

THE SHAME OF NAKEDNESS

Ron Halbrook

Revelation 3:17-18 pictures a proud church like a poor, diseased man with inadequate clothes. If the church repented, Christ would supply every spiritual need, *“that thou mayest be clothed, and that the shame of thy nakedness do not appear.”* This figurative use of inadequate clothing is based on the concept of the shame of nakedness and on the failure of some people to recognize this shame. Nakedness may refer to nudity or to inadequate clothing. Adam and Eve were first nude, but then partially clothed with *“aprons”* (girdle, loin-covering; Gen. 3:7). God replaced this inadequate clothing with *“coats,”* proper and adequate garments *“generally with sleeves, coming down to the knees”* (v. 21; Gensenius, Hebrew & Chaldee Lexicon, p. 420). God replaced their shorts with garments covering from the shoulders down to the knees to cover the shame of their nakedness. To uncover or see nakedness is a euphemism for sexual intercourse (Lev. 18:6; 20:17). Nakedness, with its sexual appeal and implications, is a blessing in marriage, but a curse and shame when displayed outside marriage. Therefore, in addition to outer robes, the

priests wore pants reaching from the waist to the knees — *“breeches to cover their nakedness; from the loins even unto the thighs they shall reach”* (Ex. 28:42). Even heathen women knew the embarrassment of lifting their skirts to cross a river — *“make bare the leg, uncover the thigh.... Thy nakedness shall be uncovered, yea, thy shame shall be seen”* (Is. 47:2-3). Exposing the thighs reveals the shame of nakedness. God commanded women to *“adorn themselves in modest apparel, with shamefacedness and sobriety; not with broided hair, or gold, or pearls, or costly array; but (which becometh women professing godliness) with good works”* (1 Tim. 2:9-10). Shamefacedness or shamefastness is an innate sense of honor which “shrinks from overpassing the limits of womanly reserve and modesty, as well as from the dishonor” of such an act (Trench, Synonyms of the New Testament, pp. 63-68). It is “a sense of shame” or “modesty which is fast or rooted in the character” (Vine, Expository Dictionary of New Testament Words, IV:17). Modesty, shamefacedness, and sobriety deeply rooted in a woman’s character cause her to shrink back from exposing the shame of her nakedness. This shame is exposed before men by wearing skirts and shorts above the knees, miniskirts, low

cut dresses and blouses (front or back), strapless or backless dresses, swimsuits, tube or tank tops, tight or formfitting attire (leotard, bicycle shorts, etc.), and the generally abbreviated uniforms worn by majorettes, cheerleaders, and flag or drill teams. A man in shorts revealing his thighs and without a shirt exposes the shame of his nakedness to women. The sin of exposed nakedness is fraught with dangers. It creates temptations for the opposite sex, sears the conscience, and refuses the truth of God’s word (Mt. 18:6-7; Jer. 6:15; Hosea 8:12). It weakens the home by causing parents to fail in their duty to their children or children to rebel against parental leadership (1 Sam. 3:13; Dt. 21:18-21). When Christians are guilty, they conform to the world, start down the road of apostasy, set the wrong example, and bring shame on Christ and His church (Rom. 12:2; Judg. 2:10; Mt. 5:13-16; Eph. 5:26-27). Souls will be lost over such sins (Gal. 5:19-21). Christ can clothe us spiritually and teach us to dress properly when people in the world repent and are baptized to be forgiven through His blood, or when erring Christians repent and pray for forgiveness (Acts 2:38; 8:22).

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WHY ROMANS 14 DOES NOT INCLUDE MORAL AND DOCTRINAL DIFFERENCES

John Edwards

It has never ceased to amaze me that there has been so much division over a chapter designed to promote unity among the Lord's people. A question unanswered for some is: "Does Romans 14 allow us to engage in an on-going, never-ending fellowship when we differ over matters of moral and doctrinal import?"

THE TEXT DOES NOT ALLOW IT. Romans 14 concerns matters of indifference to God. Paul said, "*Let not him that eateth despise him that eateth not; and let not him which eateth not judge him that eateth: for God hath received him*" (Rom. 14:3). Each individual is "*to be fully persuaded in his own mind*" (Rom. 14:5). Things under consideration in Romans 14 are things clean — "*there is nothing unclean of itself*" (Rom. 14:14) — and pure

things — "*all things indeed are pure*" (Rom. 14:20). This excludes moral differences, for immorality is neither clean nor pure (Heb. 13:4). Neither does the chapter contain doctrinal matters for verse 22 records, "*Hast thou faith? Have it to thyself before God....*" "*Faith*" here refers to one's personal faith or conscience, not the gospel, for we are not to keep the gospel to ourselves (Mk. 16:15-16).

THE CONTEXT DOES NOT ALLOW IT. A rule of Bible study is to consider the context of a passage. Romans 14 is situated between passages that enforce morality (Rom. 13:13-14) and condemn the teaching of false doctrine (Rom. 16:17-18). Do you think Paul, in the middle of such teaching, would teach something completely opposite? To say Romans 14 teaches us to receive each other when we have moral and doctrinal differences is to say something that does not agree with the context. When you say Romans 14 includes things allowed, it then makes sense!

THE TEACHING OF

OTHER PASSAGES DOES NOT ALLOW IT. Truth is harmonious. Whatever Romans 14 says must be consistent with everything else the Bible says. We cannot have fellowship with those practicing immorality (1 Cor. 5:1-11; Eph. 5:11), nor can we have fellowship with those teaching false doctrine (1 Cor. 15:12, 33; Gal. 1:8-9; 1 Tim. 6:3-5; 2 Jn. 9-11). To come out of Romans 14 with a meaning that violates the teaching of other passages of Scripture is to arrive at the wrong meaning!

Either all, some, or no moral and doctrinal matters fit into Romans 14. If you believe some moral and doctrinal matters are included in Romans 14 teaching, which ones are they and why not others? To use Romans 14 to teach an on-going and never-ending fellowship with those living in sin or teaching false doctrine is but to misuse it!

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APRIL 16-21
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OCTOBER 23-29
RON HALBROOK

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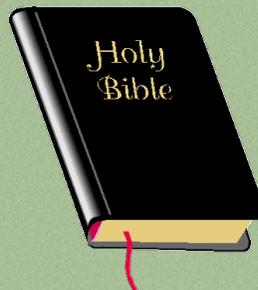
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