

The following is another of many topical studies and Biblical Chain References written by Dr. Kent A. Field starting in 1976 to the present day. Do you question the validity of topical studies? Think again! Consider the very purpose of the New Testament Letters. The Book of 1John was a topical study combating Gnosticism; Galatians combats the binding of circumcision; and so on...

Dressed To Worship God?

By Dr. Kent A. Field © 2003

Old Testament Instruction? Yes!

- ❖ It is true that the Christian is not justified by obedience to the Old Testament Law, Gal.5:2-4.
- ❖ However, neither is there justification by faith alone!, Ja.2:24.
- ❖ Faithful obedience is still required as an integral part of faith, Ja.:2:14-26; 1 Jno.2:4ff, etc..
 1. Give me the specific New Testament passage that forbids marriage and sex with an animal or even your own sister or daughter???? _____ There are *specifically* none!
 2. It is from the O.T. that we know that such things are an abomination to God!, Ex.22:19; Lv.18:6-18,23; 20:17, etc..
 3. Now it's time to apply that same reasoning to other matters, such as how we dress for worship.
- ❖ Even though the Christian is no longer under obligation to, or justified by, the Old Testament... The Old Testament can shed light on the subject of what God's thoughts are on many subjects, including HOW God expects His worshippers to dress when they come before Him in Worship. Prayerfully consider the following passages as PROOF!

1. Romans 15:4

For whatever was *written in earlier times* was **written for our instruction**, so that through perseverance and the **encouragement of the Scriptures**, (*he was then referring to the O.T.*), we might have hope.

Question: What are we supposed to use the O.T. for today? _____

2. Galatians 3:24

Therefore the Law has become our **tutor to lead us to Christ**, so that [Gal 2:16] we may be justified by faith. [1 Cor 4:15]

Question: Does the O.T. have any relevance to our Christian life and worship today? _____
How? _____

3. 2 Timothy 3:16

All Scripture, (*he was specifically referring to the O.T. in this case*), is inspired by God and **profitable** for teaching, for reproof, for **correction**, for training in righteousness;

Question: Is the O.T. supposed to be used by the Christian today? _____

Old Testament Instruction

1. Genesis 35:1-3

Then God said to Jacob, "Arise, go up to Bethel and live there, and make an altar there to God, who appeared to you when you fled from your brother Esau." So Jacob said to his household and to all who were with him, "Put away the foreign gods which are among you, and **purify yourselves** and **change your garments**; and let us arise and go up to Bethel, and I will

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make an altar there to God, who answered me in the day of my distress and has been with me wherever I have gone."

Question: When God's people were told how to brake away idolatrous practices, what were they instructed to do here? _____

2. **Ezra 3:10**

Now when the builders had laid the foundation of the temple of the LORD, the priests stood in their **apparel** with trumpets, and the Levites, the sons of Asaph, with cymbals, to praise the LORD [1 Chr 6:31; 25:1] according to the directions of King David of Israel. [Zech 4:6-10] [1 Chr 6:31; 25:1]

Question: Did God's priesthood appear to have special clothing for their worship? _____

3. **2 Samuel 12:20**

Then David arose from the earth, and **washed**, and **anointed himself**, and **changed his apparel**, and **came into the house of the LORD, and worshipped**: then he came to his own house; and when he required, they set bread before him, and he did eat.

Question: Before David worshipped God, what did he do? _____ Why? _____

4. **Zephaniah 1:8**

And it shall come to pass in the day of the LORD's sacrifice, that I will **punish** the princes, and the king's children, and all such as are **clothed with strange apparel**.

Question: Why did God say He was going to punish the princes in this case? _____

5. **Leviticus 16:32**

And the priest, whom he shall anoint, and whom he shall consecrate to minister in the priest's office in his father's stead, shall make the atonement, and shall **put on the linen clothes**, even the **holy garments**:

Question: How did God command his priests to prepare to offer up worship and sacrifice?

Question: Did God desire any special clothing to be worn? _____ Why? _____

6. **Exodus 28:1-4**

Garments of the Priests

"Then bring near to yourself Aaron your brother, and his sons with him, from among the sons of Israel, to minister as priest to Me--Aaron, Nadab and Abihu, Eleazar and Ithamar, Aaron's sons. "You shall **make holy garments** for Aaron your brother, for glory and for beauty. "You shall speak to **all the skillful persons** whom I have endowed with the spirit of wisdom, that they **make Aaron's garments** to consecrate him, that he **may minister as priest to Me**. "These are the garments which they shall make: a breast-piece and an ephod and a robe and a tunic of checkered work, a turban and a sash, and they shall make **holy garments** for Aaron your brother and his sons, **that he may minister as priest to Me**.

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Question: What was the stated purpose that God gave for making special or holy clothing for the priests of God? _____

7. **Exodus 29:29**

The **holy garments** of Aaron shall be for his sons after him, that in them they may be anointed and ordained. [Num 20:26, 28]

Question: Were there special clothes that Aaron and his sons were to wear? _____

Question: For what purpose? Or occasion? _____

8. **Exodus 31:10**

the woven **garments** as well, and the **holy garments** for Aaron the priest, and the **garments** of his sons, with which **to carry on their priesthood**; [Ex 39:1]

Question: Why did God require special clothing for the priests? _____

9. **Exodus 35:19**

the woven **garments for ministering in the holy place**, the **holy garments** for Aaron the priest and the **garments** of his sons, to minister as priests."

Question: What did God require from the priests to minister in the holy place? _____

10. **Leviticus 21:10**

"The priest who is the highest among his brothers, on whose head the anointing oil has been poured and who has been consecrated to wear the **garments**, [Lev 10:6] shall not uncover his head **nor tear his clothes**;

Question: What kind of clothes did God forbid his priests to minister in? _____

Why? _____

11. **Ezra 2:69**

According to their ability they gave to the treasury for the work 61,000 gold drachmas and 5,000 silver minas and 100 **priestly garments**. [Ezra 8:25-34]

Question: At least in the O.T., was it obvious that God's priests were to wear special clothes?

_____ Why? _____

12. **Isaiah 52:1**

Awake, awake, Clothe yourself in your strength, O Zion; Clothe yourself in your **beautiful garments**, O Jerusalem, the holy city; For the uncircumcised and the [Is 35:8] unclean Will no longer come into you. [Is 51:9, 17] [Ex 28:2, 40; 1 Chr 16:29; Ps 110:3; Is 49:18; 61:3, 10; Zech 3:4] [Neh 11:1; Is 48:2; 64:10; Zech 14:20, 21; Matt 4:5; Rev 21:2-27]

Question: What kind of clothing did God describe as clothes of celebration? _____

13. **Ezekiel 42:14**

"When the priests enter, then they shall not go out into the outer court from the sanctuary without laying there their **garments in which they minister, for they are holy**. They shall put

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on **other garments**; then they shall approach that which is for the people." [Ezek 44:19] [Ex 29:4-9; Lev 8:7, 13; Is 61:10; Zech 3:4, 5]

Question: What kind of clothing did God want to be ministered to in? _____

14. **Ezekiel 44:16-18**

They shall *enter My sanctuary*; they shall come near to My table to *minister to Me* and keep My charge. It shall be that when they enter at the gates of the inner court, they shall be **clothed with linen garments**; and wool shall not be on them while they are ministering in the gates of the inner court and in the house. Linen turbans shall be on their heads and linen undergarments shall be on their loins; **they shall not gird themselves with anything which makes them sweat.**

Question: Did God even notice the material that clothing was to be made out of? _____

Question: Why did God command that the clothes of those who minister to Him in His sanctuary were to be made out of linen, and not wool? _____

Question: Does it appear that God didn't want sweat-stained priests to minister to Him in His sanctuary? _____ Why? _____

15. **Ezekiel 44:19**

"When they go out into the outer court, into the outer court to the people, they shall put off their **garments in which they have been ministering and lay them in the holy chambers**; then they shall put on **other garments** so that they will **not transmit holiness** to the people with their **garments**. [Lev 6:10; 16:4, 23, 24; Ezek 42:14] [Lev 6:27; Ezek 46:20]

Question: Did God require His priests to wear one kind of clothes for worship and another for common use? _____ Why? _____

16. **Psalm 29:1-2**

Ascribe to the LORD the glory due to His name; Worship the LORD in **holy array**.

Question: When we come before the Lord is special (holy) clothes, what are they said to be doing? _____

17. **2 Chronicles 20:21**

When he had consulted with the people, he appointed those who sang to the LORD and those who praised Him in **holy attire**, as they went out before the army and said,

Question: How were the people who praised God dressed here? _____

18. **Psalm 110:3**

Your people will volunteer freely in the day of Your power; In **holy array**, from the womb of the dawn, Your youth are to You as the dew.

Question: When God's people are said to come before Him freely, how would they dress?

19. **1 Chronicles 16:29**

Ascribe to the LORD the glory due His name; Bring an offering, and come before Him; Worship the LORD in **holy array**.

Question: What is commanded here as part of giving God the Glory due to His Name? _____

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Question: If anyone would refuse to wear Holy attire in this case, what else would they be refusing to do? _____

20. Psalm 96:8,9

Worship the LORD in *holy attire*; Tremble before Him, all the earth.

Question: When all the earth is commanded to tremble before the Lord, what else are they commanded to do? _____

- ❖ **"Dress to honor Him, for He is Worthy"** (that's the message!). What is this relationship between holiness and what we wear? Are the *clothes themselves* holy (set apart for worship use), is the *Lord* holy (worship the splendor of his holiness), or are *we ourselves* to be holy? I think a proper New Testament application is that today God wants our hearts to be set apart (holy) unto him. But is this to be to the apparent exclusion of our outward garments? Or... Are our garments to reflect that holiness?

New Testament Instruction

1. Matthew 3:4

Now John himself had a *garment of camel's hair* and a leather belt around his waist; and his food was locusts and wild honey. [Lev 11:22] [2 Kin 1:8; Zech 13:4; Matt 11:8; Mark 1:6]

Question: Even though some believe that God doesn't care about or notice what people wear or what their clothes are made of, what did the Holy Spirit point out here about John's clothes?

2. 1 Timothy 2:9-10 (KJV)

In like manner also, that women adorn themselves in modest apparel, with shamefacedness and sobriety; not with broidered hair, or gold, or pearls, or costly array; but (which becometh women professing godliness) with good works.

Question: Does God care about how Christians dress, even in everyday life? _____

Question: If women are to dress in modest apparel, are men excluded from this prohibition?

Question: Is the definition of *modest* (*kosmios*) purely a sexual one? _____

Question: What is the definition of "modest" in this passage? _____

Answer: Well arranged, presentable, appropriate, seemingly, decent, well ordered

Furthermore: In this passage, the words translated "modest," "decency" and "propriety" (in the KJV) are very general, relative terms which do not even suggest an absolute standard.

"Modest" is *kosmios*, a term which means "decorous," "orderly" or "of good behavior."

Similarly, "decency" ("shamefacedness") is *aidows*, a word which literally indicates downcast eyes and figuratively denotes bashfulness, respect or awe. Likewise, "propriety" ("sobriety") is *sophrosune*, which means "soundness of mind, sanity or self-control." Similarly, the word translated "dress" (*katastole*) is derived from the word used to describe the robes worn by men of high office as a symbol of their authority (*stole*), and both words are derived from a verb (*stello*) which has as its primary definition "to place in order." The focus of all four words is on maintaining of peace and proper order, not on the length or style of the clothing.

Question: Does it appear that God cares about how we appear in the eyes of others? _____

Question: Does care about how what we wear may affect others? _____

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3. **James 2:2-4**

For if there come unto your assembly a man with a gold ring, in **goodly apparel**, and there come in also a poor man in **dirty clothes**;

Question: In this passage, is there a condemnation of wearing fine clothes in the worship assembly? _____

Question: In this passage, is there a condemnation of wearing dirty clothes in the worship assembly? _____

Question: In this passage, what is being condemned? _____

Question: In this passage, why isn't the man wearing dirty clothing condemned? Does it say how he came to be wearing dirty clothes? _____

4. **1 Peter 3:1-4**

Whose adorning let it not be that outward adorning of plaiting the hair, and of wearing of gold, or of putting on of **apparel**;

Question: While it is true that this passage is addressed to women in the church, would it be fair to say that men are also enjoined to "chaste and respectful behavior"? _____

Question: Is this passage condemning the wearing of decent and respectful or presentable clothing? _____

Question: What is this passage clearly condemning? _____

Question: Does it appear that God cares how we dress around others? _____

5. **Revelation 3:5**

He who overcomes will thus be **clothed in white garments**; and I will not erase his name from the book of life, and I will confess his name before My Father and before His angels.

[Rev 2:7; Rev 3:4] [Ex 32:32f; Ps 69:28; Luke 10:20; Rev 13:8; 17:8; 20:12, 15; 21:27] [Matt 10:32; Luke 12:8]

Question: In the heavenly scene, does God describe special garments worn by His faithful?

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Do You Really Love Your Neighbor?, Your Brother?, The Lost? ... God?

6. 1 Cor.9:19-22

For though I am free from all men, I have *made myself a slave to all*, so that I *may win more*. To the Jews I became as a Jew, so that I might win Jews; to those who are under the Law, as under the Law though not being myself under the Law, so that I *might win those* who are under the Law; to those who are without law, as without law, though *not being without the law of God* but *under the law of Christ*, so that I might *win those* who are without law. To the weak I became weak, that I might *win the weak*; *I have become all things to all men*, so that I may by *all means save some*. *I do all things for the sake of the gospel*, so that I may become a fellow partaker of it.

Question: What are we obligated to do as Christ's "free men"? _____

Question: What is our motivation for making ourselves the slave of others? _____

Question: What kinds of things must we be prepared to do for all men and for the sake of the Gospel? _____

Question: If this included dressing in a certain way so as to be respectful and not offend lost visitors, would you do it? _____

7. 2 Corinthians 8:21

For we *have regard* for *what is honorable*, not only in the sight of the Lord, but also *in the sight of men*.

Question: Should we care about what is "honorable" in the sight of men? _____

Question: Is the Christian responsible for caring what men think about respectful clothing? _____

8. Romans 12:17

Never pay back evil for evil to anyone. *Respect what is right in the sight of all men*. If possible, so far as it depends on you, *be at peace with all men*.

Question: Are Christians obligated or commanded to "respect" what is right in the sight of "all men"? _____

Question: Why wouldn't this also include dressing in respectful attire for a worship service? _____

9. 1 Jno.4:20,21

If someone says, "I love God," and hates his brother, he is a liar; for the one who does not love his brother whom he has seen, cannot love God whom he has not seen. And this commandment we have from Him, that the one who loves God should love his brother also.

Question: If someone says that they love God, but will not dress a certain way that is respectful or modest, what does the Bible call that person? _____

10. 2 Cor.5:11-20

Therefore, knowing the fear of the Lord, *we persuade men*, but we are made manifest to God; and I hope that we are made manifest also in your consciences. We are not again commending ourselves to you but are giving you an occasion to be proud of us, *so that you will have an answer for those who take pride in appearance and not in heart*. For if we are beside ourselves, it is for God; if we are of sound mind, it is for you. For the *love of Christ controls us*,

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having concluded this, that one died for all, therefore all died; and He died for all, so that they who live ***might no longer live for themselves***, but for Him who died and rose again on their behalf. Therefore from now on we recognize no one according to the flesh; even though we have known Christ according to the flesh, yet now we know Him in this way no longer. Therefore if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creature; the old things passed away; behold, new things have come. Now all these things are from God, who reconciled us to Himself through Christ and ***gave us the ministry of reconciliation***, namely, that God was in Christ reconciling the world to Himself, not counting their trespasses against them, and He has committed to us the word of reconciliation. Therefore, we are ambassadors for Christ, ***as though God were making an appeal through us***; we beg you on behalf of Christ, be reconciled to God.

Question: What is our mission as ambassadors for Christ? _____

Question: As ambassadors, do we represent ourselves or someone else? _____

Question: If we truly no longer live for ourselves, will we fight for our "right" to have no regard for what other men think of our behavior or clothing? _____

Question: From this passage, what would be a possible motivation for dressing a certain way for a worship hour? _____

11. **Acts 18:18**

Paul, having remained many days longer, took leave of the brethren and put out to sea for Syria, and with him were Priscilla and Aquila. In Cenchrea ***he had his hair cut, for he was keeping a vow***. [Nu.6:2,5,9,18; Ac.21:19-26].

Question: Are there any reasons you can now think of why Paul would be shaving his head and keeping this vow? _____

Question: If someone has a problem with wearing a tie or other clothes for worship, does it appear that they would more quickly "shave their head" or take such a vow? _____

12. **Acts 21:19-26**

After he had greeted them, he began to relate one by one the things which ***God had done among the Gentiles through his ministry***. And when they heard it they began glorifying God; and they said to him, "You see, brother, how many thousands there are among the Jews of those who have believed, and they are all zealous for the Law; and they have been told about you, that you are teaching all the Jews who are among the Gentiles to forsake Moses, telling them not to circumcise their children nor to walk according to the customs. "What, then, is to be done? They will certainly hear that you have come. "Therefore do this that we tell you. We have four men who are under a vow; ***take them and purify yourself along with them***, and ***pay their expenses*** so that they ***may shave their heads***; and all will know that there is nothing to the things which they have been told about you, but that ***you yourself also walk orderly***, keeping the Law. "But concerning the Gentiles who have believed, we wrote, having decided that they should abstain from meat sacrificed to idols and from blood and from what is strangled and from fornication." Then Paul took the men, and the next day, ***purifying himself along with them***, went into the temple giving notice of the completion of the days of purification, ***until the sacrifice was offered for each one of them***.

Question: What two things did the apostle Paul do in this passage that, at first glance, didn't seem to be required by the "Law of Christ"? _____

Question: Why did the brethren insist on having Paul and four others do this? _____

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Question: Why did Paul do this? And even give money to the Temple? _____

Question: Would you shave your head just to reach out to a certain group of people? _____

Question: If you say you would, would you wear certain clothes that says "respect" in our culture or society? _____ Really? _____

13. Acts 16:1-4

Paul came also to Derbe and to Lystra. And a disciple was there, named Timothy, the son of a Jewish woman who was a believer, but his father was a Greek, and he was well spoken of by the brethren who were in Lystra and Iconium. Paul *wanted this man to go with him*; and he took him and *circumcised him because of the Jews who were in those parts*, for they all knew that his father was a Greek. Now while they were passing through the cities, they were delivering the *decrees which had been decided upon by the apostles and elders* who were in Jerusalem, *for them to observe*.

Question: Why did Paul want to take a certain man with him on a missionary journey? _____

Question: What was an issue of concern for Paul that might be an obstacle from taking Timothy? _____

Question: What Paul concerned about how the Jewish audience might respond to the appearance or race of a fellow laborer in the Gospel? _____

Question: How did both Paul and Timothy deal with that obstacle? _____

Question: If you or someone you know won't submit to wearing a tie or other "respectful" apparel for the Lord's Memorial service, do you see them as willingly submitting to circumcision to reach the lost? _____

14. Matt.22:37-40

And He said to him, "YOU SHALL LOVE THE LORD YOUR GOD WITH ALL YOUR HEART, AND WITH ALL YOUR SOUL, AND WITH ALL YOUR MIND." "This is the great and foremost commandment. "The second is like it, YOU SHALL LOVE YOUR NEIGHBOR AS YOURSELF." On these two commandments depend the whole Law and the Prophets."

Question: According to this passage, What is Loving you God with all your heart like? _____

Question: If you say you'd wear more respectful attire if God required it directly, but you won't because only your neighbor may want that from you, are you really loving God? _____

Some Additional Thoughts

- ❖ Dress may suggest whether a person is rich or poor (Jas. 2: 2).
- ❖ Clothing can reveal sorrow (2 Sam. 3: 31).
- ❖ Certain clothing can identify one's belonging to a particular group, such as a gang or life style (cp. Zeph. 1: 8).
- ❖ A male or female can be announced by distinctive apparel (Deut. 22: 5).
- ❖ Prisoners can be detected by their dress (Jere. 52: 33).

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- ❖ Certain clothing may reveal particular activity, such as having attended a wedding (Matt. 22: 1 ff.).
- ❖ The quality of dress can reveal how well a mother has provided for her family (Prov. 31: 21, 22).
- ❖ Clothing can also announce a harlot (Prov. 7: 10).
- ❖ ***You see, those who believe the Bible is silent relative to dress have not really considered what the Bible says about clothing.***

- ❖ We dress accordingly for different purposes and functions (Gen. 41: 14; Matt. 22: 11-13).
- ❖ Public worship should be no exception. The fact that most people in our society still attend public worship in a shirt & tie for men, and an appropriate length dress or suite for women is clear.
- ❖ ***It must not be lost either how our society as a whole shows proper respect in attire when attending the Memorial service of a loved or honored one. The Primary reason for our gathering together on the 1st day of the week in to participate in the Lord's Memorial Service! "Do this in Memorial of Me!", 1 Cor.11:19,24,25; Lk.22:19; Acts 20:7)***
- ❖ The priests of old wore clothing that reflected the gravity and solemnity of the occasion (Ex. 28: 2 ff., 1 Pet. 2: 9).
- ❖ 1 Timothy 2 - Paul addresses the attire of women thus: "In like manner also, that women adorn themselves in modest apparel, with shamefacedness and sobriety; not with broided hair, or gold, or pearls, or costly array..." (vs. 9). The descriptive terms used are very helpful in determining the teaching and requisites.
- ❖ The specified attire for the priests was designed to cover their "nakedness" (Ex. 28: 42). God specified clothing covered their "thighs" (the exposing of the thighs was called nakedness).

Conclusion

- ❖ In general, clothing that is not gaudy,
- ❖ appropriate for the occasion,
- ❖ distinguishes the genders,
- ❖ does not take priority over the spiritual development,
- ❖ shows a sense of shame and good judgment,
- ❖ is well arranged, and covers the thighs taught in the Bible.
- ❖ Our dress should be humble, simple and unpretentious. (Hence no "Tux" or "Gown")
- ❖ our clothing should not be expensive, ostentatious or flashy.
- ❖ In closing, ***"clothes do not make the person, but they often reveal the person!"***

Tim Smith

- ❖ We are at a church meeting, not a fashion show. The goal is not to draw attention to ourselves. "Over-dressing" for meetings frequently ensures that the attention and eyes of others are on us rather than on the LORD.

- ❖ ***"So whether you eat or drink or whatever you do, do it all for the glory of God."***
(1 Corinthians 10:31).

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