

IS YOUR PASTOR YOUR SPIRITUAL COVERING?

I believe many have been told that their pastor, or other religious leader, is their "spiritual covering." I have heard more than one televangelist say so over the past few years. However, in my search, I did not find one verse that supports this claim.

Webster's Dictionary partially defines "cover" as, 1) to extend over; 2) to clothe; 3) to deal with or provide for. 4) To insure against risk or loss. 5) To shelter; protect.

Now what does the Word of God have to say on this subject.

COVERING ACCORDING TO THE OLD TESTAMENT

In **Isaiah 30:1** the Lord says,

"Woe to the rebellious children, saith the Lord, that take counsel, but not of me; and that cover with a **covering**, but not of My Spirit, that they may add sin to sin:" (KJV)

Cover {5258} נָכַך — **nacak**, *naw-sak'*; a primitive root; **to pour out**, especially **a libation**, or **to cast** (metal); by analogy, **to anoint a king**: — (Translated in King James version as) cover, melt, offer, (cause to) pour (out), set (up).

Covering {4541} מִסְכָּנָה — **maccekah**, *mas-say-kaw'*; from 5258; properly, **a pouring over**, i.e. **fusion of metal** (especially **a cast image**); by implication, a libation, i.e. **league**; concretely **a coverlet** (as if poured out): — (Translated in King James version as) covering, molten (image), vail.

Note - For those who look to man to cover them, they make that man their god, their idol. If in "obedience" they bow to the will of the man instead of the will of God, according to the Word and leading of God, they become worshippers of the man.

"Thou shalt have no other god's before Me", says the Almighty God. (KJV-Exodus 20:3)

◆ Some church leaders may use **Isaiah 58** to justify their claim.

Isaiah 58:6-7

"Is this not the fast that I have chosen: To loose the bonds of wickedness, to undo the heavy burdens, to let the oppressed go free, and that you break every yoke? Is it not to share your bread with the hungry, And that you bring to your house the poor who are cast out; When you see the naked, that you **cover** him, And not hide yourself from your own flesh?

These verses were addressed to all of Israel and not just the priests.

Cover {3680} קָאַח — **kacah**, *kaw-saw'*; a primitive root; properly, **to plump**, i.e. **fill up hollows**; by implication, **to cover** (for clothing or secrecy): — (Translated in King James version as) clad self, close, clothe, conceal, cover (self), (flee to) hide, overwhelm.

The same word used in **Isaiah 58:6-7** for "cover" is also used in **Ezekiel 16:8** and **Isaiah 51:16**.

Ezekiel 16:8-9

"When I passed by you again and looked upon you, indeed your time was the time of love; **so I spread My wing over you and covered your nakedness.** Yes, I swore an oath to you and entered into a covenant with you, and you became Mine," says the Lord God. ⁹ "Then I washed you in water; yes, I thoroughly washed off your blood, and I anointed you with oil."

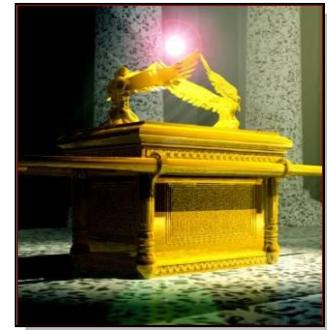
Isaiah 51:12-16

"I, even I, am He who comforts you. Who are you that you should be afraid of a man who will die, And of the son of a man who will be made like grass? ¹³ And you forget the Lord your Maker, Who stretched out the heavens and laid the foundations of the earth; you have feared continually every day because of the fury of the oppressor, when he has prepared to destroy. And where is the fury of the oppressor? ¹⁴ The captive exile hastens, that he may be loosed, that he should not die in the pit, And that his bread should not fail. ¹⁵ but I am the Lord your God, Who divided the sea whose waves roared- The Lord of hosts is His name. ¹⁶ And I have put My words in your mouth; **I have covered you with the shadow of My hand,** That I may plant the heavens, Lay the foundations of the earth, And say to Zion, **You are My people.** "

Comforts {5162} נְחַם — **nacham**, *naw-kham'*; a primitive root; properly, **to sigh**, i.e. breathe strongly; by implication, **to be sorry**, i.e. (in a favorable sense) **to pity, console** or (reflexively) **rue**; or unfavorably) **to avenge** (oneself): — (Translated in King James version as) comfort (self), ease (one's self), repent(-er,-ing, self).

Atonement

Located in both the wilderness tabernacle, and later the temple, was the Holy of Holies. Inside the Holy of Holies was the "ark of the covenant" (Num. 10:33); or as it was sometimes called, the "ark of the testimony." Inside the ark were the two tablets of stone on which were written the ten commandments of the covenant, the law, the manna and Aaron's rod that budded. Extending above the ark was the Mercy Seat. The Mercy Seat covered the ark. The Lord spoke to Moses above the Mercy Seat, from between the two cherubim (Exodus 25:22)



Once a year, on the day of Atonement the High priest would bring the blood from the sin offering and sprinkle it with his finger on the mercy seat to make atonement "because of the uncleanness of the children of Israel, and because of their transgressions, for all their sins" (Lev. 16:3-24)

Leviticus 16:15-17

"Then he shall kill the goat of the sin offering, which is for the people, bring its blood inside the veil, do with that blood as he did with the blood of the bull, and sprinkle it on the mercy seat and before the mercy seat. ¹⁶ So he shall make **atonement** for the Holy Place, because of the uncleanness of the children of Israel, and because of their transgressions, for all their sins; and so he shall do for the tabernacle of meeting which remains among them in the midst of their uncleanness. ¹⁷ There shall be no man in the tabernacle of meeting when he goes in to make atonement in the Holy Place, until he comes out, that he may make atonement for himself, for his household, and for all the assembly of Israel.

This word "**Atonement**" means "**to cover**". The blood from the sacrifice covered the sins of the people.

Atonement {3722} — **kaphar**, *kaw-far'*; a primitive root; **to cover** (specifically with **bitumen**); figuratively, to expiate or condone, to placate or cancel: — (Translated in King James version as) appease, make (an atonement, cleanse, disannul, forgive, be merciful, pacify, pardon, purge (away), put off, (make) reconcile(-liation).

Bitumen (Dictionary.com) - (1) any of various natural substances, as asphalt, maltha, or gilsonite, consisting mainly of hydrocarbons. (2) (formerly) an asphalt of Asia Minor used as cement and mortar.

Under references Dictionary.com goes on to say,

"Bitumen is a mixture of organic liquids that are highly viscous, black, sticky, entirely soluble in carbon disulfide, and composed primarily of highly condensed polycyclic aromatic hydrocarbons. Naturally occurring or **crude bitumen** is a sticky, tar-like form of petroleum which is so thick and heavy that it must be heated or diluted before it will flow. At room temperature, it is much like cold molasses.

Refined bitumen is the residual (bottom) fraction obtained by fractional distillation of crude oil. It is the heaviest fraction and the one with the highest boiling point, boiling at .

In British English, the word ' asphalt' refers to a mixture of mineral aggregate and bitumen (or tarmac in common parlance). The word 'tar' refers to the black viscous material obtained from the destructive distillation of coal and is chemically distinct from bitumen. In American English, bitumen is referred to as 'asphalt' or 'asphalt cement' in engineering jargon. In Australian English, bitumen is sometimes used as the generic term for road surfaces. In Canadian English, the word bitumen is used to refer to the vast Canadian deposits of extremely heavy crude oil, while asphalt is used for the oil refinery product used to pave roads and manufacture roof shingles. Diluted bitumen (diluted with naphtha to make it flow in pipelines) is known as dilbit in the Canadian petroleum industry, while bitumen upgraded to synthetic crude oil is known as syncrude and syncrude blended with bitumen as *synbit*."

The Hebrew word "kaphar", or bitumen, is the very substance the Lord told Noah to use on the Ark to seal it. The King James Version translated this word as "pitch."

Genesis 6:13-14 (King James Version)

"And God said unto Noah, The end of all flesh is come before me; for the earth is filled with violence through them; and, behold, I will destroy them with the earth. ¹⁴Make thee an ark of gopher wood; rooms shalt thou make in the ark, and shalt **pitch** it within and without with pitch."

Note – The first "pitch" is the Hebrew word "kaphar." However, the second "pitch" was translated from the Hebrew word "kopher."

Pitch {3724} — **kopher**, *ko'-fer*; from 3722; properly, a **cover**, i.e. (literally) **a village** (as covered in); (specifically) **bitumen** (as used for coating), and the henna plant (as used for dyeing); figuratively, a redemption-price: — (Translated in King James version as) bribe, camphire, pitch, ransom, satisfaction, sum of money, village.

The Secret Place

Psalm 91 not only describes the benefits of being covered; but Who in fact covers and how you can position yourself to be covered.

Psalm 91

"He who dwells in the secret place of the Most High shall abide under the shadow of the Almighty. ² I will say of the Lord, "He is my refuge and my fortress; **My God, in Him** I will trust." ³ Surely **He shall deliver you** from the snare of the fowler and from the perilous pestilence. ⁴ **He shall cover you with His feathers**, and **under His wings** you shall take refuge; **His truth** shall be your shield and buckler. ⁵ You shall not be afraid of the terror by night, nor of the arrow that flies by day, ⁶ Nor of the pestilence that walks in darkness, Nor of the destruction that lays waste at noonday. ⁷ A thousand may fall at your side, and ten thousand at your right hand; but it shall not come near you. ⁸ Only with your eyes shall you look, And see the reward of the wicked. ⁹ Because you have made **the Lord, who is my refuge**, even **the Most High, your dwelling place**, ¹⁰ No evil shall befall you, Nor shall any plague come near your dwelling; ¹¹ For **He shall give His angels charge over you**, To keep you in all your ways. ¹² In their hands they shall bear you up, Lest you dash your foot against a stone. ¹³ You shall tread upon the lion and the cobra, The young lion and the serpent you shall trample underfoot. ¹⁴ "Because he has set his love upon Me, therefore **I will deliver him; I will set him on high, because he has known My name.** ¹⁵ **He shall call upon Me**, and **I will answer him; I will be with him in trouble; I will deliver him and honor him.** ¹⁶ **With long life I will satisfy him, and show him My salvation.**"

Note - It does not say, that **He** shall cover your pastor or priest and they in turn will cover you. We are to go to **Him** directly. It's "he", individually, "who dwells in the secret place of the Most High" who "shall abide under the shadow of the Almighty."

The word **secret** in Psalm 91:1 also means "**a cover.**"

Dwell {3427} יָשַׁב — **yashab**, *yaw-shab'*; a primitive root; properly, **to sit down** (specifically as judge, in ambush, in quiet); by implication, **to dwell, to remain**; causatively, **to settle, to marry:** — (Translated in King James version as) (make to) abide(-ing), continue, (cause to, make to) dwell(-ing), ease self, endure, establish, X fail, habitation, haunt, (make to) inhabit(-ant), make to keep (house), lurking, X marry(-ing), (bring again to) place, remain, return, seat, set(-tle), (down-) sit(-down, still, -ting down, -ting (place) -uate), take, tarry.

Secret {5643} סִתְרָה — **cether**, *say'-ther*; or (feminine) **cithrah**, (<053238>Deuteronomy 32:38), *sith-raw'*; from 5641; **a cover** (in a good or a bad, a literal or a figurative sense): — (Translated in King James version as) backbiting, covering, covert, X disguise(-th), hiding place, privily, protection, secret(-ly, place).

Abide (3306) μένω, — **men '-o**; a primary verb; **to stay** (in a given place, state, relation or expectancy): — (Translated in King James version as) abide, continue, dwell, endure, be present, remain, stand, tarry (for), x thine own.

Where is this "secret place" - this covering place? For starters, Psalms 91:9 says, "**the Most High, your dwelling place.**"

Psalms 31 and 27 tells us this secret place is also a hiding place.

Psalm 31:19-20

"Oh, how great is Your goodness,
Which You have laid up for those who fear You,
Which You have prepared for those who trust in You
In the presence of the sons of men!
²⁰ **You shall hide them in the secret place of Your presence**
From the plots of man;
You shall keep them secretly in a pavilion
From the strife of tongues.

Psalm 27:4-5

"One *thing* I have desired of the LORD,
That will I seek:
That I may dwell in the house of the LORD
All the days of my life,
To behold the beauty of the LORD,
And to inquire in His temple.
⁵ For in the time of trouble
He shall hide me in His pavilion;
In the secret place of His tabernacle
He shall hide me;
He shall set me high upon a rock.

Could this "rock" be a reference to Jesus Christ?

Isaiah 32:1-3

"Behold, a king will reign in righteousness,
And princes will rule with justice.
² **A man will be as a hiding place** from the wind,
And **a cover** from the tempest,
As rivers of water in a dry place,
As the shadow of **a great rock in a weary land**.
³ The eyes of those who see will not be dim,
And the ears of those who hear will listen.

Isaiah 44:1-9

"Thus says the LORD, the King of Israel,
And his Redeemer, the LORD of hosts:
' I am the First and I am the Last;
Besides Me *there is no God*.
⁷ And who can proclaim as I do?
Then let him declare it and set it in order for Me,
Since I appointed the ancient people.
And the things that are coming and shall come,
Let them show these to them.
⁸ Do not fear, nor be afraid;

Have I not told you from that time, and declared *it*?
You are My witnesses.
Is there a God besides Me?
Indeed *there is no other Rock*;
I know not one.”

Could this be the same rock declared in the New Testament?

Matthew 7:13-29

“Enter by the narrow gate; for wide *is* the gate and broad *is* the way that leads to destruction, and there are many who go in by it. ¹⁴ Because narrow *is* the gate and difficult *is* the way which leads to life, and there are few who find it.

¹⁵ “Beware of false prophets, who come to you in sheep’s clothing, but inwardly they are ravenous wolves. ¹⁶ You will know them by their fruits. Do men gather grapes from thornbushes or figs from thistles? ¹⁷ Even so, every good tree bears good fruit, but a bad tree bears bad fruit. ¹⁸ A good tree cannot bear bad fruit, nor *can* a bad tree bear good fruit. ¹⁹ Every tree that does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire. ²⁰ Therefore by their fruits you will know them.

²¹ “Not everyone who says to Me, ‘Lord, Lord,’ shall enter the kingdom of heaven, but he who does the will of My Father in heaven. ²² Many will say to Me in that day, ‘Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in Your name, cast out demons in Your name, and done many wonders in Your name?’ ²³ And then I will declare to them, ‘I never knew you; depart from Me, you who practice lawlessness!’

²⁴ “Therefore whoever hears these sayings of Mine, and does them, I will liken him to **a wise man who built his house on the rock:** ²⁵ and the rain descended, the floods came, and the winds blew and beat on that house; and it did not fall, **for it was founded on the rock.**

²⁶ “But everyone who hears these sayings of Mine, and does not do them, will be like a foolish man who built his house on the sand: ²⁷ and the rain descended, the floods came, and the winds blew and beat on that house; and it fell. And great was its fall.”

²⁸ And so it was, when Jesus had ended these sayings, that the people were astonished at His teaching, ²⁹ for He taught them as one having authority, and not as the scribes.

Luke 6:46-49

“But why do you call Me ‘Lord, Lord,’ and not do the things which I say? ⁴⁷ Whoever comes to Me, and hears My sayings and does them, I will show you whom he is like: ⁴⁸ He is like a man building a house, who dug deep and laid the foundation on the rock. And when the flood arose, the stream beat vehemently against that house, and could not shake it, **for it was founded on the rock.** ⁴⁹ But he who heard and did nothing is like a man who built a house on the earth without a foundation, against which the stream beat vehemently; and immediately it fell. And the ruin of that house was great.”

1 Peter 2:1-8

“Therefore, laying aside all malice, all deceit, hypocrisy, envy, and all evil speaking, ² as newborn babes, desire the pure milk of the word, that you may grow thereby, ³ if indeed you have tasted that the Lord is gracious.

⁴ **Coming to Him as to a living stone, rejected indeed by men, but chosen by God and precious,** ⁵ you also, as living stones, are being built up a spiritual house, a holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ. ⁶ Therefore it is also contained in the Scripture,

*"Behold, I lay in Zion
A chief cornerstone, elect, precious,
And he who **believes on Him** will by no means be put to shame."*

⁷ Therefore, to you who believe, *He is* precious; but to those who are disobedient,

*"The stone which the builders rejected
Has become the chief cornerstone,"*

⁸ and

*"A stone of stumbling
And a rock of offense."*

They stumble, being disobedient to the word, to which they also were appointed.

COVERING ACCORDING TO THE NEW TESTAMENT

Following is a short list of arguments some church leaders might use to justify their claim that they "cover" their congregations.

Point 1 –

Ephesians 4:11-16

"And He Himself gave some to be apostles, some prophets, some evangelists, and some pastors and teachers, ¹² for the equipping of the saints for the work of ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ, ¹³ till we all come to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to a perfect man, to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ; ¹⁴ that we should no longer be children, tossed to and fro and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the trickery of men, in the cunning craftiness of deceitful plotting, ¹⁵ but, speaking the truth in love, may grow up in all things into Him who is the head-Christ- ¹⁶ from whom the whole body, joined and knit together by what every joint supplies, according to the effective working by which every part does its share, causes growth of the body for the edifying of itself in love.

Ephesians 4:11-16 does not say, "He Himself gave some to **cover** you." The ministry gifts, according to Paul, are for the equipping of the saints for ministry and for the edifying of the body of Christ.

However, according to Jesus Christ,

John 10:7-16

"Then Jesus said to them again, "Most assuredly, I say to you, I am the door of the sheep. ⁸ **All who ever came before Me are thieves and robbers**, but the sheep did not hear them. ⁹ I am the door. If anyone enters by Me, he will be saved, and will go in and out and find pasture. ¹⁰ The thief does not come except to steal, and to kill, and to destroy. I have come that they may have life, and that they may have it more abundantly.

¹¹ "**I am the good Shepherd.** The good shepherd gives His life for the sheep. ¹² But a hireling, *he who is not the shepherd, one who does not own the sheep, sees the wolf coming and leaves the sheep and flees; and the wolf catches the sheep and scatters them.* ¹³ The hireling flees because he is a hireling and does not care about the sheep. ¹⁴ I am the good shepherd; and I know My sheep,

and am known by My own. ¹⁵ As the Father knows Me, even so I know the Father; and I lay down My life for the sheep. ¹⁶ And other sheep I have which are not of this fold; them also I must bring, and they will hear My voice; and **there will be one flock and one shepherd.**

Note – The Greek word “Poimēn” translated in the above passage as “shepherd” was also translated into English as “pastor.”

Shepherd (4166) ποιμήν,— *poy-mane*: of uncertain affinity; a **shepherd** (literal or figurative): — (Translated in King James version as) shepherd, pastor.

According to the above passage **ALL** who ever came before Jesus are thieves and robbers. But some will say, “the Bible says God has given you shepherds according to His heart!” Close, but this is not exactly what it says. According to the Bible, this will be a future event.

Following is the reference as it reads in the New King James Version.

Jeremiah 3:14-18

“Return, O backsliding children,” says the LORD; “for I am married to you. I will take you, one from a city and two from a family, and I will bring you to Zion. ¹⁵ **And I will give you shepherds according to My heart, who will feed you with knowledge and understanding.**

¹⁶ “Then it shall come to pass, when you are multiplied and increased in the land in those days,” says the LORD, “that they will say no more, ‘The ark of the covenant of the LORD.’ It shall not come to mind, nor shall they remember it, nor shall they visit *it*, nor shall it be made anymore.

¹⁷ **At that time Jerusalem shall be called The Throne of the LORD, and all the nations shall be gathered to it, to the name of the LORD, to Jerusalem.** No more shall they follow the dictates of their evil hearts.

¹⁸ “In those days the house of Judah shall walk with the house of Israel, and they shall come together out of the land of the north to the land that I have given as an inheritance to your fathers.

Verse 17 has not yet taken place.

Here is another reference in Jeremiah.

Jeremiah 23:1-8

“Woe to the shepherds who destroy and scatter the sheep of My pasture!” says the LORD.

² Therefore thus says the LORD God of Israel **against the shepherds who feed My people:** “You have scattered My flock, driven them away, and not attended to them. Behold, I will attend to you for the evil of your doings,” says the LORD. ³ “But I will gather the remnant of My flock out of all countries where I have driven them, and bring them back to their folds; and they shall be fruitful and increase. ⁴ **I will set up shepherds over them who will feed them; and they shall fear no more, nor be dismayed, nor shall they be lacking,**” says the LORD.

⁵ “Behold, *the* days are coming,” says the LORD,

“ That I will raise to David a Branch of righteousness;
A King shall reign and prosper,
And execute judgment and righteousness in the earth.

⁶ In His days Judah will be saved,
And Israel will dwell safely;
Now this *is* His name by which He will be called:

THE LORD OUR RIGHTEOUSNESS.

⁷ "Therefore, behold, *the days are coming*," says the LORD, "that they shall no longer say, 'As the LORD lives who brought up the children of Israel from the land of Egypt,' ⁸ but, 'As the LORD lives who brought up and led the descendants of the house of Israel from the north country and from all the countries where I had driven them.' And they shall dwell in their own land."

In the following passages, the Lord is angry with the shepherds because of their abuse and neglect of His flock.

Ezekiel 34:2-10

"Son of man, prophesy against the shepherds of Israel, prophesy and say to them, 'Thus says the Lord GOD to the shepherds: "Woe to the shepherds of Israel who feed themselves! Should not the shepherds feed the flocks? ³ You eat the fat and clothe yourselves with the wool; you slaughter the fatlings, *but you do not feed the flock*. ⁴ The weak you have not strengthened, nor have you healed those who were sick, nor bound up the broken, nor brought back what was driven away, nor sought what was lost; but with force and cruelty you have ruled them. ⁵ So they were scattered because there was no shepherd; and they became food for all the beasts of the field when they were scattered. ⁶ **My sheep** wandered through all the mountains, and on every high hill; yes, **My flock** was scattered over the whole face of the earth, and no one was seeking or searching for them."

⁷ 'Therefore, you shepherds, hear the word of the LORD: ⁸ "As I live," says the Lord GOD, "surely because **My flock** became a prey, and **My flock** became food for every beast of the field, because there was no shepherd, nor did My shepherds search for My flock, but the shepherds fed themselves and did not feed **My flock**"— ⁹ therefore, O shepherds, hear the word of the LORD!

¹⁰ Thus says the Lord GOD: "Behold, I *am* against the shepherds, and I will require **My flock** at their hand; I will cause them to cease feeding the sheep, and the shepherds shall feed themselves no more; for I will deliver **My flock** from their mouths, that they may no longer be food for them."

How often have I heard a pastor refer to the congregation as his flock, his church. Granted, not everyone grazing in the pews belongs to the Lord. Like wise, not every shepherd has been sent by the Lord.

Verse 4 above reminds me of Luke 4:18

Luke 4:14-19

¹⁴ Then Jesus returned in the power of the Spirit to Galilee, and news of Him went out through all the surrounding region. ¹⁵ And He taught in their synagogues, being glorified by all.

¹⁶ So He came to Nazareth, where He had been brought up. And as His custom was, He went into the synagogue on the Sabbath day, and stood up to read. ¹⁷ And He was handed the book of the prophet Isaiah. And when He had opened the book, He found the place where it was written:

¹⁸ "The Spirit of the LORD is upon Me,
Because He has anointed Me
To preach the gospel to the poor;
He has sent Me to heal the brokenhearted,
To proclaim liberty to the captives
And recovery of sight to the blind,
To set at liberty those who are oppressed;
¹⁹ To proclaim the acceptable year of the LORD."

Isaiah 56:1-11

"Thus says the LORD:

" Keep justice, and do righteousness, for My salvation *is* about to come, and My righteousness to be revealed. ² Blessed *is* the man who does this, and the son of man who lays hold on it; who keeps from defiling the Sabbath, and keeps his hand from doing any evil." ³ Do not let **the son of the foreigner who has joined himself to the LORD** speak, saying, " The LORD has utterly separated me from His people"; Nor let the eunuch say, " Here I am, a dry tree." ⁴ For thus says the LORD:

" To the eunuchs who keep My Sabbaths, and choose what pleases Me, and hold fast My covenant, ⁵ even to them I will give **in My house** and within My walls a place and a name better than that of sons and daughters; I will give them an everlasting name that shall not be cut off. ⁶ " Also the sons of the foreigner who join themselves to the LORD, to serve Him, and to love the name of the LORD, to be His servants— everyone who keeps from defiling the Sabbath, and holds fast My covenant— ⁷ Even them I will bring to My holy mountain, and make them joyful in My house of prayer. Their burnt offerings and their sacrifices

will be accepted on My altar; for My house shall be called a house of prayer for all nations." ⁸ The Lord GOD, who gathers the outcasts of Israel, says, " Yet I will gather to him others besides those who are gathered to him."

⁹ All you beasts of the field, come to devour, all you beasts in the forest. ¹⁰ His watchmen are blind, they are all ignorant; they are all dumb dogs, they cannot bark; sleeping, lying down, loving to slumber. ¹¹ Yes, *they are greedy dogs which never have enough.* And they are shepherds who cannot understand; they all look to their own way, every one for his own gain, **from his own territory.**

Note – It says "My house", not "My houses."

I know, some will say this only applies to Israel and their shepherds. But recall John 10:16, "**there will be one flock and one shepherd.**" We, whoever we are, who belong to Christ are a part of the one flock and one shepherd – a part of Israel.

Jeremiah 25:34-36

" Wail, shepherds, and cry!

Roll about *in the ashes,*
You leaders of the flock!

For the days of your slaughter and your dispersions are fulfilled;
You shall fall like a precious vessel.

³⁵ And the shepherds will have no way to flee,
Nor the leaders of the flock to escape.

³⁶ A voice of the cry of the shepherds,
And a wailing of the leaders to the flock *will be heard.*
For the LORD has plundered their pasture,

Jeremiah 50:4-6

" In those days and in that time," says the LORD,

" The children of Israel shall come,
They and the children of Judah together;
With continual weeping they shall come,
And seek the LORD their God.

⁵ They shall ask the way to Zion,
With their faces toward it, *saying,*

' Come and let us join ourselves to the LORD
In a perpetual covenant
That will not be forgotten.'

⁶ " My people have been lost sheep.
 Their shepherds have led them astray;
 They have turned them away *on* the mountains.
 They have gone from mountain to hill;
 They have forgotten their resting place.

From outward appearances, there seems to be many caring, loving pastors. Some look as if they are excellent teachers. But how many are *really* not teaching and adhering to the true Word of God. As a result, how many have they led astray.

How many claim to be a "spiritual leader?" How many call themselves and expect to be called by such exalted titles as "father", "reverend", and " rabbi" - just to name a few.

But what does Jesus say?

Matthew 23:8-12

"But you, do not be called '**Rabbi**'; for One is your **Teacher**, the Christ, and **you are all brethren**.
⁹ **Do not call anyone on earth your father**; for **One is your Father, He who is in heaven**.
¹⁰ And do not be called teachers; for One is your Teacher, the Christ. ¹¹ But he who is greatest among you shall be your servant. ¹² And whoever exalts himself will be humbled, and he who humbles himself will be exalted.

Rabbi (4461) ḥāb̄bī—*hrab-bee*'; of Hebrew origin [**Hebrew {7227}** (בָּבָר) with pronoun suffix]; *my master*, i.e. *Rabbi*, as an official title of honor: — (Translated in King James version as) Master, Rabbi.

{7227} בָּבָר — **rab, rab**; by contracted from 7231; abundant (in quantity, size, age, number, rank, quality): — (Translated in King James version as) (in) abound(-undance, -ant, - antly), captain, elder, enough, exceedingly, full, great(-ly, man, one), increase, long (enough, (time)), (do, have) many(-ifold, things, a time), ((ship-)) master, mighty, more, (too, very) much, multiply(-tude), officer, often(-times), plenteous, populous, prince, process (of time), suffice(-lent).

Teacher (2519) καθηγητής, — *kath-ayg-ay-tace*'; from a compound of (2596) (κατά) and (2233) (ήγεομαι); a *guide*, i.e. (figurative) a *teacher*: — (Translated in King James version as) master.

Brethren (80) ἀδελφός, — *ad-el-fos*'; from (the *womb*); a *brother* (literal or figurative) near or remote — (Translated in King James version as) brother.

Earth (1093) γῆ, — *ghay*; concrete from a primary word; *soil*; by extension a *region*, or the solid part or the whole of the *terrene* globe (including the occupants in each application): — (Translated in King James version as) country, earth (-ly), ground, land, world.

Father (3962) πατήρ, — *pat-ayr*'; apparently a primary word; a "*father*" (literal or figurative, near or more remote): — (Translated in King James version as) father, parent.

Based on the above definitions, Matthew 23:8, 10 could be translated as follows:

"But you, do not be called **master** for One is your **guide** the Christ, and you are all brethren.
¹⁰ And do not be called **guides**; for One is your **guide**, the Christ."

Note - Isn't this what many are presumptuously doing?

I realize it says in **1 Peter 5:2-3**,

"Shepherd the flock of God which is among you, serving as overseers, not by compulsion but willingly, not for dishonest gain but eagerly;³ nor as being lords over those entrusted to you, but being examples to the flock;

But to whom are the above verses referring to?

1 Peter 5:1-4

"**The elders** who are **among** you I exhort, **I who am a fellow elder** and a witness of the sufferings of Christ, and also a partaker of the glory that will be revealed:² **Shepherd** the flock of God which is among you, serving as overseers, not by compulsion but willingly, not for dishonest gain but eagerly;³ nor as being lords over those entrusted to you, but being examples to the flock;⁴ and when the Chief Shepherd appears, you will receive the crown of glory that does not fade away.

The word "elder" is not referring to some self-appointed, deacon appointed, or headquarters appointed pastor or priest. That word "elder" primarily means "older," "senior."

Elder (4245) πρεσβύτερος, — *pres-boo'-ter-os*; comparative of (*elderly*); *older*; as noun, a *senior*; specially an Israelite *Sanhedrist* (also figurative member of the celestial council) or Christian "*presbyter*": — (Translated in King James version as) elder (-est), old.

Vine's Expository Dictionary of New Testament Words says,

4245, presbuteros - an adjective, the comparative degree of presbus, "**an old man, an elder**," is used (a) **of age**, whether of the "elder" of two persons, Luke 15:25, or more, John 8:9, "the eldest;" or of a person advanced in life, a senior, Acts 2:17; in Heb. 11:2, the "elders" are the forefathers in Israel; so in Matt. 15:2; Mark 7:3,5; the feminine of the adjective is used of "elder" women in the churches, 1 Tim. 5:2, not in respect of position but in seniority of age; (b) **of rank or positions of responsibility**, (1) among Gentiles, as in the Sept. of Gen. 50:7; Num. 22:7; (2) in the Jewish nation, firstly, those who were the heads or leaders of the tribes and families, as of the seventy who assisted Moses, Num. 11:16; Deut. 27:1, and those assembled by Solomon; secondly, members of the Sanhedrin, consisting of the chief priests, "elders" and scribes, learned in Jewish law, e.g., Matt. 16:21; 26:47; thirdly, those who managed public affairs in the various cities, Luke 7:3; (3) in the Christian churches, those who, being raised up and qualified by the work of the Holy Spirit, were appointed to have the spiritual care of, and to exercise oversight over, the churches. To these the term "bishops," episkopoi, or "overseers," is applied (see Acts 20, ver. 17 with ver. 28, and Titus 1:5,7), the latter term indicating the nature of their work, presbuteroi their maturity of spiritual experience. The Divine arrangement seen throughout the NT was for a plurality of these to be appointed in each church, Acts 14:23; 20:17; Phil. 1:1; 1 Tim. 5:17; Titus 1:5. The duty of "elders" is described by the verb episkopeo. They were appointed according as they had given evidence of fulfilling the Divine qualifications, Titus 1:6-9; cp. 1 Tim. 3:1-7; 1 Pet. 5:2; (4) the twenty-four "elders" enthroned in heaven around the throne of God, Rev. 4:4,10; 5:5-14; 7:11,13; 11:16; 14:3; 19:4. The number twenty-four is representative of earthly conditions. The word "elder" is nowhere applied to angels.

Among (1722) ἐν, — *en*; a primary preposition denoting (fixed) *position* (in place, time or state), and (by implication) *instrumentality* (medially or constructively), i.e. a relation of *rest* (intermediate between (1519) (εἰς) and (1537) (ἐκ)); “*in*,” *at*, (up-) *on*, *by*, etc.: — (Translated in King James version as) about, after, against, + almost, x altogether, among, x as, at, before, between, (here-) by (+ all means), for (...sake of), + give self wholly to, (here-) in (-to, -wardly), x mightily, (because) of, (up-) on, [open-] ly, x outwardly, one, x quickly, x shortly, [speedi-] ly, x that, x there (-in, -on), through (-out), (un-) to (- ward), under, when, where (-with), while, with (-in). Often used in compounds, with substantially the same import; rarely with verbs of motion, and then not to indicate direction, except (elliptically) by a separate (and different) preposition

Shepherd (4165) ποιμαίνω, — *poy-mah'ee-no*; from (4166) (ποιμήν); to *tend* as a shepherd (or figurative *supervisor*): — (Translated in King James version as) feed (cattle), rule.

(4166) ποιμήν, — *poy-mane'*; of uncertain affinity; a *shepherd* (literal or figurative): — (Translated in King James version as) shepherd, pastor.

Yes, 1 Peter 5 refers to elders among the sheep as “shepherds.” However, 1 Peter 2:25 also points to the true Shepherd.

1 Peter 2:25

“For you were like sheep going astray, but have now returned to **the Shepherd and Overseer of your souls.**

Overseer (KJV says Bishop) (1985) ἐπίσκοπος, — *ep-is'-kop-os*; from (1909) (ἐπί) and (4649) (σκοπός) (in the sense of (1983) (ἐπισκοπέω)); a *superintendent*, i.e. Christian officer in general charge of a (or the) church (literal or figurative): — (Translated in King James version as) bishop, overseer.

Point 2 –

1 Corinthians 11:2-12

“Now I praise you, brethren, that you remember me in all things and keep the **traditions** just as I delivered them to you. ³ But **I want you to know that the head of every man is Christ**, the **head** of woman is **man**, and the head of Christ is God. ⁴ **Every man praying or prophesying, having his head covered, dishonors his head.** ⁵ But every woman who prays or prophesies with her head uncovered dishonors her head, for that is one and the same as if her head were shaved. ⁶ For if a woman is not covered, let her also be shorn. But if it is shameful for a woman to be shorn or shaved, let her be covered. ⁷ For a man indeed ought not to cover his head, since he is the image and glory of God; but woman is the glory of man. ⁸ For man is not from woman, but woman from man. ⁹ Nor was man created for the woman, but woman for the man. ¹⁰ For this reason the woman ought to have a symbol of authority on her head, because of the angels. ¹¹ Nevertheless, neither is man independent of woman, nor woman independent of man, in the Lord. ¹² For as woman came from man, even so man also comes through woman; **but all things are from God.**

Note – Verse 2, the King James version used the word “ordinance.”

Multiple Notes –

1. Verse 4 above does not say “every man praying or prophesying, having *his* head covered, dishonors his pastor – OR – it could be said, every man praying or prophesying, who says his head is covered by his pastor or other religious leader, dishonors his head - Christ.
2. In verse 3 “the head of woman is man” may be better translated “the head of woman is her husband”. It stands to reason that not every man is head or in authority over every woman. I am sure a husband would not appreciate another man giving orders to his wife.
3. It appears Paul regressed to his days as a Pharisee. Paul says in verse 2, “keep the **traditions** just as I delivered them to you.” This sounds like Paul flexing his pharisaical muscles by establishing these traditions like he would have as a full-blown Pharisee. Interestingly, Paul did say long after his on the road to Damascus experience that he was **still** a Pharisee. I can only assume that he did not tell a lie.

Acts 23:6

“But when Paul perceived that one part were Sadducees and the other Pharisees, he cried out in the council, “Men and brethren, **I am a Pharisee**, the son of a Pharisee; concerning the hope and resurrection of the dead I am being judged!”

Just to make sure the New King James Version did not err, following is the King James translation.

Acts 23:6 King James Version (KJV)

“But when Paul perceived that the one part were Sadducees, and the other Pharisees, he cried out in the council, Men and brethren, **I am a Pharisee**, the son of a Pharisee: of the hope and resurrection of the dead I am called in question.

Once a Pharisee always a Pharisee?

4. It appears Paul contradicts what he said in Galatians 3:28.

Galatians 3:26-28

“For you are all sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus. ²⁷ For as many of you as were baptized into Christ have put on Christ. ²⁸ There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is neither male nor female; for you are all one in Christ Jesus.

5. What did Jesus say about the traditions of the scribes, Pharisees and elders?

Mark 7

“Then the Pharisees and some of the scribes came together to Him, having come from Jerusalem. ² Now when they saw some of His disciples eat bread with defiled, that is, with unwashed hands, they found fault. ³ For the Pharisees and all the Jews do not eat unless they wash *their* hands in a special way, holding the tradition of the elders. ⁴ When they come from the marketplace, they do not eat unless they wash. And there are many other things which they have received and hold, *like* the washing of cups, pitchers, copper vessels, and couches. ⁵ Then the Pharisees and scribes asked Him, “Why do Your disciples not walk according to the tradition of the elders, but eat bread with unwashed hands?” ⁶ He answered and said to them, “Well did Isaiah prophesy of you hypocrites, as it is written:

‘ *This people honors Me with their lips,
But their heart is far from Me.*

⁷ And in vain they worship Me,
Teaching as doctrines the commandments of men.'

⁸ For laying aside the commandment of God, you hold the tradition of men—the washing of pitchers and cups, and many other such things you do."

⁹ He said to them, "All too well you reject the commandment of God, that you may keep your tradition."¹⁰ For Moses said, 'Honor your father and your mother'; and, 'He who curses father or mother, let him be put to death.'¹¹ But you say, 'If a man says to his father or mother, "Whatever profit you might have received from me is Corban"—' (that is, a gift to God),¹² then you no longer let him do anything for his father or his mother,¹³ making the word of God of no effect through your tradition which you have handed down. And many such things you do."

Traditions (KJV-ordinances) (3862) παράδοσις, — *par-ad'-os-is*; from (3860) (παραδίδωμι); *transmission*, i.e. (concrete) a *precept*; specially the Jewish *traditionary law*: — (Translated in King James version as) ordinance, tradition.

Head (2776) κεφαλή, — *kef-al-ay*': (in the sense of *seizing*); the **head** (as the part most readily *taken* hold of), literal or figurative: — (Translated in King James version as) head.

Vine's Expository Dictionary of New Testament Words says,

2776, kephale - besides its natural significance, is used (a) figuratively in Rom. 12:20, of heaping coals of fire on a "head" (see COALS); in Acts 18:6, "Your blood be upon your own heads," i.e., "your blood-guiltiness rest upon your own persons," a mode of expression frequent in the OT, and perhaps here directly connected with Ezek. 3:18,20; 33:6,8; see also Lev. 20:16; 2 Sam. 1:16; 1 Kings 2:37; (b) metaphorically, of the authority or direction of God in relation to Christ, of Christ in relation to believing men, of the husband in relation to the wife, 1 Cor. 11:3; of Christ in relation to the Church, Eph. 1:22; 4:15; 5:23; Col. 1:18; 2:19; of Christ in relation to principalities and powers, Col. 2:10. As to 1 Cor. 11:10, taken in connection with the context, the word "authority" probably stands, by metonymy, for a sign of authority (RV), the angels being witnesses of the preeminent relationship as established by God in the creation of man as just mentioned, with the spiritual significance regarding the position of Christ in relation to the Church; cp. Eph. 3:10; it is used of Christ as the foundation of the spiritual building set forth by the Temple, with its "corner stone," Matt. 21:42; symbolically also of the imperial rulers of the Roman power, as seen in the apocalyptic visions, Rev. 13:1,3; 17:3,7,9.

Man (435) ἄντρος, — *an'-ayr*; a primary word [compare a *man* (properly as an individual male)]: — (Translated in King James version as) fellow, husband, man, sir.

In Vain (3155) μάτην, — *mat'-ane*; accusative of a derivative of the base of (3145) (μασάομαι) (through the idea of tentative *manipulation*, i.e. unsuccessful *search*, or else of *punishment*); *folly*, i.e. (adverb) *to no purpose*: — (Translated in King James version as) in vain.

Point 3 –

I believe this is the most widely used by pastors and other church leaders.

Hebrews 13:7

"Remember those who **rule** over you, who have spoken the word of God to you, whose faith follow, considering the outcome of their conduct.⁸ Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, today, and forever."

Rule (2233) ἡγέοματι, — *hayg-eh'-om-ahee*; middle of a (presumed) strengthened form of (71) (ἀγω); to **lead**, i.e. **command** (with official authority); figurative to **deem**, i.e. **consider**: — (Translated in King James version as) account, (be) chief, count, esteem, governor, judge, have the rule over, suppose, think.

The King James could have easily used the word "lead" instead of "rule." I wonder why out of all the translation choices listed they decided on "rule." Hmm...

Note what Jesus Christ said in Matthew 20: 25-28.

Matthew 20:25-28

"But Jesus called them to Himself and said, "You know that the **rulers** of the Gentiles **lord it over them**, and those who are great exercise authority over them.²⁶ **Yet it shall not be so among you**; but **whoever desires to become great among you, let him be your servant.**²⁷ And **whoever desires to be first among you, let him be your slave-**²⁸ **just as the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give His life a ransom for many.**"

Rulers (758) ἀρχῶν, — *ar'-khone*; present participle of (757) (ἀρχω); a **first** (in rank or power): — (Translated in King James version as) chief (ruler), magistrate, prince, ruler.

Once again, Christ said in **Matthew 23:8-12**

"But you, do not be called 'Rabbi'; for One is your Teacher, the Christ, and you are all brethren.⁹ Do not call anyone on earth your father; for One is your Father, He who is in heaven.¹⁰ And do not be called teachers; for One is your Teacher, the Christ.¹¹ **But he who is greatest among you shall be your servant.**¹² **And whoever exalts himself will be humbled, and he who humbles himself will be exalted.**

Notice what Christ told Peter in John 21:14-19.

John 21:14-19

"This is now the third time Jesus showed Himself to His disciples after He was raised from the dead.¹⁵ So when they had eaten breakfast, Jesus said to Simon Peter, "Simon, son of Jonah, do you love Me more than these?" He said to Him, "Yes, Lord; You know that I love You." **He said to him, "Feed My lambs."**¹⁶ He said to him again a second time, "Simon, son of Jonah, do you love Me?" He said to Him, "Yes, Lord; You know that I love You." **He said to him, "Tend My sheep."**¹⁷ He said to him the third time, "Simon, son of Jonah, do you love Me?" And he said to Him, "Lord, You know all things; You know that I love You." **Jesus said to him, "Feed My sheep.**¹⁸ Most assuredly, I say to you, when you were younger, you girded yourself and walked where you wished; but when you are old, you will stretch out your hands, and another will gird you and carry you where you do not wish."¹⁹ This He spoke, signifying by what death he would glorify God. And when He had spoken this, **He said to him, "Follow Me."**

Jesus told Peter to Feed and Tend **His** sheep. This was so important that He repeated the command; but no where does it state that Christ instructed Peter to "cover" **His** sheep.

Feed (1006) βόσκω, — *bos'-ko*; a prolonged form of a primary verb [compare (977) (βιβρώσκω), (1016) (βοῦς)]; to *pasture*; by extension to *fodder*; reflexive to *graze*: — (Translated in King James version as) feed, keep.

Tend (4165) ποιμαίνω, — *poy-mah'ee-no*; from (4166) (ποιμήν); to *tend* as a shepherd (or figurative *supervisor*): — (Translated in King James version as) feed (cattle), rule.

Unger's Bible Dictionary¹ definition of a "Shepherd."

Shepherd means one who tends; to tend.

The routine of the shepherd's duties appears to have been as follows:

- In the morning he led forth his flock from the fold which he did by going before them and calling to them.
- Arrived at the pasturage, he watched the flock with assistance of dogs. And should any sheep stray, he had to search for it until he found it.
- He supplied them with water, either at a running stream or at troughs attached to wells.
- At evening he brought them back to the fold and reckoned them to see that none was missing. By passing them "under the rod." As they entered the door of the enclosure; checking each sheep as it passed by a motion of the hand.
- He watched the entrance of the fold throughout the night, acting as porter. The shepherd's office thus required great watchfulness, particularly by night.
- It also required tenderness toward the young and feeble (Isaiah 40:11) particularly in driving them to and from the pasturage.
- The office of the eastern shepherd, as described in the Bible was attended with much hardship, and even danger.
 - ✚ He was exposed to the extremes of heat and cold
 - ✚ His food frequently consisted of the precarious supplies afforded by nature.
 - ✚ He had to encounter the attacks of wild beasts, occasionally of the larger species such as lions, wolves, panthers, and bears.
 - ✚ Nor was he free from the risk of robbers or predatory hordes
- In certain localities, moreover, towers were erected for the double purpose of spying an enemy at a distance and protecting the flock.

Note – the shepherd did not require the sheep to feed, support and protect him.

John 10:11-16

"I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd gives His life for the sheep. ¹² But a **hireling**, *he who is* not the shepherd, one who does not own the sheep, sees the wolf coming and leaves the sheep and flees; and the wolf catches the sheep and scatters them. ¹³ The **hireling** flees because he is a **hireling** and does not care about the sheep. ¹⁴ I am the good shepherd; and I know My *sheep*, and am known by My own. ¹⁵ As the Father knows Me, even so I know the Father; and I lay down My life for the sheep. ¹⁶ And other sheep I have which are not of this fold; them also I must bring, and they will hear My voice; and there will be one flock and one shepherd.

¹ Unger's Bible Dictionary by Merrill F. Unger; Copyright © 1957, 1961, 1966 by the Moody Bible Institute of Chicago, Third Edition, page 1013

Hirling (3411 μισθωτός, — *mis-tho-tos*'; from (3409) (μισθώω); a *wageworker*(good or bad): — (Translated in King James version as) hired servant, hireling.

(3409) μισθώω, — *mis-tho'-o*; from (3408) (μισθός); to *let* out for wages, i.e. (middle) to *hire*: — (Translated in King James version as) hire.

(3408) μισθός, — *mis-thos*'; apparently a primary word; *pay* for service (literal or figurative), good or bad: — (Translated in King James version as) hire, reward, wages.

New Testament Atonement

In what we call the Old Testament, an animal was sacrificed and the blood sprinkled on the Mercy Seat to atone for (or cover) the sins of Israel. These sacrifices are now a thing of the past.

1 John 2:1-2

"My little children, these things I write to you, so that you may not sin. And if anyone sins, we have an *Advocate* with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous.² And He Himself is the *propitiation* for our sins, and not for ours only but also for the whole world."

1 John 4:10-11

In this is love, not that we loved God, but that He loved us and sent His Son to be the *propitiation* for our sins.¹¹ Beloved, if God so loved us, we also ought to love one another.

The word "propitiation" means atonement. Jesus Christ has covered us and atoned for our sins.

Advocate (3875) παράκλητος, — *par-ak'-lay-tos*; an *intercessor, consoler*: — (Translated in King James version as) advocate, comforter.

Propitiation (2434) ἵλασμός, — *hil-as-mos*'; *atonement*, i.e. (concretely) an *expiator*: — (Translated in King James version as) propitiation.

Note - the Hebrew meaning of Atonement is "to cover." Refer to page 3.

Jesus Christ is also our Mediator (Hebrews 8:8, 12:24).

Hebrews 8:1-6

"Now *this is* the main point of the things we are saying: We have such a High Priest, who is seated at the right hand of the throne of the Majesty in the heavens,² a Minister of the sanctuary and of the true tabernacle which the Lord erected, and not man.

³ For every high priest is appointed to offer both gifts and sacrifices. Therefore *it is* necessary that this One also have something to offer. ⁴ For if He were on earth, He would not be a priest, since there are priests who offer the gifts according to the law;⁵ who serve the copy and shadow of the heavenly things, as Moses was divinely instructed when he was about to make the tabernacle. For He said, "See that you make all things according to the pattern shown you on the mountain."⁶ But now He has obtained a more excellent ministry, inasmuch as He is also *Mediator* of a better covenant, which was established on better promises.

Hebrews 12:18-24

"For you have not come to the mountain that may be touched and that burned with fire, and to blackness and darkness and tempest,¹⁹ and the sound of a trumpet and the voice of words, so that those who heard it begged that the word should not be spoken to them anymore.²⁰ (For they could not endure what was commanded: "And if so much as a beast touches the mountain, it shall be stoned or shot with an arrow."²¹ And so terrifying was the sight that Moses said, "I am exceedingly afraid and trembling.")

²² But you have come to Mount Zion and to the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, to an innumerable company of angels,²³ to the general assembly and church of the firstborn who are registered in heaven, to God the Judge of all, to the spirits of just men made perfect,²⁴ to Jesus the **Mediator** of the new covenant, and to the blood of sprinkling that speaks better things than that of Abel.

Mediator (3316) μεσίτης, — *mes-ee'-tace*; from (3319) (μέσος); a *go-between*, i.e. (simply) an *internunciator*, or (by implication) a *reconciler* (*intercessor*): — (Translated in King James version as) mediator.

It is Jesus Christ who covers our sins, with His own blood and intercedes on our behalf.

Endued with Power

Luke 24:49 says

"Behold, I send the Promise of My Father upon you; but tarry in the city of Jerusalem until you are **endued** with power from on high."

The word "endued" means to invest with clothing. If you are clothed in something, you are covered by it. (Example Exodus 22:26-27) According to Strong's Concordance, it's "in the sense of sinking into a garment." This reminds me of sinking into a clean downy soft robe after a nice hot bath.

Exodus 22:26-27

"If you ever take your neighbor's garment as a pledge, you shall return it to him before the sun goes down.²⁷ For that is his only covering, it is his garment for his skin. What will he sleep in? And it will be that when he cries to Me, I will hear, for I am gracious.

Endued (1746) ἐνδύω, — *en-doo'-o*; from (1722) (ἐν) and (1416) (δύω) (in the sense of *sinking* into a garment); to *invest* with clothing (literal or figurative): — (Translated in King James version as) array, clothe (with), endue, have (put) on.

The "power from on high" that Jesus said we must be "endued" with is the Holy Spirit, the Spirit of God. The Holy Spirit is our Comforter and Teacher. He is the Spirit of truth (John 14:16, 26; 15:26).

John 14:14-26 (King James Version (KJV))

"If ye love me, keep my commandments.¹⁶ And I will pray the Father, and he shall give you **another Comforter**, that he may abide with you for ever;¹⁷ Even the Spirit of truth; whom the world cannot receive, because it seeth him not, neither knoweth him: but ye know him; for he dwelleth with you, and shall be in you.

¹⁸I will not leave you **comfortless**: I will come to you.

¹⁹Yet a little while, and the world seeth me no more; but ye see me: because I live, ye shall live also.

²⁰At that day ye shall know that I am in my Father, and ye in me, and I in you.

²¹He that hath my commandments, and keepeth them, he it is that loveth me: and he that loveth me shall be loved of my Father, and I will love him, and will manifest myself to him.

²²Judas saith unto him, not Iscariot, Lord, how is it that thou wilt manifest thyself unto us, and not unto the world?

²³Jesus answered and said unto him, If a man love me, he will keep my words: and my Father will love him, and we will come unto him, and make our abode with him.

²⁴He that loveth me not keepeth not my sayings: and the word which ye hear is not mine, but the Father's which sent me.

²⁵These things have I spoken unto you, being yet present with you.

²⁶But the **Comforter**, which is the **Holy Ghost**, whom the Father will send in my name, he shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you.

Comfortless (3737) ὀρφανός, — *or-fan-os*'; of uncertain affinity; *bereaved* ("orphan"), i.e. *parentless*: — (Translated in King James version as) array comfortless, fatherless.

Comforter (3875) παράκλητος, — *par-ak'-lay-tos*; an *intercessor, consoler*: — (Translated in King James version as) array advocate, comforter.

Note – This is the same word translated as "Advocate" on page 18.

The New King James Version uses the word Helper" instead of "Comforter."

John 14:15-16

"If you love Me, keep My commandments. ¹⁶ And I will pray the Father, and He will give you **another Helper**, that He may abide with you forever— the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it neither sees Him nor knows Him; but you know Him, for He dwells with you and will be in you. ¹⁸ **I will not leave you orphans; I will come to you.**

¹⁹ "A little while longer and the world will see Me no more, but you will see Me. Because I live, you will live also. ²⁰ At that day you will know that I am in My Father, and you in Me, and I in you. ²¹ He who has My commandments and keeps them, it is he who loves Me. And he who loves Me will be loved by My Father, and I will love him and manifest Myself to him."

²² Judas (not Iscariot) said to Him, "Lord, how is it that You will manifest Yourself to us, and not to the world?"

²³ Jesus answered and said to him, "If anyone loves Me, he will keep My word; and My Father will love him, and We will come to him and make Our home with him. ²⁴ He who does not love Me does not keep My words; and the word which you hear is not Mine but the Father's who sent Me.

²⁵ "These things I have spoken to you while being present with you. ²⁶ But the **Helper**, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in My name, He will teach you all things, and bring to your remembrance all things that I said to you.

CONCLUSION

How blessed we are to have a God who covers and protects us. Our Father in Heaven sent His Son to cover our sins. It is He, Christ Jesus, who is our Good Shepherd and Overseer, who laid down His life for us. It is He who is our Rock and deliverer from the storms. He is our intercessor and He protects us from our enemies and those who hate us (Luke 1:68-71). He is our secret place. He sees us, knows us and loves us. He said He would never leave His flock or forsake us. Now, because of Him, we can be endued with power from on high. We have another Comforter, the Holy Spirit who teaches and prepares us.

So why do we put our trust in man, a middleman at that, when the Lord has given us direct access to Himself - if we continue to trust and abide in Him (John 14:23; 15:4-10).

Psalm 146:3 says,

"Do not put your trust in princes, Nor in a son of man, in whom there is no help."

It is also recorded in **Matthew 23:37** that Jesus said,

"O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, the one who kills the prophets and stones those who are sent to her!

How often I wanted to gather your children together, as a hen gathers her chicks under *her* wings, but you were not willing!"

Are we still not willing?

So, can your pastor, "father", reverend, or whatever else you may call him or her, cover you when they cannot even cover themselves? You decide.

Considering the times in which we live, the following passage is right on point. It is not written to strangers. It is written to those who claim they know and follow Jesus Christ.

Revelation 3:14-22

"And to the angel of the church of the Laodiceans write,

'These things says the Amen, the Faithful and True Witness, the Beginning of the creation of God:

¹⁵ "I know your works, that you are neither cold nor hot. I could wish you were cold or hot. ¹⁶ So then, because you are lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I will vomit you out of My mouth.

¹⁷ Because you say, 'I am rich, have become wealthy, and have need of nothing'—and do not know that you are wretched, miserable, poor, blind, **and naked**— ¹⁸ I counsel you to buy from Me gold refined in the fire, that you may be rich; **and white garments, that you may be clothed, that the shame of your nakedness may not be revealed**; and anoint your eyes with eye salve, that you may see. ¹⁹ As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten. Therefore be zealous and repent.

²⁰ Behold, I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears My voice and opens the door, I will come in to him and dine with him, and he with Me. ²¹ To him who overcomes I will grant to sit with Me on My throne, as I also overcame and sat down with My Father on His throne.

²² "He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches."