cloth and fled from them naked.”

This young man (possibly John Mark himself) had followed Jesus closely even boldly but when danger came, he abandoned his garment and ran. This moment illustrates how fear and pressure can cause believers to **abandon their spiritual covering**, choosing safety or comfort over fidelity to Christ.

What It Means to Walk Spiritually Naked

To “walk naked” before God is a biblical image of **spiritual shame, exposure, and judgment**. Adam and Eve became aware of their nakedness after sinning (Genesis 3:7-10). In Revelation, spiritual nakedness reflects a life devoid of God’s righteousness:

Revelation 3:17-18 (NKJV):

“Because you say, ‘I am rich, have become wealthy, and have need of nothing’ and do not know that you are wretched, miserable, poor, blind, and naked

I counsel you to buy from Me gold refined in the fire, that you may be rich; and white garments, that you may be clothed, that the shame of your nakedness may not be revealed...”

Jesus warns the church of Laodicea: **Self-confidence without holiness is deadly**. A spiritual life without the garment of Christ's righteousness will leave us exposed at His coming.

Trials and the Temptation to Abandon Righteousness

Many today are tempted to **lay down their garments** to compromise their convictions under the weight of trials. Whether due to rejection, persecution, workplace pressure, or relational conflicts, some choose to walk away from their walk with Christ and return to the world.

But Scripture calls us to persevere, especially when it's hard:

Mark 8:35 (NKJV):

“For whoever desires to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for My sake and the gospel’s will save it.”

This echoes the cost of discipleship. We are not promised an easy life, but we are promised eternal life and the presence of Christ in our suffering.

A Final Reminder: He Is Coming Like a Thief

Jesus repeatedly uses the image of a **thief in the night** to describe His sudden return (see Matthew 24:42-44; 1 Thessalonians 5:2). He is not promoting fear but **readiness**. Only those who remain spiritually awake and clothed in righteousness will be unashamed when He comes.

Application Questions: Have you abandoned your spiritual garment your commitment to holiness due to pressure or discouragement? Are you walking “naked” in the sight of God, having exchanged righteousness for compromise? Are you staying spiritually alert, or have you grown cold and careless in your walk?

DON'T ABANDON YOUR GARMENTS AND GO NAKED

Maranatha.

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