

Mixed Fibers

What do you think about Leviticus 19:19 and Deuteronomy 22:11 and wearing clothes of mixed fibers? These Scriptures do not seem very clear.

Leviticus 19:19 says, “You are to keep My statutes. You shall not breed together two kinds of your cattle; you shall not sow your field with two kinds of seed, nor wear a garment upon you of two kinds of material mixed together” (NASU). It lists a variety of forbidden mixtures, not only pertaining to kinds of materials or cloth, but also breeding different kinds of cattle and different kinds of seed. The challenge in interpreting this text correctly does not relate to the principle that we are not to mix things or have an imbalance of them, but how we apply this today in the clothes we wear. Based on this verse alone, it would seem that we can only wear clothes that are of one type of fabric.

Many Messianics can get confused from this verse, because of the simple reason that many clothes today are made of mixed threads or different types of fabrics. One of the most common types of mixed fabric today is cotton and polyester. Does this mean that we are to throw out all of those clothes that have synthetic fabrics in them?

It is important that we let the Scriptures interpret themselves here. Deuteronomy 22:11 clarifies what is said by telling us, “You shall not wear a material mixed of wool and linen together” (NASU). Here, the text is specific and indicates that a mixture of wool and linen is prohibited. This is because the combined fibers of wool and linen are a poor combination and that garments made of this mixture will wear out very easily. This is to be contrasted with mixtures today such as cotton and polyester, which is actually very strong and versatile.

We need to interpret these verses together, noting that they forbid us from mixing wool and linen. We do not believe that it forbids the mixing of organic and synthetic fabrics. This commandment was originally given in an Ancient Near Eastern context where linen and wool were the two major fabrics. It was not given in a time when more diverse organic fabrics, in addition to synthetic fabrics, would exist.