

Healing In His Wings

Numbers 15:37-40 (NLT) And the Lord said to Moses, Say to the people of Israel: Throughout the generations to come you must make tassels for the hems of your clothing and attach the tassels at each corner with a blue cord. The tassels will remind you of the commands of the Lord, and that you are to obey his commands instead of following your own desires and going your own ways, as you are prone to do. The tassels will help you remember that you must obey all my commands and be holy to your God.

God knows that human beings are visual learners, so He gave the Jews the prayer shawl as an object lesson. They were to put tassels or fringes (Tzitziot) on the borders or corners (Kanaph) of this garment. They would often wrap the tassels around their fingers as they prayed to remind them of the commandments of the Lord.

There were five knots on each tassel, to remind them of the five books of the Torah. There were four spaces between the knots, to remind them of the four letters in the name of God (YHWH – Yahweh). There were 39 windings in each twisted coil, which equals the numerical value of the Hebrew words “the Lord is One” (and Jesus suffered the same number of stripes for our healing!).

The prayer shawl, or TALITH, is still used at all major Jewish occasions – circumcisions, bar mitzvahs, weddings and even as a shroud for burial. It protects the scrolls of the Torah when they are moved. It even inspired the Jewish flag. In Biblical times, Jewish men wore the Talith all the time, not just at prayer.

TALITH contains two Hebrew words – TAL meaning “tent” and ITH meaning “little” – thus every Jewish man had his own little tent or tabernacle where he could meet with God. By pulling it up over his head to form a tent, he could totally focus on God in his own prayer closet! (That’s what Jesus meant in the sermon on the mount.)

Since the fringe of a man’s garment represented his obedience of God’s commands, to cut it off was the equivalent of saying he was backslidden. That’s what happened in the cave with David and King Saul, why David’s conscience was smitten the next day, and why Saul knew his kingdom would soon fall.

1 Samuel 24:20 (KJV) And now, behold, I know well that thou shalt surely be king, and that the kingdom of Israel shall be established in thine hand.

Jesus condemned the Pharisees for making long tassels on their garments, because they were just doing it for show. They wanted everyone to think that they valued God’s laws so highly, but they were breaking His commandments in their hearts!

Matthew 23:5 (NLT) Everything they do is for show. On their arms they wear extra wide prayer boxes with Scripture verses inside, and they wear extra long tassels on their robes.

The Talith is most likely the mantle that the great prophet Elijah passed on to his successor Elisha. Elijah had saturated this mantle with his prayers to the God of heaven, and when Elisha struck the waters with it, there was power to part them!

2 Kings 2:14 (KJV) And he took the mantle of Elijah that fell from him, and smote the waters, and said, Where is the Lord God of Elijah? and when he also had smitten the waters, they parted hither and thither: and Elisha went over.

Even today, Jewish weddings are often performed under a prayer shawl held up by four poles. That dates back to Boaz and Ruth, where the Talith was cast over the one being claimed for marriage.

Ruth 3:9 (NIV) “Who are you?” he asked. “I am your servant Ruth,” she said. “Spread the corner of your garment over me, since you are a kinsman-redeemer.”

What Ruth was literally saying to Boaz was “take me under your wing,” for the Hebrew word translated “corner” is also translated “wing” 76 times in the Bible. For this reason, the corners of the prayer shawl are often called wings.

Psalms 91:1-4 (KJV) He that dwelleth in the secret place of the most High shall abide under the shadow of the Almighty. I will say of the Lord, He is my refuge and my fortress: my God; in him will I trust. Surely he shall deliver thee from the snare of the fowler, and from the noisome pestilence. He shall cover thee with his feathers, and under his wings shalt thou trust: his truth shall be thy shield and buckler.

As well, when the priest held out his arms to say a blessing, his Talith looked exactly like wings.

Numbers 6:23-26 (KJV) Speak unto Aaron and unto his sons, saying, On this wise ye shall bless the children of Israel, saying unto them, The Lord bless thee, and keep thee: The Lord make his face shine upon thee, and be gracious unto thee: The Lord lift up his countenance upon thee, and give thee peace.

What a wonderful heritage Israel had, but they wasted it! By the end of the Old Testament, they have only recently returned from a 70-year captivity in Babylon – and they have already begun to backslide again! It seems like there is no hope for a permanent solution. Malachi, the last prophet to write, offers to Israel one last time the choice between destruction and hope.

Malachi 4:1-2 (NLT) The Lord Almighty says, "The day of judgment is coming, burning like a furnace. The arrogant and the wicked will be burned up like straw on that day. They will be consumed like a tree—roots and all. But for you who fear my name, the Sun of Righteousness will rise with healing in his wings. And you will go free, leaping with joy like calves let out to pasture.

In the very last chapter of the Old Testament, it is fitting that the sun should begin to break out of the clouds! If Israel will only fear the name of the Lord and keep His commandments, they will be free – really free! But sadly, they didn't listen ... and the long barren period of the 400 silent years begins. Four long centuries in which no one hears from the Lord!

Nothing more is heard from Malachi's prophecy for centuries, until three of the gospel writers record the story of one person who puts the puzzle together. It's not a religious scholar or popular leader, it's just a little woman who grasps what everyone else has missed.

Luke 8:43-44 (KJV) And a woman having an issue of blood twelve years, which had spent all her living upon physicians, neither could be healed of any, Came behind him, and touched the border of his garment: and immediately her issue of blood stanchèd.

Why did she touch the Tzitzit (tassels) of Jesus' garment? Two reasons: First, they represented the commandments and promises of Almighty God. Second, "the Sun of Righteousness will rise with healing in his WINGS" – healing even in the folds of His garment, even in the little tassels on his Talith!

She touched the holiest part of Jesus' garment – no wonder she approached from behind! **Normally the impure defiles the pure, but in this case the opposite happened.** The purity of Jesus remained uncompromised, while the cause of the woman's impurity was instantly removed! And then, Jesus almost immediately initiated contact with a dead body, regarded in Judaism as the primary source of all impurity!

Mark 5:41 (KJV) And he took the damsel by the hand, and said unto her, Talitha cumi; which is, being interpreted, Damsel, I say unto thee, arise.

All three of the gospel writers that record these two miracles record them together – why? Because of the Talith! Tradition has called Jairus' daughter Tabitha, but the word is Talitha – when Jesus reached out his hands to heal her, He was saying, "Little girl who is under my wings, under my covenant, under my promises, under my tabernacle – arise!" Or another translation could be, "Little girl, arise even as my Talith!"

The woman with the issue of blood started something great when she claimed a 400-year-old promise – "but for you who fear my name, the Sun of Righteousness will rise with healing in his wings – and you will go free, leaping with joy like calves let out to pasture!"

Matthew 14:36 (NLT) The sick begged him to let them touch even the fringe of his robe, and all who touched it were healed.

When that woman touched Jesus, He stopped cold – she got His attention. Why? Because somebody got it! Somebody in that vast crowd believed that He was the Messiah. Somebody believed that He could do what His word said He would do! And they got their answer.

It goes without saying that our world is "sick" today. It goes without saying that sometimes living righteously for God in a sinful world is not easy. It goes without saying that between temptations, trials, tests and troubles the battle can become very wearisome very quickly. It goes without saying that you've experienced a lot of days when the easiest thing to do would be to give up!

But the Sun of Righteousness will soon rise with healing in His wings! Oh yes, He can give physical healing ... but this will be the ultimate healing! "Arise, church! The battle is over and you have won!"

Luke 21:25-28 (KJV) And there shall be signs in the sun, and in the moon, and in the stars; and upon the earth distress of nations, with perplexity; the sea and the waves roaring; Men's hearts failing them for fear, and for looking after those things which are coming on the earth: for the powers of heaven shall be shaken. And then shall they see the Son of man coming in a cloud with power and great glory. And when these things begin to come to pass, then look up, and lift up your heads; for your redemption draweth nigh.

Luke 21:25-28 (MSG) It will seem like all hell has broken loose—sun, moon, stars, earth, sea, in an uproar and everyone all over the world in a panic, the wind knocked out of them by the threat of doom, the powers-that-be quaking. And then—then!—they'll see the Son of Man welcomed in grand style—a glorious welcome! When all this starts to happen, up on your feet. Stand tall with your heads high. Help is on the way!