

What Are Tzitziyot – Part 1

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MAIN VERSES

[Numbers 15:37](#) • [Numbers 15:38](#) • [Numbers 15:39](#) • [Deuteronomy 22:12](#) • [Ezekiel 8:3](#) • [Galatians 3:29](#) • [Ephesians 2](#) • [Romans 10](#) • [Romans 11](#) • [Luke 8:41](#) • [Luke 8:42](#) • [Luke 8:43](#) • [Luke 8:44](#) • [Luke 8:45](#) • [Luke 8:46](#) • [Luke 8:47](#) • [Luke 8:48](#) • [Malachi 4:2](#) • [1 Samuel 24:3](#) • [1 Samuel 24:4](#) • [1 Samuel 24:5](#) • [1 Samuel 24:6](#) • [1 Samuel 24:7](#) • [1 Samuel 24:8](#) • [1 Samuel 24:9](#) • [1 Samuel 24:10](#) • [1 Samuel 24:11](#) • [1 Samuel 24:20](#) • [Exodus 19](#) • [Romans 6](#) • [Romans 7](#)

Hey everybody, this is Matthew VanderWaals with Founded in Truth Ministries. Today we're going to be speaking about a very specific topic.

Now, this may be a topic that you've learned something about before, and maybe it's not. Maybe it's something you've never even heard about. For me, this has been a topic that I've researched over the past 13 years, and I thought I knew every single thing about it, and then I realized one day that I didn't, that I really didn't know a whole lot about it. I just thought I did, which never happens, right? Anyway, the topic that we're going to be discussing today continuing in our foundational series is what are Tzitziyot?

Now, many of us understand the premise of Tzitziot and the commandment of God to command the children of Israel to wear these little tassels that dangle down on their garments. And we may have seen many, many, many messages and many teachings about them. I, for one, have. And I almost didn't even do this message, to be perfectly honest, because there's so much information out there already that I've used in my past to learn about the commandments of God and to learn about the tassels that God commanded Israel to wear and the specific kind of unique, kind of odd clothing that was actually a commandment, a fulfillment of a positive commandment to wear in God's kingdom.

And then I came across some sources and I started actually studying history and archaeology and anthropology and realized that Personally, me, in 13 years I've been learning the Hebraic roots of my faith, I really didn't understand the topic as much as I thought I did. Which again, that never happens, right?

A Topic I Thought I Knew

And so today we're going to be speaking about what are tzitziot. Now before we go any further, I try to make it a point to name my sources. And I want to go ahead and give you my sources right now. That way you too can go back and study this topic. If you'd like to learn more about the history behind it, if you'd like to dig into some other teachings that go a little bit deeper than I'm going to go today, I'm going to give you those as well.

And my number one resource for this message was actually an article by Jacob Milgram. Now, Jacob Milgram was a conservative rabbi that died in the early 2000s, I think. And he was, let me just put it this way: He is a scholar who is universally known as the expert on the book of Leviticus in modern academia. This guy is no joke. His name is Jacob Milgram, and from a secular standpoint, secular academia, and secular scholarship, he is known as the expert on the book of Leviticus.

And he has a lot of great insights concerning the ancient Near East, concerning the ancient culture of Israel, and concerning the surrounding cultures around Israel. If we look at the Hittites, or the Babylonians, or Mesopotamians, or the Egyptians, sometimes we can find cultural parallels between them and Israel and understand why Israel was doing certain things in the Bible.

And so it's very important to look at modern scholarship just to try to get another angle on how we understand things. And so Jacob Milgram wrote a 17-page essay called *Of Hymns and Tassels*, and he submitted it to the *Biblical Archaeological Review* in 1983, and they actually published it. And I think his work is also published in the *JPS Commentary of the Book of Numbers*, specifically chapters 15, as we'll soon discover. So check that out. A lot of the information I'm presenting today comes from Jacob Milgram's article.

Also, a book that I highly recommend to understand the equality in ancient Israel and in the Torah is *ancient Near Eastern thought and the Old Testament* by John Walton.

Now, John Walton, I believe he's a believer, and he is one of the few scholars who write about ancient Near Eastern thought and history who's actually a believer. His books are currently being studied in Baptist seminaries throughout the U.S. And so it's really, really, really cool to see such a depth of scholarship entering into the seminaries and building up the next generation of ministers in the faith. And so it's pretty cool.

Naming Your Sources

So those are the two main resources I used for this presentation. But I also need to tell you guys about some other teachers and some other teachings. If you want to go deeper than what I'm going to provide today, you guys got to check out a good friend of mine, Ryan White. I highly, highly, highly look up to Ryan.

He's one of the few Hebrew teachers who is actually pursuing a master's in theology right now. He's studying Greek, Hebrew, Near Eastern culture, and First Century Roman culture. He has a lot of information. Back in 2013, he actually did a teaching called The Hymn and the Garment. Now, this was a message that really rocked my world, and I'll just leave it at that. It really rocked my world. It really messed me up because it approached the idea of tzitzit and biblical clothing in the context of what Scripture portrays. It really portrayed it from an angle I had never even seen before, and so I want to thank Ryan for that. You can check out his website at www.rootedintour.com. All of his teachings are well worth your time.

So I really want to toss that out there. And also a good friend of mine and another peer that I look up to is Matt Knapper over at Beit Lecha Messianic Congregation. Now he did a message called Zit Zit, Biblical Instruction, History, and Modern Usage. Now this message that he did was so detailed and he just hammered the history, the academic history behind Zietziot so well. It was just so easy to understand. I got to give him props. And looking over his message really gave me a great workflow to move off of. It really gave me a good workflow to follow, if you will. And so I want to express my appreciation for the hard work that he put into his message. And if you want to go deeper into the topic of Zietziot, check it, find them on Facebook, check them out online and get his teaching on that. Cause he takes it to a level that I'm not even going to scratch the surface of today.

Resources Show Credibility

It's always good to name your sources. And I'm never shy about doing that. Number one, because if you disagree with me, then you don't even have to email me all angry. You can just email the sources, right? And you can just badger them. And number two, I never want to give the impression that I am somehow smart or skilled or God just uploaded all this information into my brain. Guys, I learn from other people, and other teachers in this movement learn from other people. Whether these other teachers tell you they do or not, they do. They read books, they read authors, and they learn from other teachers. And I want to be one of the teachers that gives honor where it is due, as Rico always tells us to do.

And so these are my resources. I am not smarter than anyone else. I just read. That's it. Okay? And so it's very, very, very, very, very important, guys, that when you teach a message or when you're learning from another teacher, resources show the credibility of what you're learning. Okay? And so never ever ever be ashamed to email your teacher or ask your teacher if they're teaching something and you're like, "Hmm, I wonder where he got that from?" Ask them what their sources were. What materials did they use to put together their presentation? That should never be something that's hidden in the background. It should never be something that someone's ashamed of at all.

Kosher Clothing

So now we continue. And so we have this biblical mandate.

Now, how many of you guys know that there is actually such a thing as kosher clothing? Now I know everybody's looking at the computer going, "Mmm-hmm, yeah, kosher clothing." I'm not talking about modesty. We have kosher clothing. We have clothing that is kosher according to biblical standards, and I use kosher loosely, just like food is. We have clothing that God told Israel, "Listen, you guys have come out of Egypt, you've come out of slavery, I am your redeemer. Through the strength of my right arm, I've pulled you out. And now I want you to dress a certain way.

Now, how many of you guys, let's just be honest, if God said, hey, I want you to wear this t-shirt every single day to show the world that you're in my kingdom and you represent me and that I am your king and I am your God, would you wear that t-shirt? I mean, that would be a cool t-shirt. Yahweh's son or something, that'd be pretty cool, I don't know. And so what's fascinating about this is we actually have a commandment that God gave to Israel concerning clothing. Now, he didn't tell them to wear a specific t-shirt that had, like, his logo or something on it, but let's just take a look.

The Biblical Command

So in Numbers chapter 15, starting in verse 37, here's what God says: "And the Lord said to Moses, 'Speak to the Israelites, speak to the children of Israel, and tell them to make fringes on the corners of their garments throughout their generations.'"

So not just this generation, but throughout all their generations. Okay, after that, after that, your kids, grandkids, great-grandkids, 10,000 generations from now, I want you to make these fringes on the corners of your garments. Okay? This is a very incredible verse and we're going to

be digging into it just a little bit deeper here in just a minute. But the first thing I want to review is who is God speaking to—the Israelites. So the word for the children of Israel in the King James Version is, I think, "bene"—"bene Yisrael." Now the word "bene" is used about 153 times in the book of Numbers, and every single time it's used, it refers to all of the children of Israel.

It really doesn't specify if there is a division—if the little kids should wear them, if women should wear them, if men should wear them. And so we just take it for what it is, and all the children of Israel are commanded to wear these tassels with a quarter blue in them.

Now if you're unfamiliar with this concept, we have a modern-day version of these tassels right here. In Judaism, you may see Orthodox believers and many Messianic or Hebrew roots believers wear them, and we wear them at the four corners of our garments. I have a tallit katan—I got a hole in it, I'm a holy man, we're gonna go on this side, that was embarrassing. And here they are. And we have a tassel that's attached to a t-shirt that I have underneath.

And you'll see that it's white with a few different knots on it, signifying specific things. It has a lot of meaning, but you'll notice the blue cord. And this is my way of attempting to fulfill this commandment in a biblical context and culture.

The Tassels Explained

And these things are called "zitziot" or "zit-zit," and that word for tassel used in Numbers is where we get that term. "Zit-zit"—tassel. We also see in [Deuteronomy 22:12](#) this commandment repeated: "You shall make tassels on the four corners of your clothing which you cover yourself." And so that's fascinating.

The word there for tassels in Deuteronomy is a little bit different. It's actually the word for "hem." And sometimes you'll see that's interchangeable. Why? Because typically the tassel is an extension of the hem, if you will. And so this word for tassel that's used in Numbers is the Hebrew word tzitzit—tzitzit or tzitziot for plural. And it literally means a tassel or maybe a hanging lock of hair, things that dangle, you know what I mean? Fringed edges on a garment.

I have here a modern prayer shawl that is typically used in Judaism. And you will see, as I'm putting it on for demonstration purposes here, at the edges we have fringes, right? This technically could be known as a zizit—a fringe, a fringed edge of a hem, okay? And at the four corners of modern talits, if you will, contemporary talits or prayer shawls, you have the ziziot once again with the blue cord going through a special tassel, if you will.

Now, what's fascinating is that this word is only used three times in Scripture. It's used twice in Numbers chapter 15, verses 38 and 39, and it's used once in [Ezekiel 8:3](#). I think it's used in the context of a lock of hair hanging down. And so we find that very interesting.

So we have this commandment. And God's giving this commandment, so you know it's important, right? And God's commanding his people, those people who are following him, the covenant people, anyone who wants to join the covenant, join his kingdom, right? Which would be Israel, according to [Galatians 3:29](#), [Ephesians 2](#), and [Romans 10](#) and 11, grafting into what? Grafting into the nation of God and the kingdom of God through the blood of Messiah.

Remember All the Commandments

We have this commandment from God that says you need to wear this little tassel. Now, I'm okay with wearing it, and I'll sport it and that's fine. But is there a bigger meaning behind it? Why did God command Israel to wear these tassels? Okay, well, let's take a look back at the verse one more time and see if we can figure this out.

"...that you may look upon it and remember all the commandments of the Lord and do them. And that you may not follow the harlotry, the whoredom, to which your own heart and your own eyes are inclined, and that you may remember and do all my commandments."

So what God's saying is that when you look at the tassels, the purpose is to remind you of his sovereignty and his kingdom and his commandments, okay? So that you will do them and you will not be inclined to go off running after your own flesh and the desires of your eyes and the desires of your heart.

Now, I don't know if you guys remember this. Back in the 90s—I know, a long time ago—we used to have something that we wore on our wrists and we had necklaces, right? And as Christians, we would walk around and whenever we would get in a situation, whether it was a time of lust or whether it was a time of sin or whether it was a time when we were fixing to do something wrong, I don't know. Or I'm hanging around the wrong friends. And you would look down at this bracelet and it would remind you of the commandments of God. And it would remind you what Jesus would do.

Remember the bracelets? WWJD bracelet, right? You would look down and you would think, "What would Jesus do in my situation right now?" If Jesus was here, what would he do? And it would remind you of the covenant that you have with God and it would remind you of the kingdom that you're serving and it would remind you of the expectations that God has for you in his kingdom. And you would go from there.

Wearing the Jersey of the King

Guys, I have something very exciting to tell you. The tzitzit, according to Numbers chapter 15, verses 37-38, these are like the biblical WWJD bracelets. This is exactly what God said. He says, "I want everyone who claims to follow me to wear these things and every single time they're going to look at them, they're going to be reminded of what their responsibility is in the kingdom because when they wear these things, they're going to be wearing the jersey of the king."

Okay, if you ever play football, you typically have two teams, right? And each team is signified by what? A jersey. Now when you wear the jersey, it tells everybody which team you're playing for and you have expectations on that team. In other words, you have expectations to grab the ball and run to the opposite side of the field, not take the ball back to your field goal. If you did that, then people would get confused, right? Because you're not acting within the scope of the expectations of the team that you represent.

This is the jersey of the king. This is the protocol. This is the clothing, the kosher clothing that God told Israel. He said, "Listen guys, the world is going to look at you and I want them to know that I am your king and I want them to know about my kingdom when they see you. And how are they going to do that? Somehow they're going to know when they see the tassels." This is the jersey of our king, if you will. And that's so exciting.

Why Did God Command Tassels?

And so we have these biblical examples and we know God told Israel to wear these tassels. And I'll be honest with you, in 2016, these look kind of weird. We can be real with each other. You're walking around Walmart with these little things dangling up and down and people look at you weird and you're like, "What in the world? Why would God tell Israel to wear tassels? Why couldn't he tell them to wear a t-shirt or something fashionable? A cool little v-neck t-shirt with a little yo, hey, vav, hey, I don't know. Something. Why did he tell them to wear tassels?"

And so in modern-day research and academia, we have access to something called comparative research. And basically what this term means is that we have the ability to study ancient Israel and the neighbors around it. We can study Egypt, we can study Hattusa, we can study Babylon and Sumeria and Greater Mesopotamia, and we can study other cultures outside of Israel but within the same time era, right? And when we do this, sometimes we get some insights about why Israel did certain things.

Now I have a quote from John Walton, and this is one of my favorite quotes because it really changed the way I looked at the Bible. And it may irritate some of you, it may offend some of you, and some of you may send me a nasty email, and that's okay too. I get a lot of them. And his quote is essentially that the Bible was written for you. It was. Absolutely, you pick it up. God's intention was that the Bible was written for you, but the Bible was not written to you.

Written to an Ancient Culture

Who was it written to? It was written to an ancient culture thousands of years ago. Now, when the Bible was written, it was addressing them, and it was speaking about things that they understood in their culture and that they walked out in their everyday life. Okay, and unfortunately the entire Bible did not come with a huge commentary dictating what every single little thing means. Okay, and it doesn't need to.

We are perfectly able to pick up the Bible, learn about the covenants of God, learn about the salvation of our God and his love for us, and that he would stop at nothing, not even his only son, to bridge the gap and give us the message of reconciliation back to him. That's not what I'm talking about. I'm talking about the little things in the Bible, such as tassels.

When Israel received the command to put on dangly tassels at the corners of their garment, what did they think? Did they think, "Well, that's weird. Why would we do that?" Or did they think, "Wow, I understand why God told us to do that."

Have I got your interest? Did you guys know that Israel was not the only kingdom that wore tassels in the Near East? Seriously, there were many, many, many, many, many other nations that wore tassels in the Near East.

And the reason was what they represented. Because this specific type of clothing was only worn by a specific class of people. And when God told everybody to wear it, it made a statement that echoed throughout the world. So I have a graphic here. And this is actually a painting that was on the wall of Pharaoh Seti I's tomb. He died around 1280-1300 BCE, somewhere around that. But when he died, he had a painting in his tomb. And this painting depicts the four known kingdoms of the world, or races of the world. Race wouldn't be a good term, but the four different types of people that existed in the world according to the Egyptians. Okay? And this painting is also found in the Egyptian Book of the Gates, which is a funerary text, and it's just a really freaky text. It's kind of weird, so I didn't get into all that. But regardless, we'll see this painting again throughout Egyptology.

The Four Kingdoms of the World

And so if you look, you'll see something very interesting. These guys right here, these nice looking fellows with no shirts on and nice little skirts down here, these were Asiatics, okay? These were Mesopotamians, if you will. Egypt understood who they were and they depicted them very correctly in this painting, right? And next to them is the Nubian kingdom, okay? Just to the south of Egypt, right? Okay, and then next to them we have the Berber tribes. These white looking folks, right? They're pasty from Ireland or something, I don't know. But these guys are actually from Northwestern Africa, the Berber tribes. They were like Morocco and so on and so forth. And Egypt understood them, right? And then down here we have the actual Egyptian tribes.

Tassels as Markers of Status

Now I want to show you something very, very, very, very cool. If we go back over to the Mesopotamians, here we go. Look right here. What is dangling on the bottom of their garments? Take a good look. I'll give you three guesses. These are tassels, right? With different colors on them, they're fancy, and so on and so forth. These are tassels. Mesopotamians wore tassels. Now we're going to go over this later in the message, but essentially you were what you wore in the Near East during this time period. And something that took place was between the different divisions and classes, and between the slaves and the elites—the elites were recognized by the things that they wore. And if you wore these fancy, fancy, fancy expensive tassels with this expensive blue dye in them, people knew that you were not a lower bottom of the barrel individual in society. They knew that you were an upper-class outstanding individual. And so that's when we see, especially in the Mesopotamian area, that's what we see these tassels.

Now here we have another picture. Again, you have the Berber tribe, you have the Nubians, you have the Mesopotamians, and then you have the Egyptians right here on the side. Again, with the Mesopotamians, you have tassels. Why? Because this individual who's being portrayed here is meant to represent the entire kingdom of Mesopotamia according to Egyptian literature, Egyptian paintings. And so he was kind of a higher up individual in Mesopotamia.

An Egyptian Relief of Prisoners

Here we have another relief. And this one is actually a relief of Egypt taking prisoners. Now we don't really have a big story behind this. I didn't have time to really look into it. No, I don't

think these are Hebrews that they're taking prisoner. But at the very front here, you have the Egyptian, right? And he's leading the pack. He's kind of like grabbing the chains and pulling them forward, if you will. And then look at everyone behind him. If you zoom in here, look at what they have on their garments. They have tassels, right? Right? And so that's fascinating.

Now some people may get upset, well Matt, these are tassels and tassels were given to the Israelites and this must be a relief about the Egyptians taking the Israelites as slaves into the land of Egypt. That's a great thought, but remember the commandment for Israel to wear the tassels wasn't given until after their freedom from Egypt. So yeah.

Assyrian Sacred Trees

Now this is one of my favorite reliefs. And I have a reason for that. Back in 2014, I did a big Christmas teaching and a lot of it was addressing all the junk that's going around Facebook. Now you guys know, if you ever see a meme or a graphic on Facebook that tries to depict some type of ancient Near Eastern history and tries to somehow connect it to some type of modern day celebration or some junk like that, most likely it is not accurate. Okay? Okay, great. So when I was doing this research about these graphics and these memes that were circulating around Facebook and they were anachronistically placing a bunch of Christmas junk back in like the 10th century BCE with graphics like this or three leafs like this, I learned a lot about Assyrian myth and ancient Assyrian myths, beliefs and culture. And so this relief is actually from the ancient city of Chalah. So we get challah bread, right? That was a joke. Don't tell people that. It was a joke.

So the ancient city of Chalah, and it actually existed kind of close to the ancient city of Nineveh. And I'm kind of upset about it because ISIS last year destroyed the remaining structures that were in the city of Chalah, especially, and the palace that this relief was actually found in. So it's very upsetting. Gladly, most of the remains were actually shipped to the British Museum a long time ago. So we still have history intact and they didn't destroy all of it.

The Sacred Tree and the King

And so this relief was put in place in the palace of Ashurnasipul II. Now Ashurnasipul II was the king of Assyria in the 10th century BCE. Okay, and this was a relief that was in his throne room. Okay, now I know what you guys are thinking, what in the world? Look, there's a big old tree and there's like four different figures. Actually, there's only three figures. I know, your brain's kind of messing with you. And this tree here is something very interesting. Now, please

do not tell people that this is a Christmas tree. This is not a Christmas tree. Okay, this is a sacred tree. It's the same type of tree that existed in the rest of Assyrian history. It existed in Persia, ancient Persia, and it's the same type of tree that exists in the biblical narrative of Israel. Remember, we have that sacred tree, the tree of life that started in the garden. If we believe that everything started in the garden, then we're going to see the concept of a sacred tree or a tree of life, right, scattered throughout many different cultures. Okay, so this is a sacred tree.

Now on each side of the tree you have Assyrian guardians or Assyrian angels. You can tell this by their wings here, okay? And they're watering the tree, if you will, and they're tending to the tree. And remember in the garden, in the narrative in Genesis, remember we had two angels, right? We had two angels that guarded the gateway to the garden and they guarded the gateway to the tree of life, right? Look at this. No one's allowed past them, but look at this guy. So this guy right here is actually King Ashurnasipul II. And look where he stands. He stands in front of the angel and this relief is basically portraying him with all authority and all power to be able to approach the sacred tree in Assyrian myth, and he is actually on both sides of the tree. Okay? This is not two different people on either side of the tree. This is the same guy on either side of the tree. This is the king. Okay? And he is the one, he is the one that has the authority to approach the sacred tree in Assyrian myth. Okay?

A Statement of Power

Now, yes, this is a pagan kingdom. Please don't think that I'm like saying that he's a real powerful king or something. This is just history. Okay? I am discussing history. Okay? I'm going to get some emails. I already know. So, what's so significant about this is this actually stood behind the throne of King Ashurnasipul II. Okay, so I want to give you a visual. So let's just say that here's a throne room and I'm King Ashurnasipul and I am going to sit on my throne and my throne would be before the sacred tree in Assyrian myth. And so if you approached me in my throne room, look at what you see. You see angels that are supporting me in approaching the tree of life, if you will, or the sacred tree behind me. I'm the one that can do it. And you see my right side, you see my left side, and now you're seeing me from the front surrounding the sacred tree in the pagan religion that we believe in, in Assyrian myth. It would be quite the statement when you approach the king in this manner. Okay? And so I love this. I think it's really exciting. And so hopefully you learned something too about Assyrian myth.

Written Testimony

Also, if you see all of this scribble right here, in every single relief found in his palace there are angels carrying goats around and angels carrying a deer around with a little tree, maybe a branch from the tree of life. Who knows? It's not Santa Claus. Please don't think it's Santa Claus. And in every single one of these reliefs, you'll see the scribble across the walls. And the scribble is actually a testimony of how great King Ashurnasipul was when he renovated the ancient city of Nineveh and the ancient city of Chalah. And so that's just basically a testimony of how great the king is. So you approach the king, right? You see the king with the tree of life behind him, but you also see him flanking either side of the tree of life, backed up by the angels, right? And written on the relief is actually the testimony of how great the king is, right?

A Passion for History

So I say all of that. All of that was actually irrelevant to this message. I just really enjoy Assyrian history, at least from this time period.

And so I want you guys to look at something. What is the king wearing? He's wearing a huge garment robe, and look at the edges of his robe. Fringes, tassels. The more important you were in the Near East, the more high class you were, the more tassels you would have. You would have tassels, you would have fringes, you would have fancy clothing, you'd have brightly dyed clothing. Look, the angels are wearing the same thing. Why? Because they are not little peons. They are angels. They are lords of figures in this pagan society. Therefore, they have fringes. Okay?

And so when God told Israel to put fringes on the corners of their garment, it was very exciting because they had just come out of a time of slavery and they were a slave race. They came out of a time of slavery and then God tells them, listen guys, you're not a slave anymore. And you're not going to be looked down upon anymore. I want every single one of you, not just the high class, not just the elite, not just the priest, not just the kings. I want everybody to make tassels on the four corners of their garment so that everybody will know that my nation is a nation of equality and respect. And my nation is one that everybody is equal in. And people aren't like lower level equal, people are all leveled up and elevated. And my kingdom is one of princes and princesses—nobility and royalty. And so it's truly exciting.

The Meaning Behind the Fringe

In fact, if we go back to [Deuteronomy 22:12](#), when it talks about you shall make tassels on the four corners of your clothing of which you should cover yourself. Remember I was speaking

about that word tassel? There is actually not Zitzit, it's kanaph. Okay. It's the word for them. And kanaph actually means the edge or the corner or even extremity. And it's also used in scripture, it's also translated as the wing. Why is it translated as the wing? Well, it's the wing of the covering. Like when you cover yourself, it's the tips, the wings. And so 74 times in scripture, the word kanaph is actually translated as wings. And then 20 times it's translated as hem or even corner. And so we're going to get to that here in just a minute, but that's important to keep in mind.

Defining Corners in Ancient Culture

And so another issue that really hit me hard was corners in the Near East. If you've been in this movement for a while, or the Hebrew Roots Movement or Messianic Movement, you've probably heard of Zitzit and the four corners of your garment. And if you don't have a four-cornered garment, then you go out and buy a tallit katan like I did, a little t-shirt that has four corners, or you have a prayer shawl, tallit gadol or whatnot, that has four corners. In the Near East—don't stone me—there were not too many cornered garments. And when I say cornered, I mean cornered like we understand it today. Now people had cornered garments, but here's a perfect illustration.

So here's a relief drawing with three different depictions of tassels. Now on the first one here, we see that corners are actually defined as the intersections of the stripes going down the tassel. So if you had some patterned garments and you had stripes going down and at the intersections of the clothing where it was sewn together, at the bottom of the dyed stripe going down the outside of the material, that was considered a corner, even though in our terminology today, it's not a corner. It was an intersection. And we see that tassels were hung from this part of the clothing. We also see in these two other illustrations here that corners are defined as the scalloped edges.

And so these edges right here, the points—yes, it's a point, but it's not really a clear-cut corner. You know what I mean? It's just where the garment comes together where it's sewn, and at that intersection it happens to be a point. But there would typically be four of these things around the garment, and this would be where the tassels are tied. And then you also have today's definition of corners—with an actual corner—which is fine too. I don't think that there's anything non-biblical about our corners versus the multiple corners that were done in the Near East. There were several different ways to define the word corner.

I say this to try to put a little bit of ease to the dispute over the nitpicking of how to wear a tzitzit. I see people who are dogmatic about wearing four-cornered garments in a specific way, and they insist, "I have to have a four-cornered garment." And if someone's not wearing the tzitzit in a way that you feel is the exact corner garment, we'll just go back to the culture of ancient Israel and see that they may not have had the exact four-cornered garments that we think of today—it may have been something a little bit different. And so I say that because it was really humbling—it was a piece of humble pie for me when I ate it—because I was like, wow, it's not so black and white. These things that we want to be so detailed on and so nitpicky and black and white on, they're not always so black and white.

No, I don't think you're breaking the commandments if you have a four-cornered garment. I have a four-cornered garment, and that's not what I'm trying to say at all. Of course, four-cornered garments are kosher, but if someone doesn't have a four-cornered garment that is what you think a four-cornered garment should be, take a step back and just appreciate the fact that they're wearing the tassels of the king and they're on your team and they're wearing the jersey of the football team. You know what I mean? That they're your brother and sister and they're actually walking in the kingdom. So yeah, if you didn't know why I said that, awesome. That's awesome. If you do know why I said that, then awesome too. And so we understand the significance of the tzitzit, of the actual tassel and the blue. And we're going to go over the blue and why the blue was so important next time in part two. But we understand the purpose of the tassel.

A Mark of High Status

In Mesopotamia, the slaves didn't wear tassels. The lower class didn't wear tassels. It was only the high class. And so it was a very, very, very special thing when Israel came out of Egypt and had a chance to wear these tassels. You know, and we can do this.

Confronting Racism in the Church

So in Numbers chapter 12, we have a very interesting situation. And I'm not even sure if I'm allowed to talk about this topic or not, but I'll just talk about it anyway. And I'm sure I'll make some people really uncomfortable. And I'm going to talk about racism in America today and actually in the body of Messiah. So in Numbers chapter 12, we find a very interesting and special story. And I'm not sure if I'm allowed to talk about this or not. If I'm not, then that's okay. I'm sure someone will let me know. But I'm going to talk about racism in the body of

Messiah and how it's actually being taught from the pulpit, the same pulpit that the gospel of our king is being taught from.

So in Numbers chapter 12, we have a story of Moses. Now Moses has come out of Egypt and all this mess, and he's an awesome leader and a man of God, just an awesome man of God. And it says that he marries a Cushite, a Cushite woman. Now I know there's a debate about what a Cushite is. In my opinion, a Cushite is one from the land of Cush, from Ethiopia, just south of Egypt there, a Nubian woman. She was a Black woman from Africa, marrying Moses, this Mesopotamian descendant. Moses was not White like me. He was darker. I know that probably offended more people than... what it is.

And we see in Numbers chapter 12 where Miriam and Aaron get upset that Moses has just married a Nubian woman, a Cushite, an Ethiopian woman. Why were Miriam and Aaron upset? I'll give you three guesses, and my bet is we're probably gonna get them all wrong, because shamefully, when I grew up in church I was taught by my Sunday school teachers that Miriam was upset with Moses because he married a Black woman. And that's what we're taught. Miriam and Aaron were upset with Moses, and I was taught this. I was taught that they were upset with Moses because he was marrying a Black woman, which was beneath himself in society. He was marrying below what his standards should be. And this is absolutely wrong; it's shameful. But this is what we're taught.

And why are we taught this? Well, because in the United States, according to our history books, we teach that African Americans come from a slave race that came over from Africa. And so by default, whenever we see Nubian, the Nubian kingdoms or the Kushites in scripture, for some reason in our American minds, we go back to, oh, well, they're a slave race. And so by default, Miriam and Aaron must have been upset because Moses should have been marrying his kind or whatnot. Guys, this is stupid. Okay. I want to tell you something about the Nubian kingdoms below Egypt. Okay. The Nubian kingdoms were so respected in their class and in their status that a Pharaoh at one point would not let Egyptians guard him. He would only let Nubians guard him because of their warrior class, their extreme warfare—they were so good at fighting. You wonder why in Egypt we have paintings of Black pharaohs and also lighter-skinned pharaohs and it alternates throughout history, on and off, because the Nubian kingdoms defeated Egypt first.

So many different times, they conquered Egypt so many different times in history. You had the Nubian kingdom fighting Egypt all the time, and it was always a power struggle. Sometimes Egypt would win and take over the Nubian kingdom. The Nubian kingdoms would come up and they would conquer Egypt, and they would go back and forth, but the Nubians were well

respected and they were viewed as a power to be reckoned with. They were not a slave race. They were a high respected kingdom of people.

Moses and a Cushite Wife

What's interesting is when we talk about the slave race, we go back to Moses. Now who was Moses, guys? Now let's just take a little piece of humble pie. Who was Moses? Who was Miriam? Who was Aaron? They were Israelites, Matt. Where did they just come from? Well, they came from Egypt. What were they in Egypt? I'll give you three guesses. They were slaves.

The Nubians, the Cushites were not a slave race, guys. The Hebrews were the slave race. These were the ones that were the bottom of the barrel, right? These were the ones who were just brought out of Egypt, brought out of slavery for hundreds of years.

So what was Miriam and Aaron so upset about? Guys, they didn't think Moses was marrying beneath himself. They were upset at Moses because they thought he was arrogant by marrying a Cushite woman. By marrying above his status by so much, right? As the very next verse in Numbers chapter 12 emphasizes, Moses was the humblest man ever to live. Why did scripture tell us that Moses was humble? Because Moses just married one heck of a girl. Right? A great catch, if you will. Moses just married a woman that had such high class and such dignity and such respect just because of her lineage and the kingdom that she came from, that Aaron and Miriam were upset because they thought he was being arrogant. No, Moses is the most humblest man. Right?

And so when you have—and I say all that to say this—yeah, don't ever, ever, ever teach that people that Moses was marrying beneath himself. That is not true. History-wise, biblically, it's not true. And you need to really pray about that if that's your current mindset, because it's just not backed up in scripture at all.

Tassels as a Sign of Status

I say all this to say this, okay? When Israel came out of Egypt, they were a slave race. They were the slave race. And the first thing that God tells them to do is he says, "Listen guys, I'm going to take you into a land and it's going to be a land of milk and honey and you're going to be able to raise your kids there and you're going to have huge portions of land according to your tribe and I'm going to be your king and I'm going to rule over you and it's going to be an awesome thing. But before you go into the land, I want you to make tassels and I want you to attach these tassels."

Now I know what you're thinking: only the elites can wear tassels, only the high class citizens of Mesopotamia can wear tassels, only the rich and the ones that you look up to can wear tassels, especially with the expensive blue dye. But guys, I want to tell you that you are no longer slaves and that when I see you, I see the highest class of people in the entire world. I see my children. I see my sons. I see my daughters. I see children who have nobility because I am their king and they are my sons and daughters.

And so I want you to take the tassels, the same tassels that the world sees as nobility, and I want you to put them on your garments. So that whenever you walk around, you will remember my commandments. You will remember what kingdom you belong to. You will remember my sovereignty. And when everyone sees you, they're going to see everybody in the kingdom walking in with tassels. Where are the lower class? Where are the slaves? We have none here. We are all sons and daughters of the king, right? And so that is why we wear the tassels and that's why it's so cool.

The Hem as a Document Repository

What's the significance of the hem? Now we can wear tassels, right? But why can't we just wear them like on your shirt collar or something or on your sleeve or on your socks or something? What's the significance of the hem?

Well in the Near East, no one carried wallets or had a bank account. You know what I mean? They didn't have a bank account or a safety deposit box to put their vital documents in. So how many of us have like a filing cabinet at home and you go through the back of the filing cabinet and there's a folder that says personal documents, right? And it contains such things as your social security card and maybe your marriage certificate, right? Or maybe your birth certificate or your passports or whatever it is, the mortgage papers to your home, whatever. Three thousand years ago, they didn't really have that, right?

So these documents—the family cylinder seals, the contract covenant tablets, right? The inheritance paperwork or tablets, if you will—these were either kept in a pocket that was sewn on the outside of the hem, right? So you open your jacket up and on the hem of your garment, you would put all your vital documents, right? If you're the man of the house, right? You'd have it all right there. Or sometimes they were sewn directly into the hem, right? Just so you would have them on you at all times and they would be sealed—safe keeping, if you will.

We have a quote here from Cyrus Gordon, right? He's the author of the book *The Status of Women Reflected in the Nuzi Tablets*—the Babylonian tablets that we found that depicts the

history of ancient Mesopotamia. And it states this: "A dowry consisted of monies from both the groom and from the bride's family. And it was often sewn into the hem of the bride's garment as a means of economic protection in the case of widowhood."

The Dowry and Protection

In other words, when you got married, ladies, when you got married, your dowry, right? Your dowry. Now the dowry was pretty much something that was yours in the marriage, okay? It was all yours. And if something happened and something didn't work out with you and your husband or he died or whatnot, you would hopefully be able to live for at least a long time off of the dowry. It was an insurance policy, if you will.

So what would happen is as soon as you got married, you get all this gold and junk sewn into the hem of your garment. You feel all fancy walking around: "Ching, ching, ching." That's what happened.

You ever notice, even in some scriptural narrative, what the punishment is if a woman was ever caught in adultery? What's the first thing that happens? You remember? Her outer garment is torn off of her. Why? Because if she's caught in adultery, then she doesn't get her dowry anymore. So it's stripped away from her immediately. It was a big deal. That's why they tore the garments off the women. It was a status thing.

The Hem as Identity

The hem of your garment represented everything you were. It represented everything you had become in your life. Everything that you stand for. It represented your wealth. It represented your reputation. Everything. The authority that you had in your family.

Here's the actual Babylonian text. Here's what it says: it's actually sewn into the dowry. Right? Hittite law, paragraph 171. Now remember guys, the outer garment specifically would be the garment that held the documents of the estate as well as the inheritance or even the family seal.

And so you have a situation—I'm sure none of us have ever went through something like this—where we might have like a teenage son and he's all acting a fool, right? And way back when, right? Up in Atusa, if your son acted a fool and said, "You know what, mom, I don't need you anymore. You know what, dad, I don't need y'all anymore. I'm heading out of here and I'm gonna make a life of my own, woo, right?" The mother would take the outer garment of the son,

which would have the inheritance documents in it, right? The family seal perhaps, and they would strip him from it, and they would hang it on a deadbolt basically beside the door.

And the son would leave no longer with the garment that signified who he was in the family. And you know the mom was saying, "I'm just gonna take this from you and when you get your attitude straight, you can come back and you might get it back. How about that?"

And that's why even the Hittites had this issue. When the son comes back, if he comes back, she's going to take it off that bolt and she's going to put it back on her son. And hopefully her son's going to be apologizing: "I love you, mama." And "I love you too, son. Here's your outer garment again. You got your, you know, inheritance documents inside of it. And you are our son again. You are who you are in our family again." It was extremely important.

And so I love that we have archeology that actually proves this point and gives us an insight into scripture, right?

The Suzerain's Covenant

Here's a quote. It was actually a message from Shamshi Adad written concerning his rebellious vassal. And he's speaking to a vassal, so he's like a king, right? And he has vassals. He has other kings or princes underneath him, other estate owners that have vowed to honor him. And so as a suzerain, he's giving benefits to them and he's expecting them to reciprocate honor back to them, right?

And so here's what he writes: "When he became an ally, he swore an oath to me." This is King Shamshi Adad. "He swore an oath to me in the temple of Adad, again on the bank of Zab."

So pretty much what he's saying is he's laying out the scenario where this vassal came to him and grabbed hold of the hem of his garment.

Now what's the hem represent? The hem represents everything you are. It represents your authority, your sovereignty. It represents your wealth. It represents your reputation. It represents your honor. It represents everything that is you, right? So this vassal came and he grabbed the hem of the king, right? And this was a great sign of saying, I know that you are king over me and I will serve you and I will do your will and I will give you gratitude. And he swore to him. And as a result, the king of Assyria swore back to him. He says, listen, I'm not going to take any tribute from you. You are my vassal and I love you. But it's a great illustration here of the grabbing of the hem of the garment and what that really, really, really said.

The Hem Across History

Here we go. Here's another incantation, which is addressed to Shamash, which was the Assyrian sun god at the time. We read, Right? You like that? It's Akkadian. So we have this man coming to the temple of Shamash and apparently the idol had a hem of a garment. And this man grabbed the hem of this pagan god, right? Doesn't exist, but in history, this is history, right? He grabbed the hem of the garment and then what did he say? He says, I swear to you. Now, what did he say? He says, I'm grabbing the hem of your garment. I seize the hem because it is your province to give judgment. Only you can give righteous judgment. Only you can announce decisions that are just and only you can establish well-being. He's grabbing the hem and he's submitting to the authority of this false God. That's what grabbing the hem of the garment was all about, right?

Here we have a sixth century B.C., Nebuchadnezzar text. This is Nebuchadnezzar II, this is the Nebuchadnezzar, right? We have destruction of the temple, that whole thing, this is it. "Because I seized the hem," remember the hem, "because I seized the hem of Marduk, my lord," Marduk was the general god of Babylon, "he loved me and entrusted me with the renewing of shrines and rebuilding the ruins." So essentially what he's saying here is, "because I seized the hem of Marduk," this false god of Babylon, He noticed me and gives me favor because I submitted to him and I trusted him and I give him all honor and glory and gratitude, right? And so we have all of these archaeological illustrations giving us the impact of what the hem of the garment—something as simple as the flip side of the side of your outer garment—represented.

The Woman with the Issue of Blood

Guys, this brings us to the woman with the issue of blood. Now, I may kill a sacred cow today. I may not. My friend Ryan sure did with me back in 2013. It upset me because typically when I read the story of the woman with the issue of blood, I see that she reached out for the hem of his garment and we already know the tassels are at the hem of the garment and we become so focused on the tassels. Like she grabbed the tzitzit of Yeshua and that was her only, only purpose. And guys, I'm gonna submit and we're gonna read it, but I'm gonna submit that maybe the tzitzit wasn't the main focus of what she was grabbing for. I'm sure she grabbed it, but that wasn't the main focus. I know, stone me now, right?

Luke chapter 8, starting in verse 41, please turn there with me. And behold, there came a man named Jairus, and he was the ruler of the synagogue. And he fell down at Yeshua's feet and begged him to come to his house. For he had an only daughter about 12 years old, and she was

dying. But as he went, the multitude gathered around him. Now a woman having a flow of blood for 12 years, who had spent all of her livelihood on physicians and could not be healed by any, came from behind and touched the border of his garment. And immediately her flow stopped. And Yeshua said, who touched me? Now what's interesting is in Matthew's account of this story, the woman actually says, I know that if I can just touch the hem of his garment, I will be made whole. She knew that she had this outstanding faith that there was something about the hem of his garment, the hem of the garment of Yeshua. If she could just reach out and touch the hem of his garment, she would be made whole. And Yeshua said, "Who touched me?" When all denied it, Peter and those with him said, "Master, the multitudes press around you, and you say, 'Who touched me?' But Yeshua said, 'Somebody touched me, for I perceived power going out from me.'

Now when the woman saw that she was no longer hidden, she came trembling, falling down before him, and she declared to him in the presence of all the people—this is important—the reason why she touched him and how she was healed immediately. And he said to her, Daughter, be of good cheer. Your faith has made you whole. Go in peace.

Unclean for Twelve Years

Guys, this woman, for 12 years, she had an issue of blood. Now, in Leviticus, it talks about nidah. It talks about the time of the month for a woman. Okay? It's amazing because there's so many men out there that exploit this verse. It's absolutely ridiculous. It's not an extreme uncleanness, the time of Nidah. Men, you're not supposed to touch your wives, touch any women on Nidah during this time period. But as long as Nidah doesn't go over seven days, it doesn't even require a baptism. It doesn't even require her to bathe according to Torah, right? As long as it doesn't go over seven days. I see so many fellowships falling into the trap of overanalyzing this commandment. And I've actually seen fellowships that don't allow women to come and fellowship when they're on Nidah. It's absolutely amazing. Like they're so disgusting, but men are never questioned like, Hey, what'd you do last night? Because if they were unclean for 24 hours, you can't come either. It's just absolutely incredible. And I see women bringing in chairs to sit in because they have to sit in their own chair. It's just, absolutely ridiculous. We'll go over that another time. But Nidah was not even unclean enough to where a woman had to go to the mikvah or tevilah, baptize as long as it didn't go over seven days. I want to make that point just so that soaks in.

And so we have this here, but this woman had an issue of blood that lasted 12 years. Now, according to Torah, God's sanctuary is a set-apart place, and it's a place of perfection, it's a place

of holiness, and so lepers and folks that are unclean can never enter that until they're cleansed. Well, this woman for 12 years could not ascend the mountain of God. She could not enter into the temple. She could not offer a praise offering or a peace offering to God because she was in this unclean state. She could not intimately approach her God in the formal manner at his house. She couldn't interact with society. This is why she was so scared because she touched Yeshua. I mean, she was unclean. She's not allowed to touch anybody. And I found this amazing because she knew that if she could just reach out and touch the hem of his garment, she would be healed.

The Authority of the Hem

And after she did this, she declared to all the people the reason why she touched him. Why did she touch him? What did she declare? Guys, this premise was known. We understand what the hem of the garment was. Yes, the tzitzit were hanging from the hem of the garment, but that's not what she was aiming for. She was aiming for the hem. Why? Because the hem of the garment of Yeshua represented his nobility. The hem of the garment of Yeshua represented the power and authority that God had given him. The hem of Yeshua represented who he was as the king of Israel. And when she came and she knew if she could just reach out and submit herself to the king who was given all power and authority over heaven and earth, that she would be healed. This is what she declared. Just like we saw in this previous example, she grabbed the hem of Yeshua's garment and then she got up and she declared to everybody, he is the king of righteousness and I was made whole by him.

Healing in His Wings

We see this in [Malachi 4:2](#), and I believe that she also knew from the prophets. I mean, obviously she understood who Yeshua was and she maybe studied the prophets. So we have [Malachi 4:2](#), "But for you who fear my name, the Son of Righteousness," and that's not a misspelling, the sun, the light, "the Son of Righteousness will come with healing in his wings." The wings. That word there for wings in [Malachi 4:2](#) is kenaf, the wings, if you will. She knew if she could only touch the wings, the hem of Yeshua's garment, that she would be made whole. That's absolutely incredible and I love that. The tzitzit were attached to the wings of the garment and that's very significant, but I feel like if we're focused too much on the tzitzit and not the whole premise of what the hem represented, we're going to miss a very, very, very valuable lesson here, guys.

The Hem and the King

This also brings us over to King David. Remember, King David and Saul, they were really big buddies and they got along fantastically and they had a long relationship that was fantastic. Not so much, right? So Saul pretty much, he had some mental issues throughout his life. And at one point he was trying to kill King David.

So we're fixing to read in 1 Samuel chapter 24, starting in verse 3, takes place where King Saul's walking around and he has to, hey, you ever going on a long vacation, right, and you're driving down the road and then you just gotta go, gotta go, gotta go, and you see a rest stop, so you pull over in the rest stop and you go in and you use the restroom, where King Saul's traveling around and he, blah, blah, blah, he had to go, and so he found a cave.

Well, David and his men were in the cave when this occurred, and a conflict takes place where David is tempted to go kill King Saul. And so in verse 3, here we go. And he came to the sheepfolds, by the way, where there was a cave, and Saul went in to relieve himself. And afterward, David's heart struck him because he had cut off the corner of Saul's robe. So David persuaded his men with these words and did not permit them to attack Saul. And Saul arose and left the cave and went in his way. And then David also arose after him and went out of the cave and called out to Saul saying, my Lord, the king. And when Saul looked behind him, David stooped with his face to the earth and bowed down. And David said to Saul, why do you listen to the words of the men who say, indeed, David seeks to kill you? Look, this day your eyes have seen that the Lord delivered you today into my hand in this cave, and someone urged me to kill you, but my eye spared you, and I said, I will not stretch out my hand against the Lord, for he is the Lord's anointed. Moreover, my father, see, yes, see the corner of your robe is in my hand. For in that I cut off the corner of your robe and did not kill you. Know and see that there is neither evil nor rebellion in my hand. And I have not sinned against you, yet you hunt my life to take it.

Why His Heart Was Struck

Now, I love the scenario because we have this picture and David's sneaking up on Saul and he has a chance to kill him. But he doesn't. He just pokes a hole in his garment. You know what I mean? He cuts the corner off Saul's robe. And this isn't that big of a deal to me. I mean, what's the worst thing about this? Saul can't give his robe to Goodwill now. They won't take it because it has a big hole and a cut in it or something. David was impacted. It says his heart was struck

by this. Why did David feel so bad for cutting the corner of Saul's garment off? I mean, it's not that big of a deal, right? It's just a little hole or something, right?

The reason is because remember what does the hem of the garment represent? When David cut the hem of Saul's garment off, he may have not realized the full impact of what he was doing. He was just trying to make an example. But in doing so, he was literally cutting off the authority of Saul's kingship from him. He was cutting off the kingship from Saul and then handing it back to him, apologizing. Listen, I'm sorry. I shouldn't have done this. That's why he felt so bad because in his mind, God had anointed Saul. God had chosen Saul. It is what it is. And David had just, in his mind, transgressed and encroached on God's honor by cutting off the symbol of Saul's kinship.

If we go later in the chapter in verse 20, here's what we read. This is what Saul is saying to David. So Saul understood what just happened. He sees David sitting here holding the kingship. Literally David cut off the kingship, the authority of King Saul and took it for himself. And this is what Saul is saying. He's like, surely now I know, now I know indeed that you're going to be king and Israel is going to be established in your hand as David's sitting here holding his garment in his hand. Right. Look at the next verse. This is Saul talking, pleading with David. David's just sitting here like, I'm sorry I cut your garment. And Saul's over here like, I now understand. I now understand, just like Samuel told me way back when, when I tore his garment. Check that out. You should go back and read that. That's incredible.

The Meaning of the Hem

And so now what's Saul doing? He's pleading with David, please don't destroy my descendants after me and keep my name alive in my father's house. When we did the afterlife teaching on YouTube, we discussed all of that and what the importance of the name and the lineage and progeny and so on and so forth was. But it's incredible. David could have easily killed Saul, but instead he cut the hem off and the hem is an extension of Saul's authority. That's why David's heart was troubled. That's why it says David's conscience struck his heart. Because what he had done was not simply just cut and torn Saul's robe. It was something much bigger than that. We're told in Numbers chapter 15 that the tassels represent God's holiness and sovereignty. And I love that because when we attach them to the four corners of our garment, we're saying that every single thing that we are, our hem of our garment, right? Men, you know what we're talking about. We've got a hem too. Everybody has a hem. And what your hem represents is who you are. Who are you? What are your priorities in your life? What is your integrity in your

life? What is your wealth? What have you accomplished in your life? What is your position in your life?

What Tassels Truly Represent

When God said, listen, I want you to take a tassel and this tassel is going to represent me and it's going to represent my kingdom and it's going to have a thread of blue in it, which is going to represent the respect and the honor and nobility of my kingdom. And I want you to attach this tassel to your hem. That way, every single time you see your tassel, you will realize that everything your hem represents is mine. Every single thing that your hem represents belongs to God. Every single thing that your hem represents should be used for the sake of edifying and furthering God's kingdom, not your own. This is the sacrifice. This is what wearing tassels is all about. It's when you look down and you see them, it's like, oh, wow. Am I trying to build my kingdom today or am I trying to build his? And that's what it's all about.

So sometimes I see people who aren't quite there yet and they don't quite understand the legitimacy and the reasoning behind wearing tassels. They don't want to look too religious or they just don't want to take that step yet. And that's okay. It's important that you understand why you're wearing tassels. Because one thing that we have too much of in this movement are people who wear the tassels who neglect every single thing that they were supposed to represent. Guys, what would happen if you went out on the football team and you wore the jersey of your football team but you played for the other team? It would bring shame to your team. If you're wearing tassels and you're not actually applying the meaning behind them, then you're bringing shame to God and you are shaming God's kingdom. If you are not acting like a member of God's holy kingdom when you're wearing the tassels, if the way that you speak is not edifying, if the way that you judge others is not edifying, you're shaming God. That's what the tassels are supposed to do. They're supposed to let you know, hey, what would Yeshua do right now? They're supposed to remind you of God's commandments, his kingdom, his authority, the constitution of the kingdom that you belong to. When you look at the tassels, it's supposed to be a time where you say, how can I better represent God's kingdom today? I love that. And so we're gonna kinda close up this point.

Clothing as Identity

Clothing in the Near East, and also in the first century, represented more than just fashion. It represented identity, kind of like today. If you saw someone going down the side of the road, my wife and I just recently went to Pennsylvania, and incredible experience, we got to meet a few

Amish folk, and they were awesome people. How did we know they were Amish? We didn't have to ask them because of the way they dressed. We could pretty much identify, most likely they're Amish, right? Because you were who you wore, right?

The Power of What We Wear

When I worked at the hospital, my previous job, I could wear scrubs to work if I wanted to, because I was in a clinical environment, even though I was informatics manager, or I could just wear semi-casual. And I wore semi-casual clothing every day. But then one day I started wearing a tie to work. Now it was amazing, just this stupid little tie, a little piece of fabric that flaps in the wind. I started wearing this tie to work. And when I walked around, people started holding the doors open for me. I was like, okay. And suddenly everybody was calling me, sir. Yes, sir. Yes, sir. Hello, sir. One day the CEO was walking down the hallway and said, Hey Matt. He knows my name. You know, if they know you, they can fire you. You know what I mean? No, he recognized me because he saw that I was wearing a tie and he identified that with some type of authoritative position in the hospital. One day I realized that the only people that wear ties in a hospital are those on the administration team—CEO, CFO, all those guys—and physicians. Those are the two groups of people that mainly wear ties in a hospital setting. And so when I come bebopping down the hallway, little Pax administrator in radiology with a tie on, everybody, at least on a subconscious level, viewed me as important. More important than I probably really was, right? You are what you wear. Why do you think Joseph's coat was so significant when Jacob gave it to him? Why do you think the brothers were so jealous? Because it said something about him and it set him apart from the rest. And so I love that. And so I want you guys to walk away from this message with one thing, really. And if there's nothing else, I want you guys to realize that when Israel came out of Egypt, they were slaves.

Slaves to Righteousness

When we came out of sin, we were a slave race too. This is what [Romans 6](#) and 7 speak about—being slaves to sin, but now slaves to righteousness. When we came out of our Egypt through the blood of Messiah, just as in our past we were slaves, it reminds me of Exodus chapter 19.

A Kingdom of Priests

God tells Israel, "You are going to be a kingdom of priests, a holy nation." Now we look at that and we get all excited, like, "Oh, we're a priest now!" No, you're not a priest. Sorry to break it to you.

The context of this verse is more cultural. So in John Walton's book, he drives this point home: in Mesopotamian cultures, only the kings and the priests could actually approach national deities. In other words, if you lived in Babylon, you would have to be a king or a priest, or someone that's elite—someone that wears the tassels in the kingdom—to be able to approach the temple of Marduk. And if you were just common folk that lived out in the land, there'd be no point. You wouldn't even worship Marduk because he wouldn't even know who you were anyway.

We have documentation that shows lower class people didn't even worship national deities because there was no point. Instead, they worshiped city gods or community deities or specifically family household gods, right? Something that they felt they could have a relationship with, because they would never be able to have a relationship with a national deity like Marduk, right?

Your Status Elevated

What God tells Israel is, "Listen, I know you guys have a mentality of slaves. I know you guys have been pushed around for a long time. And I know you guys aren't used to having the redemption of your God and your king at hand for you right now. But listen, you're going to take these tassels and you're going to tie them to the four corners of your garment. And you're going to put a string of blue in it too. But that's only what the elites do. Only the priests of the other countries do that. Only the kings of the other countries do that. Yeah, and you're going to be to me as kings and priests. You're going to be a kingdom of priests to me."

In other words, unlike everybody else in the world, you will be able to approach me as if you are a king or a priest. You will be able to approach me as if you are elite in the kingdom because you are elite in the kingdom of God. Everybody is. You are a prince, you are a princess, you are a son and a daughter of the king. You have nobility, and this is how it's represented, right?

And so this was a culture shock to ancient Israel when they came out of Egypt because, wow, I get to be elevated in status because of who my God is. And the same thing goes for you today. Once you declared that Yeshua is your king and believed that God raised him from the dead, your status was elevated as a son and daughter of the king. And it's incredible to look back and think that way.

Priests as Ministers to the Nations

And of course, there's more to the verse of being a kingdom of priests. You're not going to be in the temple killing lambs. You're not a Levitical priest, if you will, approaching the altar, smearing the blood and everything. But you are to be a priest, a minister to the nations. That is your job. And how do we know that's your position? Because God told you to wear the jersey of the king. And that is what we do.

Coming in Part Two

Guys, stick around for part two. Should be up soon. We're going to discuss a few different things. We're going to discuss whether women were allowed to wear a Tzitzit in rabbinic Judaism and in the first century. Today in Orthodox Judaism, it's really frowned upon. And so let's just look at history. Were women allowed to wear a Tzitzit in the first century, right?

We're also going to discuss the dying process of the blue strand that went into the Tzitzit and how it may have been a little daunting when God gave this command to Israel because it was so expensive, right? And we're also going to look at the laws of Shatnez, the mixing of wool and linen. We have archaeological findings along with historical writings that may suggest that Yeshua wore wool and linen together. Hmm. Don't stone me yet. Check out part two when it comes out and we'll see you guys later.

A Final Word of Encouragement

I hope this message was encouraging and edifying. I hope you learned a little more about the history and meaning behind the Tzitzit. If you currently wear Tzitzit, I hope that you are edified. I hope next time you look down, you will see such great meaning and great love that God has for you.

And if you currently don't wear Tzitzit, then hey, I hope this message provided you with a little bit more information and understanding that possibly will encourage you to do so. So that way when we pass each other, I can say, hey, you're a brother, you're a sister in the king, right?

So guys, stay encouraged, stay blessed, and stay fit. Stay founded in truth. We'll see you guys next time.

Closing Remarks

Hey guys, I'm Matthew Vanderels, pastor at Founded in Truth Fellowship, and I really hope you enjoy this message. If you would like to see more messages and teachings like this one, please

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If you'd like to write us, you can do so at Founded in Truth, P.O. Box 38042 Rock Hill, South Carolina, zip code 29732. You can also check out our Facebook page at facebook.com/foundedintruth.

I pray that you stay blessed. I pray that you guys stay encouraged. And I pray that you stay fit. Founded in Truth. We'll see you guys next time.

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