

Part 1 - Holy Garments for the Priests

In chapter twenty-seven we learned about the altar of burnt offering, the wall of hangings (curtains) that enclosed the Tabernacle and about the light that was to be *always* burning in the Tabernacle (when not in transport). These items (like all the others) have great spiritual lessons for us even today. The altar of burnt offerings was large to accommodate many animal sacrifices and all the ashes that would result from it. But the altar today is in our heart for two reasons. First, we are to always keep the memory of how Jesus Christ went to the ‘altar’ (the cross) for us because He shed His blood to redeem our soul. Without Jesus Christ’s great sacrifice on the altar (the cross), we would not be forgiven any of our sins (and we all have them). Secondly, even though Jesus Christ paid for all our sins, for all times (Heb 10:10) our Heavenly Father (YHWH) still expects us to ‘crucify’ our carnal mind each and every day (Rom 8:7, Lk 9:23). We are to kill (spiritually) all the ‘carnal inclinations’ we have: our sinful, selfish, prideful and lustful thoughts, desires, words and deeds. He wants us to crucify the ‘animal’ that’s within each of us so we can put off the ‘works of the flesh’ (Gal 5:19-21) and produce good fruit for Him (Gal 5:22-26). The animals sacrifices of old are still useful tools for us to learn by (Gal 3:24-25) but we do not perform them anymore since Jesus died on that ‘altar’ (cross) for us (Heb 10:10). These are the two ways that the altar is within our heart today.

We also learned about the wall of curtains (hangings) that surrounded the Temple. These were made of fine linen with scarlet, blue and purple threads also woven into them, which symbolize righteousness, royalty, obedience to the Word of God and the precious blood of Jesus Christ. It is these things that protect our soul, just as a wall of ‘hangings’ protected the Tabernacle. In Zech 2:5, our God (YHWH) promises to be *a wall of fire round about, and will be the glory in the midst of her*. This ‘her’ is speaking of New Jerusalem, of which all those who remain faithful to Jesus Christ will be part of (Rev 21:14-21).

And last (but certainly not least) we learned about the lighting in the Tabernacle. It was to be only from pure olive oil, which was the oil produced from the first pressing of the olives. This oil was the best: the purest and would burn the cleanest. This symbolized our Savior, Jesus Christ and the truth that His Word and His Holy Spirit gives us so we too can let His Light shine through every aspect of our lives. We, like the light in the Tabernacle, are *never* to let this light go out. We are to keep it burning brightly, *in our soul*, each and every day. And this can be done only when we sincerely study, think upon and learn to obey God’s Word. It takes perseverance, dedication, patience and willingness to see our sins and kick them out. Day in and day out we are to keep the light ‘burning’ in our heart and mind, which means we must also keep the lamp (our soul) clean for the light to shine brightly out of.

We now move on to another enlightening chapter with great spiritual significance. Although we’ll be told about the Priest’s physical clothing, it is ever so significance of the spiritual clothing we are to have on. So, without further a due, let’s get digging...

10 Receive my instruction, and not silver; and knowledge rather than choice gold.

11 For wisdom is better than rubies; and all the things that may be desired are not to be compared to it.

Prov 8:10-11

Exodus 28

1 And take thou unto thee Aaron thy brother, and his sons with him, from among the children of Israel, that he may minister unto me in the priest's office, even Aaron, Nadab and Abihu, Eleazar and Ithamar, Aaron's sons.

We see from this first verse God specifically chose who was to serve Him in the priest's office. And, it was not because Aaron and his sons were 'special'. As we shall see later, Aaron fell miserably short of obedience to God when he allowed Israel to worship a golden calf (he even molded it for them). Further, Lev 10 documents that Aaron's oldest two sons were so morally corrupt that they offered strange fire to YHVH – a decision that led to their instantaneous death, being smitten by God Himself for such a grievous sin. But still, God selected these men to lead Israel. Why? Because they were from the tribe of Levi, which was the only tribe who chose to be on God's side during the rebellion of the golden calf (Ex 32:26-28). So, *loyalty* has much to do with how God chooses people. And even though Aarons eldest sons were not loyal, his younger two sons would prove to be *very* faithful. This shows us that God knows how to purge out the rebels (Ezek 20:38) and sanctify those who are trying to obey Him (Ezek 36:23, John 17:17). Therefore, we must understand that, when God chooses servants, it is not due to *their* holiness but in accordance to His plan of Salvation. And God is building a righteous government made up of people who (though not without fault) are *loyal* to Him. Loyalty (faithfulness) is considered righteousness in God's eyes. All those who rebel against Him are considered 'sinners'. And in this chapter, we will see what God required of His priesthood. They had to put on special clothing in order to serve Him...

Exodus 28

2 And thou shalt make holy garments for Aaron thy brother for glory and for beauty.

The word 'holy' is #6944 and it means: *a sacred place or thing*; rarely abstract, *sanctity*. It comes from #6942, which means: ***to be*** (causatively, make, pronounce or observe as) ***clean*** (ceremonially or morally). Remember, the Tabernacle is a physical example (1 Cor 10:11) of what the spiritual Temple is to be (our soul – 1 Cor 3:16, 6:19, 2 Cor 6:16). So, likewise, the physical clothing of the priesthood is an example to us of how to put on spiritual clothing that makes us acceptable to serve God. So, Aaron was to put on 'holy' garments for glory and beauty because ***they were to symbolize the beauty and glory of being spiritually clean.***

Exodus 28

3 And thou shalt speak unto all that are wise hearted, whom I have filled with the spirit of wisdom, that they may make Aaron's garments to consecrate him, that he may minister unto me in the priest's office.

God called all those who were ‘wise hearted’ to help make Aaron’s holy garments. Note that the wisdom (at weaving and sewing) was given by God Himself for the purpose of clothing His High Priest. Our God is well able to provide for His servants. These clothes were to ‘consecrate’ him. You should recognize the word ‘consecrate’ for it is the prim root for the word ‘holy’ - #6942, a primitive root that meant: *to be* (causatively, make, pronounce or observe as) *clean* (ceremonially or morally). Remember, physically clothing the High Priest was a type for us to see the *spiritual* truth of what it takes to be a High Priest for God. In other words, the physical clothing reveals (though analogy) what moral characteristics are required to be a High Priest for God Almighty.

Exodus 28

*4 And these are the garments which they shall make; a **breastplate**, and an **ephod**, and a **robe**, and a broidered **coat**, a **mitre**, and a **girdle**: and they shall make holy garments for Aaron thy brother; and his sons, that he may minister unto me in the priest's office.*

Consider the Hebrew of the following words...

- **Breastplate** is #2833 *choshen* (pronounced as: kho'-shen). It's from an unused root probably meaning *to contain* or *sparkle*; perhaps a **pocket** (as holding the Urim and Thummim), or *rich* (as **containing gems**), used only of *the gorget of the highpriest*. It is only translated as breastplate in the KJV.
- **Ephod** is #646, *'ephowd* (pronounced as: ay-fode'); rarely *'ephod* (pronounced as: ay-fode'); probably of foreign derivation a *girdle*; specifically *the ephod or high-priest's shoulderpiece*; also generally, an *image*. It is only translated as ephod in the KJV.
- **Robe** is #4598 *me' iyl* (pronounced as: meh-eel'); from OT:4603 in the sense of covering; *a robe* (i.e. **upper and outer garment**). It's been translated as cloke, coat, mantle, robe in the KJV.
- **Coat** is #3801 *kethoneth* (pronounced as: keth-o'-neth); or *kuttoneth* (pronounced as: koot-to'-neth); from an unused root meaning *to cover* [compare OT:3802]; *a shirt*. It's been translated as coat, garment, robe in the KJV
- **Broidered** is #8665 *tashbets* (pronounced as: tash-bates'); **checkered stuff** (as reticulated). It's only been translated as broidered. It comes from #7660, a primitive root that means: *to interweave (colored) threads in squares*; by implication (of reticulation) *to in chase gems in gold*. Translated in the KJV as - embroider, set.
- **Mitre** is #4701 *mitsnepheth* (pronounced as: mits-neh'-feth); from OT:6801; *a tiara*, i.e. official **turban** (of a king or high priest). It's been translated as diadem and mitre in the KJV, even though it really means a turban.
- **Girdle** is #2805 *chesheb* (pronounced as: khay'-sheb); from OT:2803; *a belt or strap* (as being *interlaced*). It is only translated as curious girdle in the KJV.

The High Priest was to have garment translated as a ‘coat’ here but was actually like the clothing worn in those days which was a loose-fitting garment much like a long shirt. It's translated as a ‘shirt’ in the Hebrew but it covered their whole body, not just the chest. Men in the middle east still wear garments similar to this called a throbe or a thobe. But this was no ordinary garment. It

was to be made of *gold, and blue, and purple, and scarlet, and fine linen*. It would have been a gorgeous ‘throb’ indeed. It was to be ‘broidered’ which means to interweave the colored threads in squares. So, it was to have quite a beautiful pattern interwoven into it. On top of the ‘coat’ there was to be what is translated as a ‘robe’ but is much more what we think of as a coat because it was an outer garment. It too was to be made of the *gold, and blue, and purple, and scarlet, and fine linen*. Then there was to be an ephod and a girdle. We learned about an ephod a few chapters back. It was likely a piece of clothing worn outside the robe and kept in place by the ‘shoulder piece’ and a ‘girdle’; the shoulder piece is what the priest’s breastplate was attached to. It was made of blue, purple and scarlet threads along with fine linen and was embroidered in gold thread with ‘cunning work’. The ephod was likely held together by a girdle of similar workmanship, sewed onto it and had two shoulder pieces that crossed the shoulders and were apparently fastened or sown to the ephod in the front. It’s uncertain whether the ephod covered the back or only the front. The purpose of the breastplate was to provide a ‘place of judgement’ wherein the ‘Urim and Thummim’ were kept (Ex 28:15, 30) as well as to keep the 12 precious stones that are symbolic of the twelve tribes of Israel. We will get more details on these things here in a bit but first, let’s look at the Scriptures to see what God had to say about the kind of spiritual clothing priests (even our true High Priest, Jesus Christ) are to be clothed with...

*Let thy priests be clothed with **righteousness**; and let thy saints shout for joy.*
Ps 132:9

*I will greatly rejoice in the LORD, my soul shall be joyful in my God; for he hath clothed me with the garments of **salvation**, he hath covered me with the robe of **righteousness**, as a bridegroom decketh himself with ornaments, and as a bride adorneth herself with her jewels.*
Isa 61:10

*1 The LORD reigneth, he is clothed with **majesty**; the LORD is clothed with **strength**, wherewith he hath girded himself: the world also is stablished, that it cannot be moved.*
2 Thy throne is established of old: thou art from everlasting.
Ps 93:1-2

Indeed, spiritual clothing such as righteousness, salvation, majesty and strength are important attributes for the King of king to have. Just look at how corrupt the world leaders (religious and political) are today and you can easily see why these attributes are so important for Jesus Christ (who will rule the world in righteousness during the Millennium, Rev 20) to have. And for this reason (because Jesus is *totally* righteous, holy and just – there is no corruption or evil in Him) the Revelations does declare...

*Thou art worthy, O Lord, to receive glory and **honour** and **power**: for thou hast created all things, and for thy pleasure they are and were created.*
Rev 4:11

*12 Saying with a loud voice, Worthy is the Lamb that was slain to receive **power**, and **riches**, and **wisdom**, and **strength**, and **honour**, and **glory**, and **blessing**.*

13 And every creature which is in heaven, and on the earth, and under the earth, and such as are in the sea, and all that are in them, heard I saying, Blessing, and honour, and glory, and power, be unto him that sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb for ever and ever.

Rev 5:12-13

Saying, Amen: Blessing, and glory, and wisdom, and thanksgiving, and honour, and power, and might, be unto our God for ever and ever. Amen.

Rev 7:12

Honor, power, riches, wisdom, strength, glory, blessings, wisdom and thanksgiving are all spiritual attributes that most people covet, as well as the angels in heaven (as Ezek 28 tells us). But, only the High Priest of God can be ‘clothed’ with all these spiritual attributes, which is why Jesus Christ is our High Priest *for all times*. Truly, Jesus Christ has *always* been without sin, and *always will be* (Heb 4:15, 2 Cor 5:21, 1 Peter 2:22, 1 John 3:5). Therefore, He is the only one who will be clothed with the glory of the High Priest clothing. *And he was clothed with a vesture dipped in blood: and his name is called The Word of God* (Rev 19:13).

Exodus 28

5 And they shall take gold, and blue, and purple, and scarlet, and fine linen.

*6 And they shall make the **ephod** of gold, of blue, and of purple, of scarlet, and fine twined linen, with cunning work.*

7 It shall have the two shoulder pieces thereof joined at the two edges thereof; and so it shall be joined together.

*8 And the curious **girdle** of the ephod, which is upon it, shall be of the same, according to the work thereof; even of gold, of blue, and purple, and scarlet, and fine twined linen.*

These verses give more details to the ephod and girdle that we’ve discussed previously. The ephod (the piece of clothing worn outside the robe and kept in place by the ‘shoulder piece’ and a ‘girdle’) was made of *gold, of blue, and of purple, of scarlet, and fine twined linen, with cunning work*. The word ‘cunning’ is #2803 and means: *to plait or interpenetrate*, i.e. (literally) *to weave* or (gen.) *to fabricate*. And remember the ephod (shoulder piece) is what the priest’s breastplate was attached to. It was made of blue, purple and scarlet threads along with fine linen and was embroidered in gold thread with ‘cunning work’. The ephod was held together by a girdle of similar workmanship, sewed onto it and had two shoulder pieces that crossed the shoulders and were apparently fastened or sown to the ephod in the front. These garments would have been stunningly beautiful and precious (of great value) due to the gold, blue, purple and scarlet threads interwoven with the fine linen. Indeed, this is symbolic of Jesus Christ. His physical appearance was absolutely stunning. As Isa 53:2 explains, *he hath no form nor comeliness; and when we shall see him, there is no beauty that we should desire him*. But Jesus’ beauty is so much more than ‘skin deep’ for indeed His soul is of great value and beauty because there is no sin, corruption or fault within His Spirit or Heart. Thus, the beautiful clothing also symbolizes the

glorious and beautiful character (nature) of our true High Priest, Jesus Christ (1 Pt 1:3-7) who is full of righteousness, patience, grace, mercy, loving kindness, and fairness - for truly, there is no respect of persons with God or His Son, Jesus Christ (Ex 34:6, Deut 32:4, Neh 9:33, Hosea 14:9, Ps 116:5, 145:8, Joel 2:13, Jonah 4:2, Deut 1:17, Acts 10:34, Rom 2:11, 1 Pt 1:17). Everyone (even Jesus Christ Himself) is judged by God's Word (John 12:46-48) and only those who humbly and sincerely repent to Jesus Christ (who paid for our sins with His own blood) will be forgiven for their sins (John 14:6). All others will still have to answer for them when Jesus returns (Mth 13:47-50).

Exodus 28

*9 And thou shalt take **two onyx stones**, and grave on them the names of the children of Israel:*

10 Six of their names on one stone, and the other six names of the rest on the other stone, according to their birth.

11 With the work of an engraver in stone, like the engravings of a signet, shalt thou engrave the two stones with the names of the children of Israel: thou shalt make them to be set in ouches of gold.

*12 And thou shalt put the two stones upon the shoulders of the ephod for stones of memorial unto the children of Israel: and **Aaron shall bear their names before the LORD upon his two shoulders for a memorial.***

Although onyx is typically thought of as a black stone, it actually comes in many colors and it is thought (as we learned earlier) that the stone in the breastplate of the priest was likely an onyx stone that had white and brown layers. It's not known for sure if these stones on the shoulders of the High Priest were the same color or not. But, whatever color they were, there were to be two additional stones made and they were to be engraved with the names of the twelve tribes of Israel; six names for each stone, according to their birth order. These were then to be 'set' in 'ouches' of gold. The word 'ouches' is #4865 and means: a *brocade*; by analogy, a (reticulated) *setting of a gem*. The 'brocade' was speaking of what we call embroidering with the gold, scarlet, blue and purple threads. And reticulated meant that it had the threads crossing like a net does. So, basically, these two onyx stones were to be sewn onto the shoulders of the ephod (vs 12) for the express purpose of being a 'memorial' for the twelve tribes of Israel. Importantly, Aaron would be 'bearing' the names of Israel before the Lord (YHVH) *on his shoulders*, for a memorial. This, of course, has great spiritual significance. Even today we still use the phrase of feeling 'weight on your shoulders' when you have a lot of responsibility. So, the High Priest was to 'bear' (carry) the 'weight of the nation' upon His shoulders.

Further, the word 'memorial' is #2146 and means: a *memento* (or *memorable thing, day or writing*). It comes from #2142, which means: *to mark* (so as to be *recognized*), i.e. **to remember**; by implication, *to mention*; also (as denominative from OT:2145) *to be male*. The High Priest was to 'bear' the names of Israel on his shoulders to as a reminder to God to think of them, to be merciful to them and remember His promises to them. This is explained beautifully in the Scriptures. And one chapter in Isaiah does a particularly good job of explaining why there was such a need for an intercessor...

1 Behold, the LORD's hand is not shortened, that it cannot save; neither his ear heavy, that it cannot hear:

2 But your iniquities have separated between you and your God, and your sins have hid his face from you, that he will not hear.

3 For your hands are defiled with blood, and your fingers with iniquity; your lips have spoken lies, your tongue hath muttered perverseness.

4 None calleth for justice, nor any pleadeth for truth: they trust in vanity, and speak lies; they conceive mischief, and bring forth iniquity...

...12 For our transgressions are multiplied before thee, and our sins testify against us: for our transgressions are with us; and as for our iniquities, we know them;

13 In transgressing and lying against the LORD, and departing away from our God, speaking oppression and revolt, conceiving and uttering from the heart words of falsehood.

14 And judgment is turned away backward, and justice standeth afar off: for truth is fallen in the street, and equity cannot enter.

15 Yea, truth faileth; and he that departeth from evil maketh himself a prey: and the LORD saw it, and it displeased him that there was no judgment.

*16 **And he saw that there was no man, and wondered that there was no intercessor:** therefore his arm brought salvation unto him; and his righteousness, it sustained him.*

*17 **For he put on righteousness as a breastplate, and an helmet of salvation upon his head; and he put on the garments of vengeance for clothing, and was clad with zeal as a cloke.***

Isa 59:1-4,12-17

When you study the history of Israel (in the Judges, books of Samuel, Kings and the Chronicles), you'll quickly realize that Israel was obedient to God *only when they had a good leader*. It truly was the leader who directed the moral compass of the nation. Our Heavenly Father knew that Israel would not remain loyal to Him and prophesied of it when He gave Moses the song in Deuteronomy 32 to testify against Israel. It was the job of the High Priest to bear Israel upon His shoulders so to make intercession for them when they needed it... which turned out to be quite often. Verse 16 is revealing because it shows us how God saw no human man was capable of being an intercessor for Israel; so, He prophesied of how He Himself would put on the spiritual clothing needed to save Israel. Spiritual clothing such as... salvation, righteousness, vengeance and zeal – all things used by Jesus Christ to enforce God's righteous judgment. And though there are *many* other scriptures we could also reference concerning this point, we'll look at a New Testament Scripture to drive home the point that God Himself took on the duty of being our intercessor, simply because there was no one else who was truly equipped to do so!

24 For we are saved by hope: but hope that is seen is not hope: for what a man seeth, why doth he yet hope for?

25 But if we hope for that we see not, then do we with patience wait for it.

*26 **Likewise the Spirit also helpeth our infirmities: for we know not what we should pray for as we ought: but the Spirit itself maketh intercession for us with groanings [inaudible prayer] which cannot be uttered.***

27 And he that searcheth the hearts knoweth what is the mind of the Spirit, because he maketh intercession for the saints according to the will of God.

28 And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose.

29 For whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brethren.

30 Moreover whom he did predestinate, them he also called: and whom he called, them he also justified: and whom he justified, them he also glorified.

31 What shall we then say to these things? If God be for us, who can be against us?

32 He that spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all, how shall he not with him also freely give us all things?

33 Who shall lay any thing to the charge of God's elect? It is God that justifieth.

34 Who is he that condemneth? It is Christ that died, yea rather, that is risen again, who is even at the right hand of God, who also maketh intercession for us.

35 Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword?

36 As it is written, For thy sake we are killed all the day long; we are accounted as sheep for the slaughter.

37 Nay, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him that loved us.

38 For I am persuaded, that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come,

39 Nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.

Rom 8:24-39

The Holy Spirit of Jesus Christ now does what the High Priest was supposed to do... but Jesus does it with perfection because He can read our heart. Verse 27 says that: *he maketh intercession for the saints according to the will of God*. Jesus Christ helps us even when we don't know what we need. Indeed, Jesus 'bears' the twelve tribes of Israel on His shoulders as He sits at the right hand of God (Rom 8:34, Eph 1:20, Col 3:1, Heb 10:12) but He also does this for anyone of any other race who *truly* believes upon Him and calls upon Him (*in truth*, Ps 145:18, John 4:23-24) for help (Acts 2:21, Rom 10:13).

*To whom God would make known what is the riches of the glory of this mystery among the Gentiles; **which is Christ in you.** [the gift of the Holy Spirit] the hope of glory:*

Col 1:27

The intercession of our High Priest, Jesus Christ, is to give us help when we need it. Physical help, yes, but more so spiritual help and that is done through the 'mystery' spoken of in the Bible, which is simply how the Holy Spirit of God (the Christ in us) helps us to kick out our sins and strengthens us in righteousness, by teaching us how to do what is right...

2 That their hearts might be comforted, being knit together in love, and unto all riches of the full assurance of understanding, to the acknowledgement of the mystery of God, and of the Father, and of Christ;

3 In whom are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge.

Col 2:2-3

The Holy Spirit opens all the hidden treasures of God's Word and gives us the wisdom and knowledge we need to learn how to do what is right and receive His blessings.

*16 That he would grant you, according to the riches of his glory, **to be strengthened with might by his Spirit in the inner man;***

17 That Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith; that ye, being rooted and grounded in love, 18 May be able to comprehend with all saints what is the breadth, and length, and depth, and height;

19 And to know the love of Christ, which passeth knowledge, that ye might be filled with all the fulness of God.

20 Now unto him that is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that worketh in us,

21 Unto him be glory in the church by Christ Jesus throughout all ages, world without end. Amen.

Eph 3:16-4:1

The Holy Spirit of God (and Jesus Christ) gives us strength in our heart and mind (the inner man) and that's made possible because Jesus Christ (our High Priest) bears the memorial of Israel 'upon His shoulders' while He is sitting at the right hand of God...

14 Seeing then that we have a great high priest, that is passed into the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold fast our profession.

15 For we have not an high priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; but was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin.

*16 Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, **and find grace to help in time of need.***

Heb 4:14-16

The point of the High Priest 'bearing' Israel's memorial (the two stones) on his shoulders has always been to help Israel when they needed it. Now that Jesus has died for us and has become our High Priest forever, our prayers are now instantly given to God when we need help. If we call to him *in truth* (Ps 145:18, John 4:23-24), He will help us. This means we must not try to deceive him with ulterior motives (secret reasons); we must be sincere and honest with Him for He alone can read our heart and knows our true intentions for the prayer. But, if we are indeed sincere, He will most certainly help us. But we must have the faith and patience to know the Holy Spirit will send help when, where and how we need it – which may not be what we are

expecting. Our faith must protect us from being afraid and teach us to be patient in waiting for God's answer in due time (1 Pt 5:6).

Exodus 28

13 And thou shalt make ouches of gold;

14 And two chains of pure gold at the ends; of wreathen work shalt thou make them, and fasten the wreathen chains to the ouches.

The two 'ouches' that held the two onyx stones (which were engraved with the names of the twelve tribes of Israel) were made of gold thread with two chains of pure gold at the ends to secure them to the ephod (shoulder piece).

We'll pick this up in Part 2...

AMEN.