

Ezekiel 42:14

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

When the priests enter therein, then shall they not go out of the holy place into the utter court, but there they shall lay their garments wherein they minister; for they are holy; and shall put on other garments, and shall approach to those things which are for the people.

Analysis

The requirement for priests to change garments before leaving holy areas emphasizes that holiness isn't casual or portable—it requires intentional separation. The priestly garments 'wherein they minister' were consecrated ('they are holy') and couldn't be worn in common areas. This teaches that what is appropriate in God's immediate presence may not be suitable for ordinary interaction. The 'other garments' for approaching 'those things which are for the people' maintained necessary distinction between sacred ministry and common life. This isn't hypocrisy but proper recognition of different contexts requiring different conduct. Reformed theology applies this principle spiritually: believers are 'clothed with Christ' (Galatians 3:27) for approaching God but must also maintain wise conduct in the world without compromising witness. The garment change also protected laity from unauthorized contact with consecrated items (Numbers 4:15, 2 Samuel 6:6-7).

Historical Context

Exodus 28-29 describes elaborate priestly vestments: breastplate, ephod, robe, tunic, turban, and sash—all consecrated for holy use. These weren't merely uniforms but sacramental garments signifying consecration to divine service.

Leviticus 6:11 specifically commands priests to change clothes after handling sacrificial blood. The garments' holiness meant they couldn't be used casually or for common purposes (Ezekiel 44:19). Archaeological discoveries include textile fragments and artistic depictions of ancient Near Eastern priestly garments, usually elaborate and distinctive. The practice of changing garments between sacred and common activities appears in various ancient cultures but Israel's rationale was unique—protecting God's holiness and people's safety. For the exiles, remembering proper priestly protocols promised future restoration of legitimate worship.

Related Passages

Hebrews 11:1 — Definition of faith

James 2:17 — Faith and works

Study Questions

1. What 'garment changes' distinguish your worship life from daily conduct—or has everything become undifferentiated?
2. How do you 'put on' Christ for approaching God while maintaining wise conduct toward unbelievers?
3. Does this verse challenge contemporary Christianity's casualness that erases all distinction between sacred and common?

Interlinear Text

בָּבֶאֱם	הַכֹּהֲנִים	וְלֹא	יֵצְאוּ	כִּי דָשׁ
enter	When the priests	H3808	therein then shall they not go out	for they are holy
H935	H3548		H3318	H6944
אֶל	הַחֲצֵצֵר	הַחֲצִיצוֹן	וְשָׁם	יִנְיחוּ
H413	court	place into the utter	H8033	but there they shall lay
	H2691	H2435		H3240
אֲשֶׁר	יִשְׁתָּו	בָּהּ	כִּי	קִדְשׁ
H834	wherein they minister	H0	H3588	for they are holy
	H8334			H6944
בְּגָדִים	אֲחֵרִים	וְקָרְבוּ	אֶל	אֲשֶׁר
garments	on other	and shall approach	H413	H834
H899	H312	H7126		
לָעָם:				
to those things which are for the people				
H5971				

Additional Cross-References

Ezekiel 44:19 (Holy): And when they go forth into the utter court, even into the utter court to the people, they shall put off their garments wherein they ministered, and lay them in the holy chambers, and they shall put on other garments; and they shall not sanctify the people with their garments.

Leviticus 8:7 (Parallel theme): And he put upon him the coat, and girded him with the girdle, and clothed him with the robe, and put the ephod upon him, and he girded him with the curious girdle of the ephod, and bound it unto him therewith.

Isaiah 61:10 (Parallel theme): 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.

Leviticus 8:13 (Parallel theme): And Moses brought Aaron's sons, and put coats upon them, and girded them with girdles, and put bonnets upon them; as the LORD commanded Moses.

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