Glad Tidings

"And we bring you good of the promise made unto the fathers…" (Acts 13:32)

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God's Modest Apparel Guidelines

(Jerry Fite)

God, through the Holy Spirit, demands that we wear "*modest apparel.*" Paul writes, "*In like manner, that women adorn themselves in modest apparel, with shamefastness and sobriety; not with braided hair, and gold or pearls or costly raiment; but which becometh women professing godliness through good works" (I Timothy 2:9-10).*

"Modest" describes the clothing we choose to adorn our bodies as we appear before others. Contextually, Paul is addressing men and women "in every place," where men are leading in prayer and teaching. Ostentatiousness is being condemned. Specific guidelines are given to avoid distracting attention. Adorning the body with " costly raiment" along with the accessories of "gold or pearls," are out of order. "Braided hair" was often stacking the braided hair up high, bringing attention to the woman's outward attire.

Such attention was distracting from the praying and teaching purpose that brought men and women together. The adornment of boastful pretentiousness is out of order, and therefore not modest. Outward adornment should be befitting, reflecting a woman "*professing godliness through good works.*"

God's remedy for the nakedness of Adam and Eve who had covered their sexual parts with fig- leafed aprons, but still felt "*naked,*" was to provide "*coats of skin,*" that reached the knee in covering their bodies *(cf. Genesis 3:7, 10, 21).* This apparel covered their nakedness before others in a world to be populated outside of Eden.

God's remedy for the priests avoiding exposing their nakedness before others was wearing breaches or short trousers that reached from the loins to the thighs. They were worn under the robe covering one's nakedness, as the priest walked up the steps to the altar in one's opened-bottom robes. (*Exodus 28:42, cf. Exodus 20:26, Ezekiel 43:17).*

The Hebrew word translated "thigh" (Yarekh) appears 34 times in the Old Testament (KJV), and is translated "hip," "waist," "side" and "loins" ("descendants") describing the body parts of humans. The thigh being located near the sexual and reproductive areas of the body is at times used euphemistically. But the Hebrew word means the actual thigh, determined by the immediate context.

In Exodus 28, we have the context of the length of clothing starting with the "waist", "hips," "loins" (*Motnaiym*) extending to the "thighs" *(Yarekh).* The two distinct words form a beginning unto the inclusive end. We have an extent or "length" consideration from the hip downward to include the thighs for the purpose of covering one's nakedness.

Notice the care in making sure our nakedness is not exposed to others. "Shamefastness" is coupled with "sobriety" in determining how we adorn the body. Sobriety is a sound mind knowing how our attire or lack thereof can affect others. Men are sexually stimulated by what they see (*cf. Matthew 5: 27-28).* The uncovered thigh which is located in the near proximity of the "loins, can stimulate unlawful sexual desires. Men and women professing godliness do not want to cause others to stumble in anything, including evil thoughts *(2 Cor. 6:3, Mk. 7:21).*

God gives us helpful guidelines in dressing modestly. The reverential godly heart follows God's revealed wisdom. If we cover, not accentuate, the sexual parts of the body, including the thigh, we will cover our nakedness, which when uncovered, leads to sinful desires in others.