

He ... laid aside His garments (Jn. 13:4)

On the night the Lord Jesus was betrayed, everything was happening so quickly. It had been planned in advance in eternity, and yet it came to pass within a few short hours. ... One moment Jesus was with them, the next He had been apprehended, unceremoniously dragged before the courts of Caiaphas, Herod, and Pontius Pilate ... and illegally sentenced to death. He was in the custody of soldiers who had no respect for any man, never mind Jesus! He had been humiliated and distressed more than any human being. Crucified in full view of His own people ... and as night fell on the eve of Passover, buried in another man's tomb.

Yes, everything happened so quickly. Let's consider the events again with the benefit of hindsight and consider the glory of God in each step our Saviour took from the evening He was arrested. ...

What a wonderful statement John chapter thirteen begins with ... **Jn. 13:1** *Now before the feast of the passover, when Jesus knew that his hour was come that he should depart out of this world unto the Father, having loved his own which were in the world, he loved them unto the end.* The Holy Spirit is showing us here the eternal significance of the evening. From before the Lord Jesus entered this world, in the great plan of God, our Saviour had already set His face towards Calvary to redeem His beloved people. ... Not even all the armies of Hell could stop Him. Their scheming and their evil plans would fail.

However, this opening verse comes with great sombreness for it is the evening of the betrayal of our Lord. It heralded a darkness far greater than the night outside. The disciples were all seated round the table in the upper room. They could *feel* something was happening but they could not comprehend the eternal ramifications of the events about to unfold. As John describes, **30** *He [Judas Iscariot, the betrayer] then having received the sop went immediately out: and it was night.*

They were celebrating the Passover feast, commemorating God saving their ancestors from out of the bondage of Egypt. They were remembering how He did not forget His people, and how He sent Moses to lead them out ('exodus'). For most of the four hundred and thirty years they had been enslaved ... but their misery and pain had not escaped Jehovah, **Ex. 3:7** *I have surely seen the affliction of my people which are in Egypt, and have heard their cry by reason of their taskmasters; for I know their sorrows; 8 And I am come down to deliver them out of the hand of the Egyptians.*

Each time the generations of Israelites sat at the Passover table they remembered ... Yes, the Lord had miraculously brought them out of Egypt ... but down through the years their nation had come under the domination of successive God-defiant invaders, - the Babylonians, the Medes and Persians, the Greeks, the Romans. ... As the disciples were in the company of the Lord Jesus in the upper room, they were not only remembering the history but they were also increasingly aware that something terrible was about to take place ... and the Holy Spirit emphasises God's plan to us in this passage, ³ Jesus knowing that the Father had given all things into his hands, and that he was come from God, and went to God; ⁴ He riseth from supper ... His every action measured in accordance with the will and plan of God ... and then we read words that, - I'm sure, - had the angels in Heaven watching on, ... and *[He] laid aside his garments.*

THE GARMENTS OF A MAN These were ordinary clothes the Saviour wore. He had no robes of Kingship, or any of the trappings of earthly glory. The clothes He was wearing was the type many others were wearing also. And yet, how those words must have thundered through Heaven, *[He] laid aside his garments!*

When He entered the womb of Mary, *[He] laid aside his garments* ... His Heavenly garments. In the cradle, *[He] laid aside his garments.* As He sat with the religious leaders in the temple, as a twelve-year-old-boy, *[He] laid aside his garments.* As the son of Joseph, - as the carpenter from Nazareth, - *[He] laid aside his garments.* Paul wrote, **Phil. 2:6** *Who, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God: ⁷ But made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant ... [He] laid aside his garments.*

From the floor of that upper room on which He was seated He arose, with the eyes of the disciples upon Him ... and He went to each of them to wash their feet. ... There was no regal pomposity in what He did. This was the Master Who taught His disciples to pray, *Thy will be done (Mt. 6:10)* ... Who, shortly, would cry out to His Father, *not my will, but thine, be done (Lk. 22:42).* Throughout His short life on earth His whole purpose was to do the will of him that sent me, and to finish his work (Jn. 4:34) ... For I came down from heaven, not to do mine own will, but the will of him that sent me (Jn. 6:38).

It was not His purpose at that time for the disciples to rise and pay Him homage. It was His purpose that He should wash their feet ... the lowliest act the owner of the house could pay to his guests. Before each of them, He stooped down on His knees, with the washing bowl in front of Him ... and one by one He takes their feet in His precious and tender hands, - the Son of God and Son of man, - and He

washed them clean. The hymn writer wrote, “O the matchless condescension! ... Wondrous glory! Can it be?”

Even consider the words, *He riseth from supper*. Consider where He came from ... In Heaven our Saviour had everything He required, and yet, when He came into this world, He said, **Mt. 8:20** *The foxes have holes, and the birds of the air have nests; but the Son of man hath not where to lay his head.* ... As He prepared to come to Bethlehem it can also be said of Him, *He riseth from supper*. All the riches and pleasures which were His in eternity He arose and left behind ... Like these garments, they were *laid aside*.

This Man Jesus, - to purchase our redemption, - paid the price of *laying aside* the garments of glory and of Kingship and instead, He stooped down before the nation of Israel as a tender plant, and as a root out of a dry ground: he had no form nor comeliness; and when they would see him, there would be no beauty that they would desire him (Is. 53:2). ... **The garments of a Man.**

THE GARMENTS OF THE MASTER He is the Focus of the disciples' attention. All eyes were upon Jesus ... even the eyes of the one who would betray Him. None could look away. They watched as Jesus took from off His shoulders the rabbi's garments, - the covering which identified Him as the Good Master Nicodemus, the rich young ruler and others associated with Him.

Doubtless, many of the Jewish leaders would have scorned His credentials to be a Teacher, - He had not belonged to a family steeped in the traditions of the Pharisees. He had never studied in a university or at the feet of a great teacher such as Gamaliel... He had not come from some well-respected area of Jerusalem, - He was a Galilean, from Nazareth! He was only a carpenter's Son!

Yet, the Book all those religious leaders were purporting to be experts in ... He wrote that Book! **Jn. 1:9** *That was the true Light, which lighteth every man that cometh into the world.* **10** *He was in the world, and the world was made by him, and the world knew him not.* **11** *He came unto his own, and his own received him not.*

In relation to His disciples, *He* was their Master. ... Who were they? Fishermen, tax collectors, ordinary people leading ordinary lives until they met Jesus. They were His servants for whom [*He*] *laid aside his garments* to wash their feet. With all due respect, I could not imagine I would want to wash any other man's feet ... but Jesus did it. After the supper time the God of Heaven *laid aside his garments*, - He further placed Himself into the role of the humble servant, and He washed the feet of sinners with **the garments of the Master.**

THE GARMENTS OF MAJESTY Once again, look back to before time began, ... look out into eternity. He Who was equal with God, - He Who is the everlasting God, - He to Whom all things were created and to Whom all things belong ... He rose from the Table in Glory, He laid aside His robes of Kingship and of honour, He stepped away from the angels surrounding Him ... and He took a towel, and girded himself in the flesh of mankind. *Only God would and could do such an action!* It was the eternal purpose that He came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many (Mt. 20:28).

In Heaven today there is a chorus being sung, Worthy is the Lamb that was slain (Rev. 5:12). He is our Redeemer and our Saviour. There is a Table prepared in Heaven and there is the voice of a great multitude, and as the voice of many waters, and as the voice of mighty thunderings, saying, Alleluia: for the Lord God omnipotent reigneth (Rev. 19:6). They are calling out in triumph and in victory, **Rev. 19:7** *Let us be glad and rejoice, and give honour to him.* He has been busy preparing our homes in Heaven, and soon He is coming back to earth again (Jn. 14).

He is waiting for the command of His Father ... and when that day arrives we shall see Him in the glorious **the garments of Majesty**, **Rev. 19:16** *And he hath on his vesture and on his thigh a name written, KING OF KINGS, AND LORD OF LORDS. ... 13* And he was clothed with a vesture dipped in blood [*the blood of His enemies*]: and his name is called The Word of God. ... Again, what 'Word' is that? ... **Jn. 1:1** *In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. 2* The same was in the beginning with God. **3** All things were made by him; and without him was not any thing made that was made. **4** In him was life; and the life was the light of men ... **1 Jn. 1:1** *That ... which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked upon, and our hands have handled, of the Word of life.*

As they sat around the table in the upper room, in the presence of the Lord, their hearts were heavy ... Here we are this evening, - just a few of us, - how we would love to see the churches up and down our country filled, and with men preaching the truth of God from the pulpits! It's a dismal picture ... as it was on the night of Christ's betrayal, and for the disciples during those next hours. But don't let the spiritual darkness undermine the great hope we have in the Saviour for His Word tells us, **Jn. 1:5** *the light shineth in darkness; and the darkness comprehended it not. ...* No matter how dark it is, or no matter how dark it will become, the darkness now nor never will be able to overcome the light which shines from our Saviour!

There's a great day coming, - and it is closer now than ever, - when every child of God shall behold the brightness of his glory (Heb. 1:3). ... On that glorious day we shall see Jesus, ... crowned with glory and honour (v.9).

He made Himself 'a little lower' as He knelt before each of His disciples and washed their feet. He knelt even lower when He hung on the cross for **Is. 53:12** he hath poured out his soul unto death ... **Rom. 5:8** But God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us. **9** Much more then, being now justified by his blood, we shall be saved from wrath through him.

CONCLUSION With a certain tone in his voice Peter asked, **Jn. 13:6** Lord, dost thou wash my feet? ... **8** Thou shalt never wash my feet. The Saviour replied, **8** If I wash thee not, thou hast no part with me. ... "What can wash away my sin? Nothing but the blood of Jesus ... Nothing can for sin atone, Nothing but the blood of Jesus."

When you look back and see what Jesus did for you ... it is amazing grace! Try to imagine what it will be like when you stand in Glory ...

Bye-and-bye, when I look on His face, Beautiful face, thorn-shadowed face.

Bye-and-bye when I look on His face, I'll wish I had given Him more."

Are you trusting Him as your Saviour? Are you enjoying Him as your Lord? ... That's the reason He came into this world ... the reason [He] laid aside his garments ... **the garments of a Man, the garments of the Master, and the garments of Majesty.**