

THE 'TALLIT' – SCRIPTURAL TRUTH OR VAIN TRADITION?

Shalom all,

In this article I would like to address the issue of whether a 'tallit', commonly understood as a 'prayer shawl', is something that is found in Scripture or not. 'Tallits' are widely promoted among many 'Messianic groups' and many 'Torah observant followers of Messiah', as well as in various Christian churches. The question we must ask ourselves is where does the tallit come from and what Scriptural evidence is there to defend any such need to wear a tallit? Most have been taught through tradition that the 'tallit' was a first century garment that fulfilled the Torah of Mosheh in regards to wearing Tsitsit on one's garments in order to remind one to keep the Torah and commands of Elohim. Many even claim that the tallit is an esteemed garment as they claim that Messiah wore a tallit and by this belief they advocate that all believers should wear a tallit. While many of the claims of those who promote the use of a tallit may sound very sincere and true we must take note that there is no historical evidence whatsoever that can prove the use of tallits in the first century. However, what can be found is that the prescribed use of a tallit can be traced as being a later rabbinic addition that was added.

What is worth taking note of is that the actual Hebrew word 'tallith' is not found in Scripture at all!!! Neither does the Greek equivalent appear in the Greek texts, be it the Renewed Writings (N.T.) or the LXX (Septuagint – Greek translation of the Tanak (O.T.)). We also take note that there is not even a 'transliterated' word for 'tallit' found in the Greek Scriptures.

The prayer shawl, as it is known today, came about later in the Middle Ages as a rabbinical decision. The design and construction of this garment was as a result of a complete misinterpretation of the command that is found in **Bemidbar/Numbers 15** regarding the instructions to wear tsitsit on the fringes of our garments, as the misinterpretation of these instructions were clearly misguided by the man-made traditions that are found in the 'Mishnah' from the 3rd century of the Common Era. Various man-made commands were constructed around the proper design and function of the tallit as well as how and when one was to wear it.

What is very alarming to see today is how there are 'Messianics', many of whom were former 'Christians' that are unknowingly following Talmudic Judaism and the vain traditions thereof by using the 'tallit' or prayer shawl during services to cover their heads when praying.

We will certainly look at who is to cover their head when praying or prophesying and who is not, however for now I want to first focus on that which is known as the 'Tallit'.

What most do not realise is that the fringes that are tied on the four corners of the 'tallit' are tied numerically by using gematria in order to tie the knots. There are four threads which go through the corner and are doubled back. $4 \times 2 = 8$. There are five knots on each tassel. $8+5=13$. When you add in the numerical equivalent of the word (tsitsit) which is 600 to the threads and knots you get 613: $600+13 = 613$. The number 613 is a rabbinic interpretation of the Ten Commandments. (603 interpretations +10 commandments = 613).

Here is what is stated by one of the sages of Judaism:

Quote:

"[The word] tsitsit is numerically equivalent to 600, 8 strings and 5 knots add up to 613. (Tanchuma, Korach 12)"

What is also worth taking note of is that at a traditional Jewish burial the one who is been buried is buried with a tallit that has one of the fringes or tsitsit cut off, which symbolises that the deceased is no longer under the rabbinic interpretation of the law. It therefore stands to reason that by wearing a tallit it symbolises that the one wearing it is under the authority of the rabbinic interpretation of the Torah. While many may boldly defend that they are not trying to be 'Jewish' in wearing a tallit they fail to realise that by their wearing of a traditional tallit they are in fact submitting themselves under the authority of Rabbinic Judaism and the false anti-Messiah spirit that drives it!

Let us take a closer look at the command to wear tsitsit so that we are able to get a clear Scriptural Truth that is given to us very plainly.

Bemidbar/Numbers 15:37-40 **"And יהוה spoke to Mosheh, saying, ³⁸ "Speak to the children of Yisra'el, and you shall say to them to make tzitziyot on the corners of their garments throughout their generations, and to put a blue cord in the tzitzit of the corners. ³⁹ And it shall be to you for a tzitzit, and you shall see it, and shall remember all the commands of יהוה and shall do them, and not search after your own heart and your own eyes after which you went whoring, ⁴⁰ so that you remember, and shall do all My commands, and be set-apart unto your Elohim. ⁴¹ I am יהוה your Elohim, who brought you out of the land of Mitsrayim, to be your Elohim. I am יהוה your Elohim."**

In order for Yisra'el to remember the commands, they were commanded to make tzitzit.

Let us take a closer look at a few of the Hebrew words that are used in these clear instructions.

The Hebrew word צִיִּצִית *tsitsith* – Strong’s H6734 means, *‘tassel, fringe, lock’* and we are to make צִיִּצִית *tsitsith* on the corners of our garments and put a blue cord in the צִיִּצִית *tsitsith* – which is for the purpose of reminding us to remember all the commands of יהוה and do them and not follow after our own heart and eyes after which we had previously went whoring! What is extremely important to take note of here is that these instructions to make צִיִּצִית *tsitsith* on the corners of garments has not been done away with as the command is given specifically to the children of Yisra’el **‘throughout their generations’**. When we are grafted in to the Body of Messiah by His Blood we are grafted into the Covenants of Promise that we were once far off from and without Elohim. By the Blood of Messiah and our immersion in His Name we are grafted into Yisra’el, His Bride, and therefore we are children of Yisra’el!

Yisra’el – יִשְׂרָאֵל *Yisra’el* – Strong’s H3478 which means, *‘he who prevails, overcomes with Ēl’*, comes from the primitive root words, אֵל *Ēl* – Strong’s H410 which means, *‘Mighty, power, shortened form of Elohim – Mighty One’* and the root word verb שָׂרָה *sarah* – Strong’s H8280 which means, *‘to persist, exert oneself, persevere, wrestle, contend’*, which is spelt the same as the name of Abraham’s wife, שָׂרָה *‘Sarah’* – Strong’s H8283 which means *‘princess or noble woman’*; which is the feminine of the word שָׂר *sar* – Strong’s H8269 which means, *‘prince, captain, chieftain, ruler’*!

We are a royal priesthood and in a manner of speaking, with Abraham as our “father in the faith”, we are also children of Sarah the **‘princess’** and so are also **‘princes’** in the Kingdom of our King, and we who overcome shall rule with our Master and Elohim! Why I am mentioning this is to make it abundantly clear that as a called out, chosen and set-apart royal priesthood of Messiah we are Yisra’el and need to guard all He commands us, including the instructions to make *tsitsit* on the corners of our garments!

The Hebrew word that is translated as ‘corners’ is the word כַּנָּף *kanaph* – Strong’s H3671 which means, *‘a wing, (of a garment or bed clothing), a flap, extremity, corner, covering, edges, skirt, wingspan’*.

The Hebrew word translated as ‘garments’ is בִּגְדֵי *begeḏ* – Strong’s H899 which means, *‘garment, covering, treachery, to deceive’* and can also give reference to any kind of garment, from the robes of the rich and mighty to the rags of the poor and the leper. It clearly represents that with which you cover yourself and therefore speaks of one’s clothing and often is understood to represent one’s outermost clothing. It is also used as a reference to the cloth used to cover the Tabernacle furniture (**Bemidbar/Numbers 4:12-13**). This word comes from the root בָּגַד *bagad* – Strong’s H898 which means, *‘to act or deal treacherously with, acted deceitfully, faithless, transgression’*.

What is worth taking note of, as you can see from the definition, is that this word for ‘garment’ - בִּגְדֵי *begeḏ* – Strong’s H899 also means *‘treachery, treacherous’* and can therefore highlight for us garments that are not pure in terms of the treacherous workings of unrighteousness that a person may be clothed in as opposed to the proper covering of righteousness, which is to guard the commands!

In Yeshayahu we see this word being translated as ‘rags’:

Yeshayahu/Isaiah 64:6 “And all of us have become as one unclean, and all our righteousnesses are as soiled rags. And all of us fade like a leaf, and our crookednesses, like the wind, have taken us away.”

When that with which we ‘cover ourselves’ deviates from the clear righteous standard of the commands of Elohim then our garments become soiled and no longer represent to purity and righteousness of complete set-apartness!

Any such tradition that sets aside the Torah of Elohim by taking away from or adding to the commands of Elohim defiles the garments of righteousness, as man-made traditions are held in higher regard than the clear Torah and instructions of Elohim that are quickly set-aside and nullified through tradition!

What has this got to do with ‘tallits’? Well that is the point of this article – which is to take a look at what Scripture teaches, instructs and commands and then be equipped to rightly separate the set-apart from the profane to ensure that we are a Bride who makes Herself ready for our soon coming King, and is not found to have soiled garments that have been defiled through vain traditions of man that has caused many to be burdened with!

Messiah has given us garments of deliverance which we are to keep pure as we guard His commands and walk in His Torah, being on guard against that which deviates from set-apartness that is called for!

Yeshayahu/Isaiah 61:10 “I greatly rejoice in יהוה, my being exults in my Elohim. For He has put garments of deliverance on me, He has covered me with the robe of righteousness, as a bridegroom decks himself with ornaments, and as a bride adorns herself with her jewels.”

As we sojourn here in our ‘Wilderness journey’ so to speak, we also recognize that this is the time that we ought to be growing, in ever increasing measure, in our ability to seek His Wisdom, discern His Voice and Understand His instructions as we diligently eat our fill each day of His Living word that sustains us, with the full assurance of His complete covering and protection over our lives – if we abide in His word and remain in Him, clothing ourselves daily in the Master יהושע Messiah.

Romiyim/Romans 13:14 “**but put on the Master יהושע Messiah, and make no provision for the lusts of the flesh.**”

We are able to ‘put on’ Messiah, because of the ‘covering’ that we have in Him – as He has covered our sins so that we can walk unhindered in the fullness of His righteousness. What we must recognize though, is that many assume to have the true covering of Messiah, yet they are simply covered by deceit and risk being exposed as having the wrong covering as their nakedness and shame will be exposed before all when the Master comes again to take up His True covered Bride!

Let us now take a closer look at the command that we see in:

Debarim/Deuteronomy 22:12 “**Make tassels on the four corners of the garment with which you cover yourself.**”

The Hebrew word that is used here for ‘tassels’ is גְּדִיל *gedil* – Strong’s H1434 which means, ‘**twisted threads**’ and comes from the primitive root word גָּדַל *gadal* – Strong’s H1431 meaning, ‘**to grow up, become great**’.

This is a wonderful example of how we are to put ‘**twisted threads**’ on the corners of our garments as a means of continually reminding us of how we are to grow up and become great in Messiah, and these tassels are a clear reference to the **tsitsit** that is mentioned in **Bemidbar/Numbers 15**.

The Hebrew word that is translated as ‘**garment**’ here in **Debarim/Deuteronomy 22:12** is the word כְּסוּת *kesuth* – Strong’s H3682 which means, ‘**a covering, clothing, garment, cloak**’, which comes from the root verb כָּסָה *kasa* – Strong’s H3680 which means, ‘**to cover, conceal, clothe, hide**’ which is used here in the above verse and is translated as ‘**cover yourself**’.

What is very clear from **Bemidbar/Numbers 15** and **Debarim/Deuteronomy 22** is that the Hebrew word ‘**tallit**’ does not feature or even come close to a linguistic match for any of these Hebrew words that are used in the instructions we are given to cover ourselves and makes **tsitsit** or tassels to out on the corners of our covering!

Let us now take a look at a few Greek words that are used in relation to **Tsitsit** and garments!

Mattithyahu/Matthew 23:5 “**And they do all their works to be seen by men, and they make their t’fillen wide and lengthen the tzitziyot of their garments**”

The Greek word that is translated here as ‘**tzitziyot**’ is κράσπεδον *kraspedon* – Strong’s G2899 which means, ‘**a border, tassel, fringe, hem**’, and this is the Greek word that is used in the **LXX** (Septuagint) for the Hebrew word צִיצִית *tsitsith* – Strong’s H6734 in **Bemidbar/Numbers 15:37&39** and is used for the Hebrew word קַנָּפִי *kanaph* – Strong’s H3671 (corners) in **Debarim/Deuteronomy 22:12**.

The Greek word that is translated here as ‘**garments**’ is ἱμάτιον *himation* – Strong’s G2440 which means, ‘**a garment, outer garment, robe, cloak, clothes, dresses**’ and is used generally for any kind of garment including inner or outer garments.

The Greek word that is translated as ‘**t’fillen**’ is the word φυλακτήριον *phulaktērion* – Strong’s G5440 which means, ‘**an amulet, phylactery**’. Phylacteries were pouches or boxes containing scrolls of parchment on which the Yehudim wrote certain portions of the Torah and bound them on their foreheads and their wrists in a literal attempt at keeping the command that is found in:

Debarim/Deuteronomy 6:8 “**and shall bind them as a sign on your hand, and they shall be as frontlets between your eyes.**”

The root word for ‘**bind**’ is קָשַׁר *qashar* – Strong’s H7194 and means, ‘**to bind, league together, knit, tied**’ and the idea here is that we are to have His Word ‘**knit**’ and interwoven into our lives, so much so that when others look at us they should see the Torah that is written upon our hearts and is in our mouths – to do it – in other words we become a ‘**letter**’ of the Truth!

Qorintiyim Bēt/2 Corinthians 3:2-3 “**You are our letter, having been written in our hearts, known and read by all men, 3 making it obvious that you are a letter of Messiah, served by us, written not with ink but by the Spirit of the living Elohim, not on tablets of stone but on fleshly tablets of the heart.**”

When the Torah is as frontlets between the eyes – then we can begin to understand more clearly how the Torah is a lamp and light for our daily walk:

Tehillah/Psalm 119:105 “**Your word is a lamp to my feet and a light to my path.**”

While we recognise this clear instruction as symbolic of having the Torah bound to all we do and all we think, many took this command literally and made containers which contained Scriptures inside that could be bound on the hand or forehead. The prevailing Pharisee tradition at the time of יהושע Messiah, as well as among orthodox Rabbinic Judaism today, was/is to take this passage in **Debarim/Deuteronomy 6** literally. They do this by inserting parchments containing these passages into two small leather boxes, one for the head and one for the right arm (left handed people use the left arm). These are then bound on to the arm and head by leather straps. There is no Scriptural command or instructions regarding the need to make leather boxes and put Scripture passages in them and attach them to your arm and head.

While those who took this command literally could not find specific instructions regarding the materials to be used or how they were to be attached to the forehead and arm, we take note that יהושע referred to the differing widths that were a current traditional practice at that time and how the hypocritical rabbis were attempting to display their spiritual superiority by having their sets somewhat wider than others who followed this man-made tradition.

There are no instructions or commands in Scripture for us to make a physical object like 't'fillin' and there are no Scriptural grounds for 't'fillin' or phylacteries!

Just like there is no command to make 't'fillen' we also take note that there is no command to make 'tallits'!

The Pharisees of the day wore wide t'fillen and lengthened the tsitsits on the corners of their garments in order to be seen by everyone! At this point it is worth taking note that no reference to a tallit is made in Scripture!

What יהושע Messiah did address when speaking of the religious hypocrites was the borders of their robes and not tallits for they did not exist!

There are some teachers today who make statements such as 'you cannot prove that יהושע did not wear a tallit'. A good answer to that vain argument that I heard was simply this: 'you cannot prove that יהושע did not wear a roman soldier's helmet either, although it is highly unlikely that he did'. The main difference is that at the time of יהושע roman soldier helmets did exist and can be historically proven, while there is no Scriptural or historical evidence of there being a tallit at the time of יהושע!

The word 'tallit' cannot be found in the Jewish writings known as the Talmud which was written from 200-500 CE. All that can be found in the Talmud is a reference to the tsitsit where it says "All must observe the law of tsitsit, Cohanim, Levites and Israelites, converts, women and slaves." The term 'tallit', can be found in the middle ages writing which comprises the foundational works of Kabbalah called the Zohar. Later renditions of the Talmud and Mishnah may have inserted the term in order to solidify their vain tradition being taught as a true command!

This is what Messiah said to the religious hypocrites:

Mattithyahu/Matthew 15:8-9 "This people draw near to Me with their mouth, and respect Me with their lips, but their heart is far from Me. 9 'But in vain do they worship Me, teaching as teachings the commands of men.'"

Let us take a look at what יהושע wore:

Yohanan/John 19:23-24 "Then the soldiers, when they had impaled יהושע, took His outer garments and made four parts, to each soldier a part, and the inner garment. But the inner garment was without seam, woven from the top in one piece. 24 So they said to each other, "Let us not tear it, but cast lots for it – whose it shall be," in order that the Scripture might be filled which says, "They divided My garments among them, and for My clothing they cast lots." The soldiers therefore indeed did this."

The Greek word that is used here for 'outer garments' in verse 23 and 'garment' in verse 24 is the word that we have already looked at, which is ἱμάτιον himation – Strong's G2440 which means, 'a garment, outer garment, robe, cloak, clothes, dresses' and is used generally for any kind of garment including inner or outer garments.

The Greek word that is used here in verse 23 for 'inner garment' is χιτών chitōn – Strong's G5509 which means, 'a tunic, clothes, garment, shirt'. This Greek word is of Semitic origin and is similar to the Hebrew word כֶּתֶנֶת kethoneth – Strong's H3801 – 'a tunic, garment, clothing as a covering more complete than a loincloth, a basic garment reaching the knees', and was a very long shirt-like garment usually made of fine linen. These words are used in Hebrew and Greek to describe the 'robe' that Yosēph wore and was stripped of and dipped in blood by his brothers, which is a clear shadow picture of Messiah who was stripped and lots were cast for His clothing!

This word כֶּתֶנֶת kethoneth is also used in the following verse and is translated as 'coats':

Berēshith/Genesis 3:21 "And יהוה Elohim made coats of skin for the man and his wife and dressed them."

The coat that Ya'aqob made for Yosēph was to be a robe of protection in a wicked world that would hate him, yet this robe would also signify his royal position as Ya'aqob's loved one.

This word is used 29 times in the Tanak and is specifically used in reference to the coats of fine linen of the priestly garments.

It was also used to describe the garment which Dawid's daughter Tamar wore:

Shemu'el' Bēt/2 Samuel 13:18-19 "And she had on a long coat, for the sovereign's maiden daughters wore such garments. And his servant put her out and bolted the door behind her. 19 And Tamar put ashes on her head, and tore her long coat that was on her, and put her hand on her head and went away crying bitterly."

This was a typical robe for the sovereign's maiden daughters, which showed their royal position, and would be a long robe that would extend to the wrists and past the knees, even to the ankles.

The Greek word ἱμάτιον himation – Strong's G2440 is used in the LXX (Septuagint) in the following verse:

Tehillah/Psalm 22:18 "They divide My garments among them, and for My raiment they cast lots."

The Greek word used for 'raiment' is ἱματισμός himatismos – Strong's G2441 which means, 'clothing, garments'. The Hebrew words used here in this Tehillah/Psalm 28 for 'garments' is בְּגָדִים begged – Strong's H899 and the Hebrew word that is used here for 'raiment' is לְבוּשׁ lebush – Strong's H3830 which means, 'garment, clothing, apparel, raiment, put on', and comes from the root verb לָבַשׁ labash – Strong's H3847 which means, 'put on, dress, wear, clothe, be clothed, clothe yourself'.

The root word לָבַשׁ labash and its derivatives show three levels of usage in Scripture: 1) being clothed, 2) being clothed as a sign of rank, status, or character, and 3) as poetic figures likening abstract qualities to clothing.


In addition to putting on clothes we also take note that the clothes that a person puts on may reveal something about the wearer. In Mishlê/Proverbs 27:26 we take note of the parable of Shelomoh and his reference to 'lambs' that are for our 'garments'! This is a clear parable that points to the clothing we have received in Messiah, the Lamb of Elohim, who takes away the sin of the world! He has clothed us in righteousness and as we stay in Him we are equipped to walk in the authority of His Word and guard righteousness as we do all He commands!

This parable highlights the sure provision of the House of the Good Shepherd and the safety and sustenance that His flock has in Him. When one looks at this root word for garments in the ancient pictographic text it becomes clear how secure we are in our Good Shepherd, who's Word endures forever and never fails!


In the ancient pictographic text this word לְבוּשׁ lebush – Strong's H3830 which means, 'garment, clothing, apparel, raiment, put on' looks like this:




Lamed - לְ:

The ancient script has this letter as , and is pictured as a 'shepherd's staff', can give the meaning of 'to or toward' and can represent that which pushes or pulls a flock in a direction, and can speak of authority or a yoke that is used to lead and guide, as well as the ability to bring back by Authority.


Bet - בְּ:

The ancient script has this letter as , which pictures a tent floor plan and means, 'house' or 'tent'. It represents family and the importance of those who are inside the tent as opposed to the tent structure itself.

Waw/Vav – וְ:

The ancient script has this letter pictured as , which is a 'peg or tent peg', which was used for securing or tying the tent or other items. The possibility of it having a Y-shape is to show that it prevents the rope from slipping off. The root meaning of this letter is 'to add, secure or hook'.

Shin - שׁ:

This is the letter 'sin/shin' which in the ancient script is pictured as , which is 'two front teeth' and carries the meaning of 'sharp or press, chew or devour'; which is what the teeth do, and also speaks of the sharpened word that comes forth from the mouth, as the teeth 'chew' or 'meditate' on the Truth, making what comes forth pure and sharp! It also carries the understanding of consuming or destroying – as teeth do to food. This can give us the meaning of WORD or Words.

As one looks at this pictographic rendering of this word לְבוּשׁ lebush – Strong's H3830, when speaking of the garments of righteousness that we have been clothed in through the Blood of the Lamb, we take note of the following meaning:

THE AUTHORITY OF THE HOUSE IS MADE SECURE IN THE WORD

What this clearly shows us is that to be properly clothed in Truth we must guard the Word and submit to the authority of our Master and Elohim, for He has given us all we need to sustain us and be built up in Him as His House, which He has secured in His own Blood. We must make sure that we do not defile the garments that The Lamb has provided us with, as we guard the rules of the House by guarding His Torah and commands!

Why I am highlighting these various Greek and Hebrew words is to clearly show that there is no reference to a 'tallit'.

The Greek word χιτών *chitōn* – Strong's G5509 that is translated as the 'inner garment' of Messiah is also used in: **Luqas/Luke 9:3** "And He said to them, "Take no *matter* at all for the journey, neither staffs nor bag nor bread nor money – neither have two **undergarments**."

Here it is translated as 'undergarments' and these were the instructions Messiah gave His taught ones. If, as some have erroneously taught, that this word referred to a 'tallit' then it would not make any sense at all as nobody would wear nor take two 'tallits' wherever they go !!!

What becomes abundantly clear in the instructions we are given in Scripture is that we are to make tsitsit/tassels on the corners of our clothing! Some argue that the reason for the tallit is that the 'garment' that the tsitsit must be made upon must be square or rectangular and have four corners, yet we must take note that the root word that we have already looked at for corners, which is קַנָּף *kanaph* – Strong's H3671, is also used in:

Yeshayahu/Isaiah 11:12 "And He shall raise a banner for the nations, and gather the outcasts of Yisra'el, and assemble the dispersed of Yehudah from the four **corners** of the earth."

Here קַנָּף *kanaph* – Strong's H3671 is used to describe the 'corners' of the earth! We know that the earth is not square or rectangular and this word is used to define four points of an area that encompasses the whole!

Marqos/Mark 6:56 "And wherever He went, into villages, or cities, or the country, they were laying the sick in the market-places, and begged Him to let them touch if only the tzitzit of His garment. And as many as touched Him were healed."

The Greek word that is translated here as 'garment' is ἱμάτιον *himation* – Strong's G2440

There is another Greek word that is translated as 'robe' which is worth taking note of as we dig further into Scripture in revealing the clear truth that there is no evidence for a tallit to be used for any purpose!

Ḥazon/Revelation 7:9 "And I said to him, "Master, you know." And he said to me, "These are those coming out of the great distress, having washed their **robes** and made them white in the blood of the Lamb."

The Greek word that is translated as 'robes' here is στολή *stole* – Strong's G4749 which means, 'equipment, apparel, long robe' and is also understood to describe a loose outer garment for men extending to the feet, worn by kings, priests, and persons of rank.

This word is also used in reference to the long robes that the religious hypocrites love to be seen in:

Marqos/Mark 12:38 "And in His teaching He was saying to them, "Beware of the scribes, who like to walk around in **long robes**, and like greetings in the market-places"

This highlights for us the need to ensure that we are not dressed in hypocrisy through the false pen of the scribes that have worked falsehood!

Yirmeyahu/Jeremiah 8:8 "How do you say, 'We are wise, and the Torah of יהוה is with us'? But look, the false pen of the scribe has worked falsehood."

This was part of a very stern rebuke given by יהוה to a corrupt and backsliding people that claimed that they were walking according to the Torah, yet the scribes had penned falsehood and were teaching vain interpretations, very similar to what Rabbinic Judaism has and continues to do, with the tallit being just one example of that which the false pen of religious scribes have taught through the ages!

We are to be clothed, or robed, in righteousness as we hear, guard and do the clear Torah of Elohim, and it is worth noting that there is another Hebrew word that is worth looking at, as it is often translated as 'robe'; which is the word מְעִיל *meil* – Strong's H4598 which means, 'robe, mantle, cloak, i.e., an exterior garment which covers an inner tunic; and can also be described as a 'sleeveless coat'.

This word מְעִיל *meil* – Strong's H4598 has a very powerful lesson for us in terms of what we are discussing here, in that we are to be robed in true garments of righteousness and walk in them and be on guard against falsified garments that are nothing more than man-made interpretations that have falsified the Truth!

What is interesting to note is that this word comes from the root word מָעַל *ma'al* – Strong's H4603 which means, 'to act unfaithfully or treacherously, violate, break faith'.

This is what got me digging a little deeper and then it struck me as I looked at the difference between these two words, and that is that the word for robe, which would picture for us robes of obedience, has one more letter than the word that renders one acting corruptly or being unfaithful. And so when we look at these words in the ancient script we see a clear picture and message being given that we also see being portrayed in the difference between Shemu'el and the two sons of Ēli.

Let us look at these two words in the ancient script:

1 - מָעַל *ma'al* – treacherous, wicked, unfaithful:



- the letter 'mem' – מ – which in the early script is pictured as 'water', also carries the meaning of chaos (from the storms of the sea) and can picture that which is mighty or massive as well as the unknown



- the letter 'ayin' - ע – which in the early script is pictured as an 'eye', and can carry the meaning of paying attention, to take heed, keep a close eye on, as well as something that 'covers'



- the letter 'lamed' – ל – which in the early script is pictured as a 'shepherd's staff', can give the meaning of 'to or toward' and can represent that which pushes or pulls a flock in a direction, and can speak of authority or a yoke that is used to lead and guide

2 - מְעִיל me'il – robe



The difference as you can see is the additional letter:



- the letter 'yad' – י – which in the ancient script is pictured as 'arm and hand', and the meaning of this letter is work, make, throw – the functions of the hand and arm and well as the gestures of the hand – 'thanksgiving'.

Now when we understand the meaning behind these individual letters we see what makes the difference between serving faithfully and being unfaithful or corrupt in service. The difference between the two words we are looking at is the picture of a hand or arm and hand.

And so when we look at the word for robe, we can see the clear message of how יהוה, out of the chaos of the waters, set His order in place through His instructions. Man sinned and was naked and exposed and יהוה saw how man needed a covering, which He sent through the work of His Outstretched Arm and Right Hand - יהושע Messiah in order to redeem us back under His Rod of instructions, being forever robed in righteousness!

Without the true covering our works will be exposed for their wickedness! The covering that makes the difference between a true robe and that which is false and wicked is the Outstretched Hand of יהוה.

When you take away the hand – there is no salvation and it is just a works based wickedness and treacherous service being delivered, that is abominable before יהוה. The removal of the commands of Elohim and the idea of the false teachings that the Torah is no longer applicable is a removal of the Hand and Arm of יהוה.

The robe that Shemu'el wore each year is a picture of us having been clothed in the robes of righteousness as we walk in the Torah and we follow the Creators cycle each year, starting with every Shabbat! Any other attempts at worship that do not follow His clear instructions, are nothing more than man-made traditions and rules that have removed the Hand of יהוה!

Yeshayahu/Isaiah 61:10 "I greatly rejoice in יהוה, my being exults in my Elohim. For He has put garments of deliverance on me, He has covered me with the robe of righteousness, as a bridegroom decks himself with ornaments, and as a bride adorns herself with her jewels."

When Dawid brought back the Ark of Elohim we are told that not only did Dawid wear a robe of fine linen, but so did the Lēwites:

Dibre haYamim Aleph/1 Chronicles 15:27 "And Dawid was dressed in a robe of fine linen, as were all the Lēwites who bore the ark, the singers, and Kenanyah the leader of the service with the singers. And Dawid wore a linen shoulder garment."

They were NOT wearing tallits!!!!

At this point it should be very clear that there is no evidence for the Scriptural use of the word 'tallit'. There is a Hebrew word that can be understood as 'prayer shawl', yet we must take note that this word is specifically used to describe a veil worn by women and further highlights the depravity of how the false scribes have tried to the definition of a tallit into every Hebrew word that refers to any kind of clothing!

This Hebrew word that is used 3 times in Scripture and translated as 'veil' is the word צַיִף tsaiph – Strong's H6809 which means, 'a wrapper, shawl, veil', and is used in the following verses:

Berēshith/Genesis 24:64-65 “**And Ribqah lifted her eyes, and when she saw Yitshaq she dismounted from her camel, 65 and she had said to the servant, “Who is this man walking in the field to meet us?” And the servant said, “It is my master.” So she took a veil and covered herself.**”

Berēshith/Genesis 38:13-14 “**And it was reported to Tamar, saying, “See, your father-in-law is going up to Timnah to shear his sheep.” 14 And she took off her widow’s garments, and covered herself with a veil and wrapped herself, and sat at the entrance to Ėnayim which was on the way to Timnah. For she saw that Shēlah was grown, and she was not given to him as a wife.**”

Berēshith/Genesis 38:19 “**And she arose and went away, and removed her veil and put on the garments of her widowhood.**”

In the above three accounts where we see this word תְּצַיֵּף tsaiph – Strong’s H6809 being used we take note that it is used in reference to that which a woman wore as a head covering and is in no way related to a tallit or prayer shawl!

What is worth taking note of is that in Rabbinic Judaism there are specific instructions with regards to the correct wearing of a tallit and in some orthodox congregations only the married men wear tallits, while in others both married and unmarried men wear them. In conservative or reformed congregations both men and women may wear tallits and a certain blessing is to be recited when putting the tallit on and when taking it off.

While they claim that there is no religious significance to a tallit itself, other than the fact that it holds the tsitsit on the corners we take note that according to Rabbinic Judaism it must be long enough to be worn over the shoulders as a shawl and not just round the neck as a scarf. There are very few requirements in regard to how a tallit is to be made and with what material, as long as there is no combination of wool and linen. Many a time blessings are written on a tallit and according to Judaic tradition if there is a blessing on one’s tallit then you are not to take the tallit into the bathroom with you as ‘sacred’ writings are not permitted in the bathroom! Many synagogues have a ‘tallit rack’ outside of bathrooms so people do not break this tradition!

The reason that I am highlighting this information is to emphasise some of the traditions that are attached to the proper use of a tallit, which most may be totally unaware of.

In recognising that there is absolutely no evidence of a tallit being used in Scripture at all one must ask the sobering question of whether the tallit has any true validity in the life of a true follower of יהושע Messiah and whether there is any valid authority that can permit or endorse such practices. The answer is a resounding NO!

What we must not neglect to recognise is that while many may say that they do not follow the rabbinic traditions and they simply use the Tallit as a prayer shawl, we must realise that the tallit was clearly constructed and designed as a religious covering that reflects the submission of the one wearing it to the authority of Rabbinic laws.

What is also worth taking note of is that most who purchase a tallit assume that they can use it as a prayer shawl under which they cover their head while praying, yet this is not the correct prescribed manner for wearing a tallit according to some rabbinic traditions. When putting on a tallit a specific blessing is recited and gives thanks to Elohim for the command of wrapping oneself in the tsitsit! Where in the Torah are we commanded to wrap ourselves in the tsitsit??? We are to have tsitsit on the corners or edges of our garments not ‘wrapped in them’!

There are some who believe that tallits are acceptable because they have been erroneously taught that Dawid and Sha’ul used tallits!

Firstly in regards to Dawid, some claim that Dawid asked Ebyathar the priest for a tallit to seek יהוה in prayer after his wives had been taken captive. Let us look at this event and see that this is not the case!

Shemu’el Aleph/1 Samuel 30:5-8 “**And Dawid’s two wives, Aḥino’am the Yizre’elitess, and Abīgayil the widow of Nabal the Karmelite, had been taken captive. 6 And Dawid was greatly distressed, for the people spoke of stoning him, because the being of all the people was grieved, each for his sons and his daughters. But Dawid strengthened himself in יהוה his Elohim. 7 And Dawid said to Ebyathar the priest, son of Aḥimeleḵ, “Please bring the shoulder garment here to me.” So Ebyathar brought the shoulder garment to Dawid. 8 And Dawid inquired of יהוה, saying, “Do I pursue this band? Do I overtake them?” And He answered him, “Pursue, for you shall certainly overtake them, and certainly rescue.””**

What we can see here in this account of Dawid seeking יהוה is that he asked for the ‘**shoulder garment**’, which is the Hebrew word עֲפוֹד ephod – Strong’s H646 which means, ‘**outer garment of priest**’. This was the ‘outer garment’ worn by the priests, which was white. The High Priest’s ephod was more costly - woven of gold, blue, purple, scarlet, and linen threads. We also take note that Shemu’el also wore a ‘shoulder garment:

Shemu’el Aleph/1 Samuel 2:18 “**But Shemu’el was attending before יהוה – a youth, wearing a linen shoulder garment.**”

The 'ephod' represents for us the need to be girded up and ready to do the good works of the Torah that has been prepared beforehand for us to do and speaks of being ready, attending to the required duty of the royal set-apart priesthood in Messiah, keeping the lamps burning as we wait for His soon return!

In **Shemu'el Bēt/2 Samuel 6:14** we are told that Dawid was wearing a linen shoulder garment when he was dancing before יהוה with all his might when they brought back the Ark of Elohim, after it had been at the house of Obēd-Edom for three months, and so pictures for us a wonderful reflection of wearing true and pure garments of praise and service unto Elohim as we 'carry/bear' His presence daily!
The ephod was not a tallit!!!

In regards to Sha'ul there are some who claim that Sha'ul made tallits and base it on the text we see in:

Ma'asei/Acts 18:3 **"And because he was of the same trade, he stayed with them and was working, for they were tentmakers by trade."**

The Greek word used here for 'tentmakers' is σκηνοποιός skēnopoios – Strong's G4635 which means, **'making tents'**, and refers to one that makes small portable tents, of leather or cloth of goat's hair or linen, for the use of travelers. This word comes from two root words: 1) σκηνή skēnē – Strong's G4633 which means, **'tent, dwelling, tabernacle'**; and 2) ποιέω poieō – Strong's G4160 which means, **'to make, do, accomplish, keep, work, acts'**.

σκηνή skēnē – Strong's G4633 is the word that is used to describe the Dwelling Place of Elohim that will be with men, in:

Hazon/Revelation 21:3 **"And I heard a loud voice from the heaven saying, "See, the Booth of Elohim is with men, and He shall dwell with them, and they shall be His people, and Elohim Himself shall be with them and be their Elohim."**

Sha'ul did not make little tallits for the rabbis to wear!!!

In Summary, we must take note that as we continue to dig through various passages of Scripture it becomes abundantly clear that there is no evidence of the use of tallits in Scriptural times. The tallit was the clear design of rabbinic Judaism in the Middle Ages as taught through kabbalah, which is the ancient Jewish tradition of mystical interpretation of the Bible and is something that true followers of Messiah must stay clear from!

In presenting the various word studies from the passages pertaining to garments and coverings I simply wanted to expose the fact that the concept of a tallit, as it is known today, is nowhere to be found in Scripture and by the evidence or lack thereof it must be concluded that the tallit and its use is NOT a Scriptural Truth but is simply a vain tradition passed down by the elders of a false system of worship that denies Messiah and His covering over us! While some may be offended at the clear evidence that a tallit is NOT a Scriptural Truth and even reckon that they use a tallit for prayers and see nothing wrong with it, they must be careful to not be doing what seems right in their own eyes while it is certainly not pleasing in the eyes of יהוה our Elohim!

We must not forget that a tallit was made for a specific purpose and despite some claiming that they do not do as the 'Jews' do, they fail to recognise that their acceptance of a tallit in their home endorses Jewish Mysticism and its false covering or garments of futility!

From a Scriptural point of view a 'tallit', as we know it today, could be classed as a **'household idol'**! The Hebrew word that is used in Scripture for **'household idols'** is תְּרָפִים teraphim – Strong's H8655 which means, **'idols, idolatry'**, and is used to describe an object of reverence that was used as a means of divination and false worship. In other words it was anything that the people would have much reverence for and identified it as something that can be used for worship and prophecy/divination! This word is a plural noun and is used 15 times in Scripture and in all but one instance it is clear that this word refers to pagan household idols.

The one instance that is a little ambiguous is that which is recorded in **Shemu'el Aleph/1 Samuel 19** where Mikal took the household idol and put it in the bed and pretended that it was Dawid who was sick in bed, after she had let Dawid escape Sha'ul. Despite this being a text that leaves the interpretation of תְּרָפִים teraphim unsolved in this text we take note that תְּרָפִים teraphim were never condoned in Scripture as a legitimate object or tool for worship unto יהוה!

The 'tallit' is held in utmost reverence by those who claim a spiritual significance to its usage, despite the fact that we find no Scriptural basis or evidence for the use of a tallit. The Tallit was established by the clear construction and design of Rabbinic Judaism in the Middle Ages as taught through 'kabbalah', which is the ancient Jewish tradition of mystical interpretation of the Bible and is something that true followers of Messiah must stay clear from!

Before I finish this article on highlighting how the tallit has no Scriptural basis I want to highlight the clear teachings that Sha'ul gives us in his letter to the Corinthians and makes clear to us who should cover their head and who should not! In **Qorintiyim Aleph/1 Corinthians 11** Sha'ul teaches us that every man praying or prophesying, having his head covered, brings shame to his Head and every woman praying or prophesying with her head uncovered brings shame to her head, for that is one and the same as if her head were shaved.

Without going in to greater detail, which is in itself a study on its own, I simply want to highlight the clear fact that men should NOT cover their heads when praying or prophesying, for if they do they bring shame to our true Head, which is Messiah and a woman that prays or prophesies with her head uncovered brings shame on her head, which is her husband.

The reason I am mentioning this is to show that the use of a tallit does not line up with the clear instruction for men to not cover their heads, bearing in mind that the tallit was, by most orthodox believers, originally only worn by men. While some argue that Sha'ul made tallits we need to see the clear fact that he did not and then take note that he clearly instructs men to not cover their heads when praying or prophesying! Why would he make tallits if he clearly taught that men should not have their head covered when praying or prophesying?

At the same time, the fact that a woman should cover her head when praying or prophesying does not validate the use of a tallit for woman, as the tallit had been specifically designed as a specific covering for prayer according to Rabbinic Judaism's instructions. A woman can cover her head with a scarf or piece of cloth or material that can cover her head and should not be covered specifically with a tallit, for the simple reason that the origin and design of the tallit is with the intended purpose of adhering to the guidelines and instructions that are given according to a set of man-made teachings that is taught as commands, while setting aside the clear Torah of Elohim!

What is also worth taking note of with regards to the prescribed Judaic customs regarding the donning of a tallit is that there are certain prescribed blessing that are taught in regards to what should be recited while inspecting the tsitsit on the tallit and then another blessing before donning the tallit in a specific manner. Many tallits have these blessings worked into the tallit for the wearer to read and recite.

What is also worth taking note of is that the Name of יהוה is not permitted to be worked in and is literally put in the blessing as יהי – and so replaces the Name of יהוה with two 'Yod' letters (י). Some do not put the two 'Yod' letters but put a 'dalet' letter – ד – in the place of the name of יהוה as the 'dalet' is understood as being the letter that represents a 'door'. The point I am trying to make is that the Name of יהוה will not be found on a traditional tallit as it is forbidden to do so. This is another clear attempt at bringing the Name of יהוה to nought by not wanting anyone who may pick up the tallit and read the Name of יהוה 'by accident', for that is forbidden according to Jewish tradition! The Orthodox Jews know that these two letters are done this way and cause them to say 'Adonai', which means 'My Master', instead of speaking the Name of יהוה.

While many today place great sentimental value in a Jewish prayer shawl (tallit) we must recognise that the design and prescribed use of a tallit is based on the vain traditions that have been handed down and taught as teachings while clearly setting aside the Torah of Elohim!

I do hope that this information can equip the reader to recognise that there is absolutely no requirement to have a tallit and at the same time be cautioned against holding fast to vain traditions that set aside the commands of Elohim. I also hope that this teaching will be used to equip the reader with the urgency to do further study of the Scriptures and grow in their understanding of our need to put on Messiah and be dressed in set-apartness, bringing praise and esteem to His Name in all we say and do!

יהוה bless you and guard you; יהוה make His face shine upon you and show favour to you; יהוה lift up His face to you and give you Shalom!!!