

Our Distinctive Garment

What The Prayer Shawl Means To Us

By Bro. Wayne Coleman

Section 1: What the Shawl Is

Num 15:37-40

37 And the LORD spake unto Moses, saying,

38 Speak unto the children of Israel, and bid them that they make them fringes in the borders of their garments throughout their generations, and that they put upon the fringe of the borders a ribband of blue:

39 And it shall be unto you for a fringe, that ye may look upon it, and remember all the commandments of the LORD, and do them; and that ye seek not after your own heart and your own eyes, after which ye use to go a whoring:

40 That ye may remember, and do all my commandments, and be holy unto your God.

Prayer shawl is a prayer closet- We wrap ourselves in the will of God.

Matt 6:6

6 But thou, when thou prayest, enter into thy closet, and when thou hast shut thy door, pray to thy Father which is in secret; and thy Father which seeth in secret shall reward thee openly

Prayer shawl is called the Tallit- *The garment of fringes.*

Num 15:38-39

38 Speak unto the children of Israel, and bid them that they make them fringes in the borders of their garments throughout their generations, and that they put upon the fringe of the borders a ribband of blue:

39 And it shall be unto you for a fringe, that ye may look upon it, and remember all the commandments of the LORD, and do them; and that ye seek not after your own heart and your own eyes, after which ye use to go a whoring:

Deut 22:12

12 Thou shalt make thee fringes upon the four quarters of thy vesture, wherewith thou coverest thyself.

Num 15:38

The ordinary outer Jewish garment was a quadrangular piece of cloth like a modern plaid, to the corners of which, in conformity with this command, a tassel was attached. Each tassel had a conspicuous thread of deep blue, this color being doubtless symbolic of the heavenly origin of the commandments of which it was to serve as a memento. Tradition determined that the other threads should be white-this color being an emblem of purity (from Barnes' Notes, Electronic Database. Copyright (c) 1997 by BibleSoft)

Num 15:37-41

2. The intention of it was to remind them that they were a peculiar people. They were not appointed for the trimming and adorning of their clothes, but to stir up their pure minds by way of remembrance (2 Peter 3:1), that they might look upon the fringe and remember the commandments. Many look upon their ornaments to feed their pride, but they must look upon these ornaments to awaken their consciences to a sense of their duty, that their religion might constantly beset them, and that they might carry it about with them, as they did their clothes, wherever they went. If they were tempted to sin, the fringe would be a monitor to them not to break God's commandments: If a duty was forgotten to be done in its season, the fringe would remind them of it. This institution, though it is not an imposition upon us, is an instruction to us, always to remember the commandments of the Lord our God, that we may do them, to treasure them up in our memories, and to apply them to particular cases as there is occasion to use them. It was intended particularly to be a preservative from idolatry: that you seek not after your own heart, and your own eyes, in your religious worship. Yet it may extend also to the whole conversation, for nothing is more contrary to God's honour, and our own true interest, than to walk in the way of our heart and in the sight of our eyes; for the imagination of the heart is evil, and so is the lust of the eyes.

(from Matthew Henry's Commentary on the Whole Bible: New Modern Edition, Electronic Database. Copyright (c) 1991 by Hendrickson Publishers, Inc.)

Section 2: Elements of the Shawl

1. **Fringes-** Called the Tzit Tzit- Represent the 613 positive and negative precepts of the law. (**Verse 38**)

a. **When the woman in Matt. Touched Jesus' hem, she touched these fringes!**

Matt 9:20-21

20 And, behold, a woman, which was diseased with an issue of blood twelve years, came behind him, and touched the hem of his garment:

21 For she said within herself, If I may but touch his garment, I shall be whole.

b. **Means to be set apart**

2. **Strings-** Symbolize being bound up with God.

3. **Blue Stripes-** *Tchellet/Tekelleth-* A dye taken from an ancient mussel. Representative of the dye used in the garments of the priesthood.

Recently, the mussel used to make the blue dye for the priest robe has been appearing in droves off the coast of Israel, after being lost for 2,000 years!!

4. **Gold stripes-** Representative of golden threads in the ephod of priest.

Ex 28:8

8 And the curious girdle of the ephod, which is upon it, shall be of the same, according to the work thereof; even of **gold**, of blue, and purple, and scarlet, and fine twined linen.

5. **Knots-** 5 is the number of Grace

Section 3: Mathematics of the shawl

1. Tzit Tzit = 600

+ 5 (the number of knots on each fringe) = GRACE

+ 8 strings =

The Number Eight--In Hebrew the number eight is hnm# (*Sh'moneh*), from the root Nm# (*Shah'meyn*), "to make fat," "cover with fat," "to super-abound."

Total----- 613 (Precepts of the law)

2. Fringe is wrapped around 26 times- The number of Mercy. As one wraps himself in the shawl, he is enveloping himself in God's Mercy!!

3. In Ashkenazic tradition, the fringes are wrapped around 26 plus 13 times.

4.The number 13 is equivalent to to the word Echad, or One.

5. The fringes become the declarative statement- *Ha Shem Echad- God Is One!*

Being covered in the shawl is akin to being enveloped in the shekinah glory of God (Divine Presence)

Acts 17:28

28 For in him we live, and move, and have our being; as certain also of your own poets have said, For we are also his offspring.

1 Chron 16:27

27 Glory and honour are in his presence; strength and gladness are in his place.