

Exodus 28

Read Exodus 28:1-4: The descendants of Aaron were designated to stand before God as priests. One takeaway for us is that we are all priests in our service to God.

But you are a chosen people, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for God's own possession, so that you may proclaim the excellencies of Him who has called you out of darkness into His marvelous light; ¹⁰ for you once were not a people, but now you are the people of God; you had not received mercy, but now you have received mercy. (1 Peter 2)

The entire tabernacle is a model of heaven. A priest is an intercessor who prays for men. Most men are doing their own thing. We have to be more preoccupied with the wellbeing of others. The concept of holiness is another way of saying 'special usage only'. Otherwise said; is he is *not normal*. They were not primarily soldiers or farmers. They had a higher calling on their lives; that goes beyond the day to day normal practices of men. To ignore this high calling is more than a lost opportunity. It is a misuse. You could compare it to silverware that is not supposed to be used as a screwdriver to work on your car. The lesser and alternate use of their lives just doesn't work well.

For every high priest taken from among men is appointed for men in things pertaining to God, that he may offer both gifts and sacrifices for sins. ² He can have compassion on those who are ignorant and going astray, since he himself is also subject to weakness. ³ Because of this he is required as for the people, so also for himself, to offer sacrifices for sins. ⁴ And no man takes this honor to himself, but he who is called by God, just as Aaron was. (Hebrews 5)

The white garments are representative of the fact that we (as daily service priests) are clothed in the righteousness of Christ. It is our authorizing uniform for duty. It is my shop coat to go out and do good work in Jesus name. My role under Christ (like a shop coat) covers my own failures and grime. If I am not covered up by the blood of Jesus, God and man will see my disgusting natural aspects.

For He has clothed me with the garments of salvation, He has covered me with the robe of righteousness, (Isaiah 61:10)

But put on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make no provision for the flesh, to fulfill its lusts. (Romans 13:14)

The priestly uniform was to represent *glory and beauty*. Not mine! It is not so much to glorify the priest. It is to reflect the actions of Christ. The breastplate that holds 12 precious gems is only attractive when it reflects light. God is light. We tend to become more beautiful when we have been spending time with God. My

cousin lived with us for 7 months in our home. She mentioned to me that she could always tell when I had gone to Wednesday night church. She said that my face seemed to be somewhat lit up. Spending time in close contact with God will change your demeanor, your outlook and even your countenance.

²⁹ Now it was so, when Moses came down from Mount Sinai (and the two tablets of the Testimony were in Moses' hand when he came down from the mountain), that Moses did not know that the skin of his face shone while he talked with Him. ³⁰ So when Aaron and all the children of Israel saw Moses, behold, the skin of his face shone, and they were afraid to come near him. (Exodus 34)

Read Exodus 28:5-14: The priestly uniform has a lot going on. On each shoulder they have one onyx stone. You could say that it is like a military uniform with the associated brigades and companies identified that the soldier is part of. Each shoulder has the names of 6 Israeli tribes inscribed on it. The onyx stone has parallel lines running through it. There are 12 different types of onyx stones. They are among the most varied of all gems. One feature of people to God is our variation of colors and characteristics. It was called chalcedony, and it was thought to cure depression. It is associated with goodwill and brotherhood (parallel lives in the same background space).



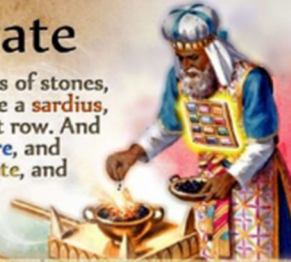
Believers are compared to living stones in many ways. Jesus is the chief stone, setting our direction, like a cornerstone of a stone building.

And coming to Him as to a living stone which has been rejected by people, but is choice and precious in the sight of God, ⁵ you also, as living stones, are being built up as a spiritual house for a holy priesthood, to offer spiritual sacrifices that are acceptable to God through Jesus Christ. ⁶ For this is contained in Scripture: “Behold, I am laying in Zion a choice stone, a precious cornerstone, And the one who believes in Him will not be put to shame.” ⁷ This precious value, then, is for you who believe; but for unbelievers, “A stone which the builders rejected, This became the chief cornerstone,” (1 Peter 2)

Read Exodus 28:15-30: Next we have a breastplate that has rows of precious stones representing each tribe, over your heart.

Ephod Breast Plate

Exodus 28:17 - And thou shalt set in it settings of stones, even four rows of stones: the first row shall be a sardius, a topaz, and a carbuncle: this shall be the first row. And the second row shall be an emerald, a sapphire, and a diamond. And the third row a ligure, an agate, and an amethyst. And the fourth row a beryl, and an onyx, and a jasper: they shall be set in gold in their inclosings.



1  Sardius Reuben	2  Topaz Simeon	3  Carbuncle Levi
4  Emerald Judah	5  Sapphire Issachar	6  Diamond Zebulun
7  Ligure Nephtali	8  Agate Gad	9  Amethyst Asher
10  Beryl Manassah	11  Onyx Ephram	12  Jasper Benjamin



This is similar to mothers who adorn necklaces or bracelets with a pendant or stone representing each precious and unique child. It is a badge of pride and love and connection. To God, we are like art work on display. It is our differences more than our similarities that make us precious.

For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand so that we would walk in them. (Ephesians 2:10)

Read Exodus 28:31-43: Pomegranates and bells are woven around the hem of the ephod.



The hem of the garment was symbolic. Many Jews had tassels on their hems. The tassels on the hem represented the Mosaic laws. It told both their place and their story.

The word “hem” means “fringe, tassel, or the border of a garment”. It says in [Numbers 15:38-39](#) “Speak to the children of Israel: Tell them to make tassels on the corners of their garments throughout their generations, and to put a blue thread in the tassels of the corners. And you shall have the tassel, that you may look upon it and remember all the commandments of the LORD and do them, and that you may not follow the harlotry to which your own heart and your own eyes are inclined, and that you may remember and do all My commandments, and be holy for your God.”

The tassels also incorporated a person’s authority structure and their place in it.

- **David cut off Saul’s garment:**

1 Samuel 24 1-22, verse **4** says “Then the men of David said to him, “This is the day which the LORD said to you, ‘Behold, I will deliver your enemy into your hand, that you may do to him as it seems good to you.’ “And David arose and secretly cut off a corner of Saul’s robe.”

When David spared Saul’s life, he took away evidence in showing Saul that he had the power to kill him but he did not. The act of cutting of the hem of Saul’s robe was of a great significance. David had just robbed Saul of his status symbol, the fringe of his robe that identified him as king. The hem of the garment at this point was also a decorative feature which made a statement about the status and importance of the wearer. Jesus in-fact rebuked the Pharisees for enlarging their fringes in **Matthew 23:5** “They make their phylacteries broad and enlarge the borders of their garments.” They were trying to magnify their importance , whereas the original intent and the purpose of the fringe and tassels was lost. It was meant as a reminder of all the commandments of the Lord and to do them (**Number 15:39**)

- **Saul rips tassel of Samuel’s garment:**

In **1 Samuel 15**, Samuel rebuked Saul for failing to kill all the Amalekites, their king, and their cattle, and when Samuel turned around to go, Saul reached out to stop him and in doing so ripped the tassel from Samuel’s garment. Samuel used this as a picture of what God was going to do with the kingdom of Israel, that it would be ripped away from Saul.

All said, the hem of the garment was like your upline in your line of command.

Pomegranates are associated with Gods Laws. Pomegranates are believed to have approximately 613 seeds, corresponding to God's 613 laws. Regardless, there is an abundance of them. The bells represent a joyful sound of praise to the LORD. The idea is not to just know the goodness of God, but to make it know to the people. Conversely, if a High Priest was living in sin, he would be killed in the Holy of Holies, and the bells would stop. They could pull him out with a rope tied around his leg if the bells stopped ringing. The verse also emphasizes that without the bells the priest would die. It is as though he has to announce that he is coming in. Jesus took care of all of that preparation for entry when he died on the cross.

¹⁴ Therefore, since we have a great high priest who has passed through the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let's hold firmly to our confession. ¹⁵ For we do not have a high priest who cannot sympathize with our weaknesses, but One who has been tempted in all things just as we are, yet without sin. ¹⁶ Therefore let's approach the throne of grace with confidence, so that we may receive mercy and find grace for help at the time of our need. (Hebrews 4)