

Exhortation 7: Christ Clothed by Pilate and Herod Charles Herle (1598-1659)

I. The Text Opened

A. Matthew 27:28

1. “And they stripped him and put on him a scarlet robe,” (Matt. 27:28).
 - a) After the chief priests and pharisees have their fill of persecuting and torturing the Son of God, he is taken to the governor’s palace and turned over to Pilate and his soldiers.
 - b) Here he meets with the second act of that tragic interlude that was begun against him in the high priest’s hall.
 - c) Once again, he is beaten, insulted, mocked, and spit on, continuing to fulfill Isaiah’s prophesy, “He is despised and rejected of men; a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief,” (Isa. 53:3).
 - (1) *Next, he is stripped of his clothes and donned with a scarlet robe.*
 - (2) *Because the Roman soldiers clearly intended to mock Jesus as, “King of the Jews,” they made him up to look like a king. Kings wore crowns made from precious jewels and metals; they gave Jesus a crown made from thorns.*
 - (a) *Kings wielded a scepter made of expensive materials; they gave Jesus a scepter made of reeds.*
 - (b) *And as the color of royalty was typically purple or dark red, they clothed Jesus in a scarlet robe.*
 - (i) *Finally, they completed the scene by bowing their knee and hailing him as King, (Matt. 27:29-30).*
 - (3) *After they tire of abusing him, Christ’s persecutors remove the robe from his back, (Matt. 27:31), so that all he carries from this place are his shoulders that have been shredded with whips, his temples now pierced with thorns, and his limbs and torso that are covered in bruises.*
 - (4) *These persecutions are not only representative of the payment he suffered for our sin, but they also depict what those who belong to Christ suffer in the world.*
 - (5) *He himself said that, “in the world you shall have persecution,” (John 16:33).*

II. The Doctrine from the Text

A. Doctrine: Like Christ from Pilate’s palace, men can carry nothing out of this world that they did not bring in except the wounds and lashes of cares, fears, and sorrows, and the pricking thorns of guilt, remorse, and grief.

1. The One who clothes the lilies of the field beyond the richest luster of Solomon’s greatest glory (Luke 12:27) is stripped of his clothes before this crowd of despising onlookers.
 - a) This is the same Christ whose garment, when touched at its hem, miraculously healed the woman who had suffered a blood disease for twelve long years, (Matt. 9:20-22), and the same Son of God whose shoes John the Baptist did not feel worthy to loosen (John 1:27).
 - b) Moreover, this is the same Lord with whose righteousness we are clothed when we put our faith and trust in him as Savior.

(1) As Isaiah 61:10 reports, “I will rejoice greatly in the Lord, my soul will exult in my God. For He has clothed me with garments of salvation, He has wrapped me with a robe of righteousness.”

2. Such is the blessed Lord and Savior, the God of glory, who became a man of reproach (Isa. 53).

a) How obstinately do men try to abuse his mercies and dismiss his blessings?

b) Man had no sooner put off innocence, but he put on shame, which he covered with garments he made for him from fig leaves.

c) Christ is that Lily of the valley (Song 2:1), not only white in innocence, but glorious too in his own inexplicable luster.

d) The Lord is the one who can cover men, in the scarlet robe of his passion and death; for he can cloak man’s shame of sin with his cloak of righteousness, that they may find entrance and be welcomed at his marriage feast of glory.

B. Herod then Clothes Christ in a Gorgeous Robe

1. “And 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,” (Luke 23:11).

a) To better understand everything that happened between the time of Christ’s arrest in the Garden and his sentence of death pronounced by Pilate in the palace, it is important to keep in mind the sequence of events that occurred.

b) At the time of his arrest, Jesus was brought first to Annas, the high priest, (John 18:13).

c) He was then taken to the Sanhedrin, (the ancient Jewish court), later that evening where he was questioned by Caiaphas, the high priest who presided over the Sanhedrin.

(1) *There he was beaten, blindfolded and struck on the face, (Matt. 26:57–68).*

d) At dawn, the council of chief priests and elders made the decision to put him to death, (Matt. 27:1), so they bound Jesus and led him away to Pilate because they were not allowed by Jewish law to sentence someone to death.

(1) *Once Pilate questioned him and discovered that he was from Galilee, he ordered that Jesus be taken to Herod, the king over Judea at the time, (Luke 23:7).*

e) Herod’s abuse of Christ is not much different from Pilate’s, though initially Herod was hoping Jesus would perform some miracles in his presence.

(1) *However, his expectation of seeing wonders from him was frustrated by Christ’s strange and sullen silence, (Luke 23:8).*

(2) *Enraged and furious at his unfulfilled request, he made sure Christ suffered the full extent of shame that a king could inflict.*

(3) *Mocking his innocence, Herod had his soldiers put a gorgeous white robe on Jesus, and then proceeded to further taunt, ridicule, and beat him.*

f) The white robe Herod used is an emblem of his spotless innocence, and the scarlet robe Pilate’s soldiers covered him with represented his passion.

(1) *The first depicted his life, the second his death.*

(2) *In Isaiah’s prophecy of this event, the question is asked how his garment became so red.*

(3) *And the answer comes back, “I have trodden the winepress alone; and of the people there was none with me; their blood shall be sprinkled upon my garments, and I will stain all my raiment,”*

(Isa. 63:2-3).

(a) *This prophetic passage speaks of the winepress of his Father’s wrath and his enemy’s malice, and so it is no wonder that Christ’s robe was soaked red with his own blood flowing from the winepress of God’s wrath for sin, (Rev. 14:20).*

(b) And yet, as Paul so well stated in Romans 8:37, we know triumph over sin and death as “conquerors” because of this gorgeous robe, though stained with blood, beautified by the work of the Messiah on behalf of sinners.

III. The Text Applied

A. Consider the warfare of this life.

1. Our lives here on earth are a warfare and with every battle our garments become more blood-stained.

a) But let us not forget that he has a beautiful white robe waiting for us when he calls us home to heaven, (Rev. 6:11, 7:9, 13).

(1) This robe of his righteousness that we will wear then signifies the life of everlasting peace and glory we are blessed to share with his throughout eternity.

b) He will strip us of our own handmade covering of fig leaves, that apparel of pride, and vain glory, that soft raiment of luxury, that garment of halting indifference, that cloak of hypocrisy studded with our own merits.

(1) Rather he will clothe us with the brilliant Sun of his righteousness, (Mal. 4:2).

(2) This is the only garment that matters, the only one that will never fade.