

Ezekiel 44:17

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

And it shall come to pass, that when they enter in at the gates of the inner court, they shall be clothed with linen garments; and no wool shall come upon them, whiles they minister in the gates of the inner court, and within.

Analysis

And it shall come to pass, that when they enter in at the gates of the inner court, they shall be clothed with linen garments—the Hebrew pishta (פִּשְׁתָּה) "linen" specifies fine white fabric, symbolizing purity and set-apartness (Exodus 28:39-42, Leviticus 16:4). Linen's coolness and breathability made it practical for priestly service, but the theological symbolism mattered most: approaching God requires cleanliness.

And no wool shall come upon them, whiles they minister in the gates of the inner court, and within—the prohibition against wool (tsemer, טְמֵר) is unique to Ezekiel's vision. Some commentators suggest wool causes sweat (v. 18), symbolizing human effort versus divine grace. Others note that mixing linen and wool (sha'atnez) was generally forbidden (Leviticus 19:19, Deuteronomy 22:11), representing improper mixture. The New Testament imagery of believers clothed in Christ's righteousness (Revelation 19:8, where saints wear "fine linen, clean and white") echoes this requirement for pure garments.

Historical Context

Priestly garments were meticulously prescribed in Mosaic law (Exodus 28, 39). The high priest wore elaborate vestments including linen undergarments, while

ordinary priests wore simpler linen tunics, sashes, and caps (Exodus 28:40-43). During service, priests changed into sacred garments and removed them afterward (Ezekiel 42:14, 44:19). These regulations emphasized holiness—God's service required specific preparation, not casual approach. Post-exilic priests carefully observed these requirements (Nehemiah 7:70-72, where temple garments are listed among returned articles). The garments prefigure Christ's perfect righteousness that qualifies Him for eternal priesthood.

Related Passages

Ephesians 2:8 — Salvation by grace through faith

John 3:16 — God's love and salvation

Genesis 1:1 — Creation of heavens and earth

Colossians 1:16 — All things created through Christ

Study Questions

1. How does the requirement for specific priestly garments illustrate that we cannot approach God on our own terms?
2. What does being clothed in linen (purity) rather than wool (human effort) teach about salvation by grace versus works?

Interlinear Text

וְיֹאכַל	בְּבֹאָמָת	אֵל	בְּשַׁעַרِ	רַחֲצָה
H1961	And it shall come to pass that when they enter	H413	in at the gates	court
	H935		H8179	H2691
יְהִי תְּהִלָּה	בְּפִנִּים יְתַהֵּל	שָׁוֹרֵת	וְיֹאכַל	יְהִי תְּהִלָּה
of the inner	garments	with linen	they shall be clothed	shall come
H6442	H899	H6593	H3847	H5927
עַלְيָם	אֵלָמָר	בְּשִׁרְתָּם	בְּשַׁעַרِ	רַחֲצָה
H5921	and no wool	upon them whiles they minister	in at the gates	court
	H6785	H8334	H8179	H2691
בְּבִתְהָהָה	בְּפִנִּים יְתַהֵּל			
of the inner	and within			
H6442	H1004			

Additional Cross-References

Revelation 19:8 (Parallel theme): And to her was granted that she should be arrayed in fine linen, clean and white: for the fine linen is the righteousness of saints.

Exodus 28:43 (Parallel theme): And they shall be upon Aaron, and upon his sons, when they come in unto the tabernacle of the congregation, or when they come near unto the altar to minister in the holy place; that they bear not iniquity, and die: it shall be a statute for ever unto him and his seed after him.