

The Gorgeous Robe — God's Care for the Honor of Christ

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Herod's Gorgeous Robe — Three Old Testament Contrasts

Luke 23:11 records that Herod with his men of war set Him at naught, and mocked Him, and arrayed Him in a gorgeous robe, and sent Him again to Pilate. That act of arraying a man in a gorgeous robe appears three times in the Old Testament, and in each case it was done in honour. Pharaoh, when Joseph revealed to him the mind of God concerning Egypt's coming famine, arrayed Joseph in royal robes and a chain of gold and set him next to Pharaoh in the kingdom. Belshazzar, when Daniel explained the handwriting on the wall, commanded that Daniel be arrayed in scarlet and a chain of gold and proclaimed the third ruler in the kingdom. And when King Ahasuerus asked what should be done for the man the king delights to honour, the answer — which Haman gave, thinking it was for himself — was: take a gorgeous robe such as the king himself has worn, put the man on the king's own horse, and lead him through the city crying, Thus shall it be done to the man whom the king delights to honour.

In every case, the gorgeous robe was an act of honour. Pharaoh honouring Joseph. Belshazzar honouring Daniel. Ahasuerus honouring Mordecai. And now Herod and his men of war arrayed the Lord Jesus Christ in a gorgeous robe — but not to honour Him. They did it as sport. They did it with smiles. It was, to them, a lark.

*Fools make a mock at sin, but among the righteous there is favour. —
Proverbs 14:9*

The World That Still Mocks

Proverbs 14:9 says: fools make a mock at sin, but among the righteous there is favour. And Proverbs 10:23: it is as sport to a fool to do wickedness, but a man of understanding hath wisdom. The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom. A man of understanding has reverence for the Lord Jesus — that is where his wisdom starts and from which it goes forward. But what Herod and his men did was wickedness, not mischief. If Herod had a lawyer, that lawyer might have called it a little mischief — just a gorgeous robe, nothing to worry about. What it really was, was rebellion. It was setting at nothing the King of the kingdom of God, making Him appear to be nothing in the world He had created.

And the world continues to do this. It mocks in casual speech. It makes jokes that reference the Lord Jesus — walking on water — as though the Lord's care for His disciples in the storm were a punchline. It arraigns the things of Scripture for its entertainment. Men do not stand with tears when they do these things. They do them with smiles, as Herod's men did. The world has not repented of what was done that day, and it has not changed its character since.

Our place in such a world is to be waiting and watching for the Lord Jesus to come from heaven. Not absorbing the world's estimate of Him, but holding His honour as the thing that matters most.

The Napkin and the Linen Clothes — God's Own Answer

John 20:5–7 gives God's answer to all of Herod's mockery. When Peter and John came to the sepulcher, they found the linen clothes lying — and the napkin that had been about His head, not lying with the linen clothes, but wrapped together in a place by itself. No one had disturbed these things. No one had stolen them or disordered them. The napkin about the head was treated differently from the rest, as though a distinction were being made between the head and the members.

And that distinction is real. He is the head of the body, the church. We are the members here on earth. The honour belongs to the head. The glory belongs to our Lord Jesus Christ in heaven. And two angels were in the sepulcher — at the place where the body of Jesus had lain. They were not preeminent in the passage. The place where He had been is centre stage, because even the place where He had been carries distinction from His own glory and person.

God looks out for the honour of His Son. He sends His angels. He preserves what belongs to Christ. He watches over His own in a world that has set His Son at naught. We often forget, perhaps, about the care God exerts — watching us, taking care of us, preserving us through a world so far from Him, so filled with ungodly thoughts and ungodly behaviours. Yet God preserves His own. We are in capable hands.

Now Is the Son of Man Glorified — John 13:31

John 13:31 records what the Lord said when Judas had gone out into the night: now is the Son of Man glorified, and God is glorified in Him. If God be glorified in Him, God shall also glorify Him in Himself, and shall straightway glorify Him. What a contrast between the estimate of those who were, in that moment, His representatives — mocking, sporting, putting on the gorgeous robe — and how God viewed that blessed man walking on this earth.

Men could mock all they wished. God was going to glorify Him. The glory is hidden from this world still — the world continues to mock, continues to dishonour. But the moral glory of the Lord Jesus shone through everything He did in His whole pathway here, whether men recognised it or not. And when He said now is the Son of Man glorified, He was looking at the cross. The completion of His moral glory as a man came out there in its fullest brightness. There the love, the holiness, the obedience, the perfect submission to the Father's will — all of it shone out without mixture or shadow. And God was glorified in

Him.

Then God glorified Him in Himself — personal glory, the glory that was His by right and worth. He was worthy. He received that glory at the right hand of God. Not yet manifested to this world — that day is coming. But before God, and before all in heaven, He has received the glory that men withheld and still withhold. The gorgeous robe that Herod's men put on Him in mockery will one day be exchanged for robes whose glory no earthly king has ever worn. May we have grace to honour Him now, in the days of His rejection, giving Him that place of glory which God has given Him and which is due to Him from every heart that belongs to Him.

*Now is the Son of Man glorified, and God is glorified in Him. — John
13:31*
