

(Exodus) Exodus 39:1-2

by J. Vernon McGee

The sermon emphasizes the importance of Christ as our high priest and the significance of his garments, which represent his strength, ability, love, and humiliation.

Duration: 14:08

Scripture: Exodus 39:1-3, Exodus 39:21, Psalm 46:10, Matthew 6:33, 1 Thessalonians 5:17

Topics: "True Worship", "Spiritual Preparation"

Description

In this sermon, the preacher emphasizes the importance of being able to hear the bells of worship on Sunday morning. He criticizes the use of gimmicks and protests in churches and Christian work, stating that they distract from the true purpose of worship. The preacher shares a personal anecdote about an elder who encouraged him to focus on preparing a message rather than visiting him, highlighting the importance of spending time in meditation and study. The sermon concludes with the preacher recounting how this elder's perspective on Jesus changed after experiencing the presence of Christ through the preacher's message.

Transcript

I'm reading now chapter 39, verse 1. And of the blue and purple and scarlet, they made cloths of service to do service in the holy place, and made the holy garments for Aaron as the Lord commanded Moses. Notice they're called here holy garments, and we read here, and he made the effort of gold, blue, and purple, and scarlet, fine twine, linen. And then we go into details concerning that.

And then there was the curious girdle of his effort. And curious means simply this, curious is something we generally apply to a human being or even to an animal, but not to an inanimate thing. But it's curious in the sense that it was an unusual way in which it was woven.

It was not just a simple one. It held not only the robe of the effort, but it held all the garments that the high priest wore, held them in order and in place. Then he talks about the breastplate here.

And now these are called in this chapter garments of glory and beauty. And a great emphasis is put upon the mitre which Aaron wore on his head. And it had on it, in verse 30, we're told, holiness to the Lord.

All of these things now have to do with this. And we're told they brought the tabernacle unto Moses and all his furniture and all this, and the covering of the ram's skin and all of that. So that now when it's all

completed, it's all brought to Moses.

So that the last thing actually that's mentioned are the garments of the high priest. Now, I want us to take a look at these garments of the high priest, because it's very important as the high priest speaks of Christ. That is something you couldn't miss, because we're told that very definitely, that the garments speak of the high priest and of Christ, as our high priest, by the way.

And now we have given here these instructions. Now, basically, Aaron wore what all the other priests wore, and that was a linen garment. All of them were clothed in that fine twine, white, bisis, Egyptian linen.

They had on this linen garment, and it had on it sort of a pants that it wore, because their nakedness was not to be revealed, although they did serve barefooted, apparently, in the tabernacle. And Aaron, as the high priest, was dressed like the others, basically. And on the great day of atonement, when he took the blood and went into the Holy of Holies, he laid aside all the garments of beauty and glory, the outward garments, and just wore this.

Now, the linen, the white linen that the priests wore, speaks of righteousness. You remember the Scripture says that those that bear the vessels of the Lord are to be clean. God still says that.

I do not believe that God uses a sinful preacher or teacher or a sinful layman today. God's not using them. I don't care how prominent they are, and I don't care about their talent and how many people they influence.

They're doing nothing for God. He doesn't accept it, and it'll be nothing but wood, hay, and stubble. But we must be clothed with the righteousness of Christ, and then there must be a life to back that up.

That is certainly taught in these basic garments. Now, the thing that interests me are these garments of glory and beauty that are laid aside by Aaron when he went in to the Holy of Holies, when he offered the sacrifice for the sin of the people, that great day of Yom Kippur, the great day that was the beginning, actually, of days for these people. What an important thing it was, and he took that basin of blood within.

Well, now, the Lord Jesus came to this earth. He did not lay aside his deity, but he did lay aside the garments of glory and beauty. What's that? He laid aside his prerogatives of God.

He laid aside the Shekinah glory, and he came just as a human being. He was born a baby. It was George MacDonald that said he came a little baby thing that made a woman cry.

They were looking for a king to lift them high, but he came just a little baby thing that made a woman cry. That's the way he came into the world, the garments of glory and beauty were laid aside. There should have been, instead of just that few paltry number of shepherds there and the wise men that came later, the whole world should have been there.

He laid that aside, friends. He was God manifest in the flesh. What a picture you have here.

And when he offered himself, you see, he died in his humanity. I don't quite buy that idea that God died on the cross. It's only what you mean by death.

He was separated from God. That is true. That was a rift in the Godhead, to be sure, when he was made sin for us who knew no sin.

But even at that moment, God was in Christ, reconciling the world to himself. And there's a mystery there, friends, that I can't penetrate. And I've read after a few of the theologians, and you want to know something? They haven't penetrated it either.

Now, these garments of beauty and glory really were lovely. You talk about the male of the species in the bird world and animal world is more ornamented than the female. Actually, it's only among men that the female is the one that dresses gaudy and the male very conservative.

Now, of course, today we're rather reversing that. And some of the men today that I see. In fact, the matter is, I followed a car the other day, tried to get around it on the freeway.

And I kept saying, that's a woman driver. And, you know, it wasn't. When I got up there was a man driver.

Well, I'm not sure whether he's a man or not, but he was the male of the species. And the way he was dressed and his hair, you couldn't tell whether it's male or female. But actually, the high priest, my, he was gaudy and colorful.

And all of these things speak of the person of Christ. And we'll not go over this, because most of you follow this study. But some of you may not have followed it.

He had on this robe of the Ephod. And it had these two stones, one on each shoulder, and six of the names of the tribes of Israel on each one of the shoulders. Speaks of his strength and ability.

That is, speaks of the strength and ability of our great Savior, who, when one sheep got lost, he went out and found it, put it on his shoulder. Thank God we have a Savior, friends, that can go out and put us on his shoulder and bring us back. And he's able to save to the uttermost those who come unto God through him.

Then you have that breastplate, like a vest, and it had 12 stones on it. Oh, was it a thing of beauty. And apparently it had in it a sort of a pocket where the urim and thummim were placed.

And it had something to do with prediction. I do not know how it worked at all. But these beautiful stones right on his breastplate.

Now, this speaks of the fact that Christ carries us on his heart today. He loved us. God so loved the world.

And he loved the church. And he gave himself for it. There are the stones there that depict that.

And they were stones of beauty. And this was part of it. Now, down there on the robe of the ephod, there were golden bells and palm granites.

And so when the high priest, you see, was serving, you could hear those bells ringing. When he went in the holy place, he was in there serving, you know. You could hear the bells outside ringing.

And the palm granite, that speaks of fruit, the fruitful life. And the bell speaks of the testimony of the life. They could hear him.

And they could say, well, you know, he's there serving for us. We know he's there. And that's what worship ought to mean to us.

It ought to draw us to the person of Christ. If we don't hear the bell ringing, friends, on Sunday morning, there's something wrong. I used to have an elder that was a very wonderful man of God.

He was a great encouragement to me as a young preacher. And he would come out on Sunday morning, and he'd always say to me, well, you rang the bell today. Well, if you want to know the truth, I didn't.

I was a young preacher then, and I had some lousy sermons that I preached in those days. I still have those sermons, by the way. But nevertheless, his point was, because he was a Bible student, the important part of the service is that we'll be able to come into the presence of Christ.

And I told you about the fellow. He was a country boy down there in Georgia. And he came to me one Sunday morning, and I never shall forget.

And he waited till everybody left. And he took my hand and held it, and tears were coming down his eyes. And he said, you know, I never knew Jesus was so wonderful before.

And he wanted to say something else, but he couldn't say it. He just released my hand, turned, walked out of the little country church, out across the cotton patch that was there, because we were right in the corner of a cotton patch. I watched him walk across, and then tears came in my eyes.

As I said, oh, God, I hope I can preach that everybody will be able to say, at least somebody will be able to say, I didn't know how wonderful Jesus was. Well, may I say, we ought to be able to hear his bells on Sunday morning and not hear all this protest or running up the American flag and all of these things that are used today as gimmicks in our churches and in so-called Christian work today. Friends, if any Christian work doesn't let you hear the bells every now and then, maybe you ought to get in another Christian work.

Or maybe you think you're hearing bells when you're not hearing them, and that's about the worst thing you can have happen to you, is to think you hear them when you don't. But you see, these bells were ringing on the inside. What a glorious, wonderful picture this is of the high priest, and these were the garments that he wore.

And I had this miter on it, and that said, Holiness unto the Lord. And that man, holiness, oh, it does have to do with the inner life. But the important thing is, it means this man is totally given to the work of the ministry.

Holy means anything that is set aside for the use of God. And I'd like to say this to some of you today. And I've been a preacher a long time.

But you know, there are a great many people that want a preacher to do everything under the sun. I think many of those people would rather for him to be doing all these other things, socializing, back-slapping, around, holding somebody's hand, and nursemaid. There's one preacher said to me, the poor fellow had a nervous breakdown in his church.

He told me, he says, you know, said, I find I'm a wet nurse for a lot of little babes in Christ. And he says, I just go around burping them all the time. Well, that's the unfortunate thing.

Preacher today who stands in the pulpit ought to be able to wear the miter, holiness unto the Lord. That is, that he has time to prepare a message. He has time to spend before God.

I'm amazed today the number of people that invite a preacher out on Saturday night. You ought not to invite your preacher out Saturday night. You ought to let him have that day and that evening for meditation

and study.

I had an elder say to me one time, in fact, my first minister, I want to go around visit everybody. And I was around visiting day and night in the first church I served in Nashville. And this elder said to me, now, Vernon, he said, I appreciate you coming to see me.

But he said, I'll tell you what I'd like for you to do. I'd like you to spend the time that you'd come to see me, spend it in preparation of a message. He said, business is difficult.

And I get very weary and discouraged in the world today. And this was a very successful businessman. He said, but when I come to church Sunday morning and Sunday night, I want to hear something that comes from God.

I want help there. And he says, I hope you'll spend time so I'll be able to hear from heaven on Sunday morning and Sunday night. Well, I think he had a right to say that.

My friend, we need to recognize today that there ought to be that miter. And there are many of us lay folk that need to, if we say we are dedicated to the Lord, we ought to mean it.

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