

" An ingenious example of speech and politics occurred recently at the UN and made the world community smile: A representatives from Israel began, "before beginning my talk I want to tell you something about Moses. When he struck the rock and it brought forth water, he thought, what a good opportunity to have a bath!. He removed his clothes, put them aside on the rock and entered the water. When he got out and wanted to dress, his clothes had vanished! A Palestinian had stolen them. The Palestinian representative jumped up furiously and shouted, "what are you talking about? The Palestinians weren't there back then." The Israeli representative smiled and said "And now that I have made that clear, I will begin my speech."

THE RESTORATION - DIVINELY ORDAINED, BUT HUMANLY CORRUPTED AND DISTORTED

Quite early in Christian history, Roman Catholic Art produced the *Crucifix*, which shows a dead man, dressed in a loin cloth and nailed against a cross. People were told, *"This is your redeemer, worship him or perish!"*

The image is meant to represent the crucified Jesus/Yeshua!

But is that indeed a true representation of a Roman execution, and did Yeshua EVER intend to be worshiped in a naked or semi-naked condition, as is the practice in RC circles and aligned churches—representative of possibly 2/3rds of Christianity?

Romans used to strip the condemned victims naked in order to humiliate them to the utmost— they cared nothing for the religious or moral sensitivities of the vanquished Jews! The crucifix does not reflect that, however! Of course, the demands of Christian modesty would not permit a sculpture of a naked, circumcised man on a cross to be displayed on church altars, pictures or be hung around people's necks for protection!!

It simply would not be proper!

But a lying misrepresentation is?

That crucifix, which adorns the necks, homes, business premises, churches, etc of countless millions of Christians around the world for protection is a deception. It tells the wrong story! Sadly, many Evangelicals and Pentecostals don't have a problem with it either!

But there is far more to that. That seemingly harmless *'modesty cloth'* hides far more than a man's nakedness. It hides the reality that Yeshua was hung naked on that Roman torture stake in order to humiliate His race, the Jewish people and therefore the G-d of His people! Nakedness of any kind was then, and still is today, unacceptable to the Hebrew mind, simply because G-d hates it!

A Summary of what has gone before:

1. Elohim of Yeshua

The God Who Yeshua proclaimed to his people and the world is none other than the Elohim of Abraham, Isaac & Yaakov. He never deviated from the creed of his people, the *Sh^ema Israel...* Thus declaring the unique oneness of the Creator.

2. Yeshua Son of God (Elohim)

The uniqueness of Yeshua is delineated in his supernatural/divine conception – thus setting him apart from all other humans that have ever been born to a woman. However, this unique conception – not birth, because his mother DID NOT remain a virgin thereafter - does NOT automatically exalt him to deity, as is commonly and erroneously assumed. It is a sign that the Elohim (God) is continuing the process of restoring/redeeming HIS earth. The Scriptures clearly say that ‘...the Earth is YHWH’s AND THE FULNESS THEREOF!’ Ex 9:29; Ps 24:1;1 and confirmed by Paul in 1 Cor 10:28,29.

Yeshua’s mission was clearly to announce the coming KoG, and he also knew that he would be killed in the process. He clearly proclaimed that the path to the Father, Whom he also proclaimed to be greater than himself, was through his way of life, by a fulfillment of the demands of the Torah by the Spirit – the Ruach HaQodesh. However, he never declared that his death on the Roman cross would be the key component for eternal life. There is nothing in his teaching that ever links the two – nor does he ever include the resurrection or ascension as part of the process of salvation. All of **these things are an essential part of the redemptive process**, albeit from a different perspective.

The key components of the life and work of Yeshua are two things: his gospel, or good news, of the coming Kingdom (requiring repentance toward; ie. Seek first the KoG, etc...) and **the Resurrection** – declaring and affirming Yeshua as the unique one of the Most High, the ‘Son of Man’ revealed in Daniel 7:13-14.

He is the supremely anointed of YHWH, thus he must never be regarded as mere man, nor must he be elevated to take the place of his father on the throne of the Universe either. These issues must be kept in tension to maintain a healthy and helpful salvific outlook concerning the Son of God.

The Kinsman-Redeemer:

The idea of a kinsman-redeemer was established by God Himself in the Hebrew Bible, or Old Testament. The concept of redemption flows right through the Bible from Genesis to Revelation; viz.

‘And I have also heard the groaning of the children of Israel whom the Egyptians keep in bondage, and I have remembered My Covenant. Therefore say to the children of Israel: ‘I am the Lord; I will bring you out from under the burdens of the Egyptians, I will rescue you from their bondage, and I will redeem you with an outstretched arm and with great judgments. I will take you as My people, and I will be your God. Then you shall know that I am the Lord your God who brings you out from under the burdens of the Egyptians...’ Exod. 6:5-7

Redemption is a divine action!

The person who had this role had several obligations:

- *If anyone, from poverty, was unable to redeem his inheritance, it was the duty of the kinsman to redeem it (Leviticus 25:25,28; Ruth 3:9,12).*
- *He was also required to redeem his relation who had sold himself into slavery (Leviticus 25:48,49).*

Redemption is always linked to bondage or slavery, oppression or hardship of some kind. However, the right of redemption belonged only to someone in the right relationship to him. In other words, if I sold myself into slavery due to financial hardship, only a close relative could redeem me— my master could not sell me off to the highest bidder. In the same vein, my relatives had the OBLIGATION to redeem me.

THERE IS MUCH MATERIAL ON THIS SUBJECT, BUT TIME IS A CONSTRAINT!

Since the scripture clearly delineate the parameters for the kinsman-redeemer, we need to pay attention to it, because it intrudes into NT salvation.

We call Yeshua our redeemer, but it is **the Father Who is doing the work** and **Yeshua is His agent**. As fallen men and women we are unable to redeem our spiritual inheritance that was originally intended for us in the Garden of Eden.

But then, what was our inheritance way back then? On the surface our Bibles do not tell us very much, nor has this EVER been a required topic in formal biblical studies. It was the ‘sin-fall and its consequences’ – the utter depravity of man that was important – especially to Evangelicals; for RC the establishment of Mary as the Redemptrix (Gen 3:15) – [show example on the perils of altering even a single letter of the Hebrew text. Show also the disastrous difference of meaning resulting from changing even the appearance of a Hebrew letter (e.g. removing the *hook* from the letter *daleth* makes it into a *resh*. In the case of the word *echad* in the ‘Sh^ema Israel..’ such a change would allow the reading *other* (God) making utter mischief of the passage. C/f. Matt. 5:18]

IN order to understand what our redemption really means we firstly need to understand what was lost.

ADAM’S GARMENTS!

I would like you to follow me to a garden – the Garden of Eden!

From there I want to paint you a picture that you may see that redemption is NOT SO MUCH ransoming from slavery to sin, as it is intended as **a restoration unto life.**

The two most powerful examples of this is the binding of Isaac in Gen 22 I referred to earlier and the death and resurrection of Yeshua.

But first, the garden!

Christianity has been – and still is - so preoccupied with salvation from sin, that we missed the most vital component of the biblical message; viz. **the call to life.** Once we comprehend the meaning of walking in the light as He is in the light – sin no longer has **ANY POWER OVER US (1 Jn.1:5-7 ...).** NOT just any form of life, but abundant life! (Gen 9:7;) John 10:10 – Yeshua told his followers that only a thief comes to kill and to destroy, but he had come that all may have abundant life. Our creator, the Elohim of Y^eshua, is not some mean, stingy social worker, who hands things out in minimalistic portions to satisfy his department’s budget, but he provides in abundance for all. If we have massive hunger problems, etc in the world today is not due to His failure to provide, but to our greed! God abounds in mercy and grace, he abounds in goodness and blessings, as well as in lovingkindness and forgiveness; there is no limit to his generosity to all creatures. The Christian therefore, according to his theology, is the one human being who ought to be the one who displays the nature of abundance. Yet, more often than not, we are among the most mean-spirited and skin-flinted people on this planet. We tend to abound in anything, it is self-centredness, vanity, jealousies, covetousness — devoid of self-sacrificial love for the brethren.

So, what’s wrong?

When God made Adam, the Hebrew text implies that He made him just like the animals, but then the Creator did something different, viz

וַיִּפַּח בְּאַפָּיו נִשְׁמַת חַיִּים וַיְהִי הָאָדָם לְנֶפֶשׁ חַיָּה׃¹

[‘And He breathed in his face the **breath of life**, and the Adam (man) turned into [became] a living soul.’] What makes the account of Adam’s creation different is the *Nishmat Chaim* or *Breath of Life!* The word *chaim* is the plural form of life and implies an abundance of life and occurs in this verse for the first time

¹*Biblia Hebraica Stuttgartensia* : With Westminster Hebrew Morphology. 1996, c1925; morphology c1991 (electronic ed.) (Ge 2:7). German Bible Society; Westminster Seminary: Stuttgart; Glenside PA

in the Bible. Therefore, as the Rabbis would say it is prudent to pay attention to this word. May I suggest that **Adam was given an abundant form** of life that was different to all other creatures.

Gen 1:25-26 – *‘Then God said, “Let the earth bring forth living creatures after their kind: cattle and creeping things and beasts of the earth after their kind”; and it was so. God made the beasts of the earth after their kind, and the cattle after their kind, and everything that creeps on the ground after its kind; and God saw that it was good.’*

Up until that point in time, God saw that everything was good. **Only after** He made man that everything became **VERY GOOD** (v.31).

So, what made Adam different, his nakedness? Yes, that would most definitely have set him apart! Have you noticed, that there is not one creature on this planet, which does not have a unique, exquisite garment? Mankind is the only one who was seemingly created without a covering for cold or rain – nor a protection against the sunlight, etc. Apart from a very fleeting youthful appearance, man’s (or woman’s) glory fades very rapidly, forcing us into a bondage to clothing stores and beauty parlors, etc to maintain some of our dignity. Surely, there is a crass discrepancy between our appearance and that of animals, birds, fish, insects – yet, paradoxically, the Bible tells us that we were made in the image of the Creator. Obviously, there is a problem here somewhere either in the way the story has been handed down – or in the way we have chosen to interpret it!

When I study this passage, I find that there is something amiss in how we understand the Biblical text. Beasts, etc were created by the spoken word of God. Adam, on the other hand, was made by a direct action of God_ AND.... Adam was filled with the *Nishmat Chaim* - again a direct action of the Creator. Most seem to think that the creation of Adam was complete when God shaped him from the ground. However, the Hebrew text appears to indicate that the creative process was not complete until the image of the Creator imprinted itself upon Adams face through the *Nishmat Chaim*. We are not told exactly what the full meaning of *Nishmat Chaim* is. It is commonly assumed that Adam came alive at that moment, disregarding the fact that the Beasts of the field and the birds of the air came alive by the spoken word of God, viz. *“Let the earth bring forth the living creature according to its kind: cattle and creeping thing and beast of the earth, each according to its kind”; and it was so!’* (Gen. 1:24). May I suggest to you, that at that moment Adam was also clothed with the same light that is in the Most High. Although Adam was NOT another god – he had the image of God upon him through the *Nishmat Chaim*. God is Spirit, so we cannot say, to have seen Adam was to have seen God. However, although made from a created substance, earth, Adam nevertheless radiated the glory of his Creator.

If we take this into consideration, the rebellion of Adam takes on a totally different perspective. When he rebelled, the *Ruach HaQodesh*, the *Nishmat Chaim* died and the light also went out – thus his utter nakedness became evident with the force of an earthquake, with a magnitude of 9+ on the Richter scale. Naturally he would try to hide – the shock both Adam & Eve would have experienced is unimaginable! **Adam’s Fall was a real Fall** from a God-like status to a condition that was even lower

than that of the animals— and **his nakedness was a real nakedness** exposing his rebellion against his Creator.

Consequently, the tailoring operation by God also takes on new meaning. From here on in we owe it to Roman Catholicism that sex is seen as sinful, as well as a whole bunch of other issues that have kept humanity in bondage.

What did become a major issue for God, however, is human nakedness. NOT because He is embarrassed over our skins and genitalia, but whenever He looks at a naked body, He is reminded of the rebellion of Adam.

In the making of the garments for Adam and Eve, God had to destroy innocent creatures to cover the humans. Ever since, we have had to kill creatures to keep ourselves covered. From the beginning, innocent creatures had to yield their lives to provide a covering for the guilty. Now it makes sense, when we read in the scriptures that without the shedding of blood there is no forgiveness of sin. The children of Israel, out of all people on the earth, were given the exclusive right to sacrifice animals in order to maintain a right standing with God, based on God's act in the Garden – the 'blood of animals' presented the 'covering garment' for them.

In order to understand the depth of these events, we need to bear in mind the significance of Adam's disobedience.

The entire process of Redemption is fenced in by two components:

- **Total rebellion** – *The First Adam*
- **Absolute Obedience** – *The Last Adam*

When Adam rebelled, the shalom (or harmony) between the Creator and humans was ruptured and could only be repaired by a divine act that would be largely incomprehensible to man.² The prophet Isaiah declares that *the ways of the Almighty are higher than ours, and His thoughts not our thoughts* (Isa.55:8-9).

Abraham was the first human being who was willing to follow God unquestioningly. It is this perfect obedience, which becomes the hallmark of the men The Eternal One has chosen to be the milestones of His work throughout Redemption history.³ The request to sacrifice Isaac follows the cutting of the (unilateral) Covenant and is the final step in re-fusing the human with the Divine.⁴ Following the trusting act of Abraham, the Eternal One was now obliged to a reciprocal action, the fulfillment of which is alluded to by Yeshua in his dialogue with Nicodemus (John 3:16-17). From the moment that Abraham lifted up his knife to kill his son, HaShem was fully committed and bound to the race of Adam and their

² Once the human race was cut off from G-d, there was no way for humankind to repair the damage. Man had no way of reaching the Divine – therefore the reverse must be true that any interaction between G-d and humans had to be initiated from G-d's dimension.

³ It is through the prophets that God continues to call to Israel, that it is NOT their sacrifices which He desires, but their obedience – a factor reiterated by Yeshua over and over again.

⁴ The unilateral cutting of the Covenant with Abraham committed HaShem to a unilateral faithfulness to keep the promises He made to Abraham and his descendants. These acts reflect also the level of determination by HaShem to redeem the human race – by not providing an opportunity for human weakness to get in the way.

redemption— even if human beings failed, the Almighty was committed with all of His resources.⁵ It is for this reason that the **faith of Abraham**, which is also the **faith of Yeshua**, needs to be **the measure** of anyone’s faith. This is the reason why the Apostle reminds us that it is (the **Abrahamic**) **faith of Yeshua**, not only IN Yeshua, which is our salvation (Rom.3:22; Gal.2:16;3:22).

Beginning with Abraham, **obedience** (mostly a lack thereof) **became the major issue in the life of the sons of Jacob**. Although the Children of Israel promised obedience to the Most High again and again, they failed miserably. As Isaiah puts it, *‘Was it not the Lord, He, against whom we have sinned? For they would not walk in His ways, nor were they obedient to His Torah. therefore He has poured on him the fury of His anger...’* (42:24-25a).

For 1500 years, the Almighty trained His people by means of the Torah, the Prophets and the Writings. In the fullness of time, the Word of God (the SAME WORD that spoke the Universe and everything created into being) came to the womb of a young Jewish girl, Miriam, and this word took on flesh in the form of a son, who was named Y^eshua – **to remind his people** that the Elohim of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob was their salvation.

Why, did God have to go through this process, why not send an angel (messenger) as he had done in the time of the judges?

The purpose of begetting Yeshua in a mortal woman, was to show that the Creator was still intimately involved with all of Creation. He needed a vessel, suitable for His purposes— and Miriam was such a vessel, because she came from a people who had been trained through Torah concerning obedience to the God of their ancestors. The Almighty had promised to send someone like Moses, on whom his word would rest; one who would need to be obeyed (De. 18:15-19). He had foreshadowed that the Gentiles would also be brought into the light He had shone onto the sons of Jacob (Isa.60:1-3 ff.).

One might wish to ask, why all of this fuss? Why couldn’t God start all over with a new model made from the dust of the ground?

The reason is that not only man was contaminated, but that the earth also was now corrupt – bearing thorns and thistles. God could no longer take soil from the ground, because it was contaminated— polluted by the rebellion of man.

Miriam therefore gave birth to a child that would be trained by Torah; *‘...that he may know how to refuse evil and to do good!’* Isa 7:15. Through redeeming the human race, all of creation would find healing (c/f. Rom.8:21) *‘...because the creation itself also will be delivered from the bondage of corruption— into the glorious liberty of the children of God.’*

In a sense, God did start all over again; albeit by different means!

⁵ The letter to the Hebrews regards the action of the divine messenger as a type of Resurrection – Heb. 11:17-19

It is again His Spirit (or Himself for God IS Spirit) Who partners with His creation – in this case through Miriam. Instead of entering a being made from the soil of the ground, to separate it from the rest of the earth's creatures, the Ruach HaQodesh impregnates a young woman. The child that is born is distinct from all others, because it carried the **image of the Divine**, without being the Divine Himself. **God is Spirit and therefore cannot concentrate Himself in a specific place– He simply IS (Ex 3:14ff) and thus fills the Universe with His Presence. However, in Yeshua He repeated the process of Creation by infusing Himself into human flesh and causing a child to be born IN HIS IMAGE AND LIKENESS (c/f. Col 1:15; 2:9).**

Yeshua is literally the first-born of a New Humanity, that would be trained by Torah AND the Ruach Ha Qodesh **in perfect obedience to the Creator.**

Isaiah writes prophetically in Ch. 61:10, (let us read the whole chapter, for the context is v.1-3) *'I will greatly rejoice in the Lord, My soul shall be joyful in my God; For He has clothed me with the garments of salvation, He has covered me with the robe of righteousness, As a bridegroom decks himself with ornaments, And as a bride adorns herself with her jewels.'*

Need for Re-clothing by God is Echoed by Paul

Paul, in 2 Corinthians 5:2-3 looking forward to Isaiah's vision writes, ***"For in this we groan, earnestly desiring to be clothed with our habitation which is from heaven, if indeed, having been clothed, we shall not be found naked."***

'For the grace of God that brings salvation has appeared to all men, teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly in the present age, looking for the blessed hope and appearance of the glory of the great God and of our Savior Yeshua the Messiah, who gave Himself for us, that He might redeem us from every deed apart from Torah and purify for Himself His own special people, zealous for good works.'

Titus 2:11-14

If we ponder the significance of Yeshua's death on the cross, we discover the merging of several lines.

1. In his nakedness on the cross, Yeshua identified with the nakedness of the first Adam and thus with Adam's transgression, therefore incurring the wrath of the Almighty
2. The parallel with the first sacrifice in the Garden – the totally innocent died for the totally guilty

3. The sacrificial victim in Eden was deprived of its garment so that it may provide a covering for Adam and Eve;
4. **Yeshua's obedience** deprived him of his earthly garment, but earned him - and the human race - the garment of righteousness and glory through resurrection from the dead (1 Cor.15:45-49)

Through Adam's fall, the (true) image of the Creator vanished from the human race. In Yeshua this image is restored. Hence the statement of Yeshua, "*If you see me you have seen the father...*" (Jn.14:9) This is not a claim by Yeshua to deity, but a declaration that the image of the Most High was being restored to the human race!

Since the original Adam was made in the image of God, **only one who had the image of God** was capable of redeeming him!

Only Yeshua was truly a kinsman of the pre-fall Adam being made in the image of God (Gen.1:26-27)!