

The Priestly Garments Exodus 28

by John Nelson Darby

The priestly garments in Exodus 28 represent Christ's priesthood and perfection, and symbolize His role as High Priest and mediator between God and humanity.

Scripture: Hebrews 4:14

Topics: "Intercession", "Christ as High Priest"

Description

John Nelson Darby expounds on Exodus 28, illustrating how Aaron's priestly garments symbolize Christ's role as our High Priest. Aaron, representing the twelve tribes of Israel, foreshadows Christ, who intercedes for us before God, bearing our weaknesses and presenting us in His perfection. The ephod, girdle, and breastplate signify service, purity, and the burden of the people, emphasizing that Christ carries us on His shoulders and in His heart. Darby highlights that our imperfections do not hinder God's grace, as Christ's holiness ensures our prayers and offerings are accepted. This understanding deepens our gratitude and joy in Christ's continual intercession and love for us.

Transcript

This chapter speaks to us of the garments with which Aaron was to be clothed to present himself before the Lord. He was the representative of the people, of those twelve tribes of Israel whose names he bore - a type of what Christ is doing for us in heaven. The Lord is not Priest after the order of Aaron, but He exercises priesthood now according to the type presented by Aaron. Now Christ is hid in God as the High Priest when he entered the holiest on the day of atonement.

A priest supposes temptations, distress, or, as in the epistle to the Hebrews, infirmities. He is the mediator to intercede on behalf of the people, and to represent them before God. I am weak, but all my weaknesses become, not a ground for judgment, but an occasion for God to display all His tenderness and all His compassion towards me, by means of our Priest. Down here Jesus washes our feet, but before God He represents us in His perfection. He displays to us down here the riches of God's grace towards us, and He presents us to God in His own perfection. Exodus 28 shows us how the Priest presents us before God. The ephod was the garment characteristic of the High Priest; the two parts of it were joined by two shoulder-pieces, which bore on two onyx stones the names of the twelve tribes. The girdle is typical of service - "Let your loins be girded." The breast-plate was fastened to the ephod, and also bore on twelve stones the names of the twelve tribes. The garments were of fine-twined linen; they were, as it were, ornamented with all possible graces, the groundwork representing purity itself.

Aaron was to bear the children of Israel before God. He carried them on his shoulders; all the burden of His people and the government are on the shoulders of Christ. If the stones had not been on Aaron's shoulders the ephod would have fallen; it was fastened by the names of the children of Israel. If Christ is Priest we are on His shoulders, borne as a memorial before God. He bears the burden and the government; He does all. Efficacy depends entirely upon Him, even in what we do for the Church. Aaron also bore the names of his people on his heart in the breast-plate of judgment. There is not a ray of God's glory and love shining upon Christ which does not also shine on us, who are borne upon His heart. The heart of Christ presents us to God. It is not only to obtain special favours, but it is we ourselves that He presents according to the love there is between Him and God. The Urim and the Thummim are lights and perfections. Aaron bore on his heart before God the judgment of the children of Israel according to the perfections of God's presence. Our sins cannot pass by Christ, and interpose themselves between God and Him. He maintains us in righteousness continually before God according to the lights and perfections of that presence. God never hides His face. He may chastise us. By our failures we may lose communion with Him; but if God hid His face from us He would hide it from Christ. It is hidden now from Israel, who is under the law. It is our shortcomings which raise a cloud between us and God; it is a consequence of our infirmity; but God's sovereign grace is by no means changed by it.

The "holiness to the Lord" (which was graven upon the gold plate, and put on a blue lace on the mitre) is always before God. Our prayers ascend in holiness to the Lord, because Christ is there. The iniquity in our holy things being borne by Him, our offerings (for there is iniquity, as all our service is imperfect) are presented before God according to divine holiness in Christ. This chapter in enabling us to understand better the extent of the love and favour, of which we are the objects, fills us with thanksgiving, and causes us to find in Christ ever new resources; for our knowledge of Him can always grow, and increase our joy.

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