

# Jesus : The Covering

1<sup>st</sup> Sunday in Advent: November 28, 2010

Well, here we are. Is it just me or do the years just seem to fly by. Thanksgiving is past and the count has begun again toward Christmas and the New Year. We had a great pledge Sunday last week and pledges continue to come in, so next week we will have a short announcement about that. Again thank you, for your faithfulness to God's mission as we look toward 2011.

This advent season, we want to concentrate our focus on Jesus. Now I realize that might be like, "Oh that's original." But here is our thinking. The message is and will continue to be nothing less than full commitment to Jesus Christ as your personal Lord and Savior. What we want to look at is, then who is Jesus, really. So in plain language from Old Testament to His birth, who is it that we the church are asking you to commit to.

The Old Testament gives a variety of images of Jesus right from the beginning. We have picked 4 of those images to talk about this Advent season, until we get to Christmas Eve where we will talk about the 5<sup>th</sup> image Jesus – The Child.

So over the next 4 weeks let you gaze be on Jesus. So what's the big deal about Jesus anyway. Here's the big deal. We can go to church all of our lives and not really know who He is. Then we start getting picked off out there by Spiritual Assassins, because we really haven't sunk our own roots down into the person of Christ. I got picked off by age 13. I had sat in church all my life to that point, but really had not heard a thing. What I really needed was one on one attention, so what we are going to give you this Advent is ammunition for your one on one times. If you need help in clarification write an e-mail or letter. So the first image is Jesus: The Covering.

There are **3** Meanings of 'Covering' in the Old Testament

## 1. Covering: To Clothe, to Conceal

The idea here is well illustrated in the first thing God did for Adam and Eve after they sinned in the garden.

*Gen 3:21 "And the LORD God made clothing from animal skins for Adam and his wife."*

He did this because they had become aware of their own nakedness, they were afraid and so they try to hide. The natural instinct, as a result of sin in the world, when we do something that we believe God or others will disapprove of is to hide or conceal. But what God did right away, was introduce His answer. For the sin of the world, he would become the covering, the clothing that would cover our shame.

Look at what David says in:

*Psalm 32:5 "Finally, I confessed all my sin to you and stopped trying to hide them."*

God knew that sin would drive a wedge between us and himself so His answer was to be our covering. It is like this: {Parachute: out into the crowd}

Points:

- He covers when we are ashamed
- Sack Clothe and ashes
- A man caught in adultery – “Dan, all I want to do is cut and run, I don’t want anyone to see me.”

The second meaning of covering is

## 2. Covering: To Protect, To Defend, to Hedge in

The idea here is that God would not only be our covering to conceal us when our guilt is more than we can bear, but God would also protect and defend us. He would have our back so to speak. {A Group in front of me defending me} This image of what God would do for us through Christ, is at the heart of the Jewish culture, through the instructions given for the building of the Ark of the Covenant.

*Exodus 25:20 “The Cherubim will face each other, looking down on the atonement cover with their wings spread out above it.”*

The Cherub are celestial beings charged with the task of guarding, protecting and defending. This is in fact another image of the kind of covering Christ would be for us. Why do we need defended? Do you remember from 3 weeks ago what the name of the enemy of our faith was. “Accuser of the Brethren”. Satan will seek to remind us of how worthless and bad we are. Jesus becomes our covering to defend, protect.

But it also says ‘to hedge in’ which means ‘to restrict movement’. Meaning Jesus as our covering is not just protecting us from outside forces, he is also protecting us from ourselves. He restricts our movement by covering us and keeping us from doing things that would be harmful for our own spiritual development. Look at this image of covering in the Old Testament:

*Exodus 33:22 “As my glorious presence passes by, I will put you in the cleft of the rock and cover you until I have passed by.”*

The last image of covering today is a most interesting one. Not only does Jesus enter our shame with us, not only does Jesus protect and defend from outer attacks and hedge us in from our own destructive tendencies. Finally this last

## 3. Covering: The imposing of something to change its appearance and also its nature

When Jesus comes He will cover us in such a way as it will change our very appearance and nature. The image here comes from Genesis 6 and God’s instructions to Noah on the building of the boat (The Ark)

*Genesis 6:14 “Make a boat from resinous wood and seal it with tar, inside and out. Then construct decks and stalls throughout its interior.”*

The wood was covered with tar and it changed not only the appearance of the wood but by soaking in it changed the nature of the wood. This wood would never be the same after this covering. {Wood and Stain}

Points

The stain soaks in

People who have met Christ and we say your whole countenance has changed

Not only has their countenance changed but their whole nature has changed.

This third image also has clear attachments to the New Testament writings and the 2<sup>nd</sup> coming of Christ, when Paul writes:

**Ephesians 4:30** *“And do not grieve the Holy Spirit, with whom you were sealed for the day of redemption.”*

This covering or ‘sealing’ also holds with it the idea of being stamped, like with a signet ring. Like we are being held in escrow, like a safety deposit box, for a future time.

All of this is surrounds Jesus. This is who you are giving your life to.

- One who covers your shame with himself
- One who protects, defends and hedges you in from hurting your own self
- One who forgives and changes not only your appearance but your nature as well for a future use to be revealed.

Prayer