



Links Players

Five Solas - Faith Alone

*Abraham believed God, and it was counted to him as righteousness.
(Romans 4: 1-3, ESV)*

Of all the many ways golf recognizes its champions, the Green Jacket Ceremony in Butler Cabin is, in this author's mind, the pinnacle of award ceremonies.

I can close my eyes and see years and years of past champions sliding their arms—sometimes awkwardly— into the sleeves of a 42 Regular or, in the case of Ian Woosnam, perhaps a 38 Short.

As is well known, more than a few tournaments clad their champions in ceremonial blazers. The winner at Hilton Head slips into a much-deserved Tartan Heritage Plaid.

All these jackets (green, tartan, or otherwise) signify that one player has overcome obstacles, rebounded from setbacks, managed his nerves, and risen to the occasion by going lower than the rest of the field. In each case, the recipient is deserving.

Tracing the theme of various characters being clothed in garments throughout Scripture is a treasure trove of meaning and encouragement.

Instead of punishing Adam and Eve for rebellion emerging from the soil of their distrust, God sacrificed an animal in their place and clothed their nakedness and shame with the hides of a slain animal—pointing forward to Jesus, who would shed his blood and atone (cover) our sin.

Because Joseph was God's chosen instrument to preserve the Egyptian empire and his family, Jacob clothed him in a "coat of many colors"—yet another clue prefiguring Jesus, who would be clothed in the royal robes of a King to rescue and rule over his brothers and sisters.

The Prodigal Son is a parable of a rebellious son returning to his father after squandering his inheritance. Rather than rejecting him, the father brings out the "best robe" and clothes him. This robe signifies undeserved reconciliation given in exchange for those who give their life to Jesus in faith.

In Zechariah, we see Joshua, the High Priest, standing before God in filthy robes, with Satan accusing him. The Angel of the Lord (probably Jesus) commands the other angels to remove the filthy garments and clothe him with

a festive robe (Zechariah 3:1-4). In this poignant scene, we see the removal of filthy garments (iniquity), and Joshua clothed with the underserved robe of righteousness.

These stories, visions, and parables vividly illustrate Paul's argument in Romans four: God counts us righteous in exchange for trusting Jesus. That is, he doesn't merely remove our filth and leave us naked and ashamed before his holy Tribunal; he clothes us in the garments of righteousness.

Wearing "The Green Jacket" would be extraordinary, but to don the robe of righteousness earned by Jesus and received by faith makes suits crafted by Armani, Brioni, Hickey Freeman, and Zegna look like tattered dish rags.

Prayer: Jesus! We worship and adore you!

READING: Romans 4:1-4; Zechariah 3:1-4; Luke 15:11-32

1. What trophy, etched crystal, plaque, or sportscoat for winning or placing high on the leaderboard do you value the most? This a great opportunity to recall some great moments with good friends.

2. After reflecting on the Parable of the Prodigal Son, what truths jump out at you? **2a**-Who is Jesus addressing? **2b**-Compare with the two preceding parables. **2c**-Contrast the father's response with the older brother's.

3. Application: Knowing that salvation is offered by Christ and received by faith (no contribution by us), how should this shape and inform our lives? Discuss.
