

Ezekiel 44:19

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

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.

Analysis

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—the Hebrew emphasizes the transition from sacred to common space. Priestly garments (bigdei sharet, בגדי שָׂרֵת, "garments of service") were holy and could not mix with ordinary life. The repetition **into the utter court, even into the utter court** stresses the boundary between sacred and profane.

And lay them in the holy chambers, and they shall put on other garments—special rooms stored consecrated vestments (Ezekiel 42:13-14). Changing clothes ritualized the distinction between sacred service and everyday activity. **And they shall not sanctify the people with their garments**—direct contact with holy objects could transmit holiness dangerously (Leviticus 6:27, Haggai 2:12-13). The laity required protection from casual contact with sacred things. This principle underlies the entire Levitical system: holiness is powerful and must be mediated carefully.

Historical Context

The temple complex had multiple courts with increasing holiness: outer court for all Israel, inner court for priests, holy place for daily service, and most holy place for annual atonement (Ezekiel 40-42). Priests changed garments when transitioning between zones (Exodus 28:43, Leviticus 6:11, 16:23-24). This spatial hierarchy emphasized that approaching God required progressive sanctification. In the New Covenant, Christ has removed these barriers—all believers now have access to God's presence (Hebrews 10:19-22, Ephesians 2:18). Yet the principle remains: we must recognize the holiness of the God we approach and come through proper mediation (Christ alone).

Related Passages

1 Corinthians 13:4 — Characteristics of love

1 John 4:8 — God is love

Study Questions

1. How does the requirement to change garments when leaving sacred service illustrate the distinctiveness of approaching God versus everyday life?
2. What does the danger of 'sanctifying the people' with holy garments teach about the proper mediation of holiness?

Interlinear Text

וּבְצֵאתָם	אֶל	הַחִיצוֹנָה	אֶל			
And when they go forth	H413	court	H413			
H3318		H2691	H2435			
הַחִיצוֹנָה	אֶל	הָעָם	וְיָשֻׁטוּ	אֶת	בְּגָדֵיהֶם:	אֲשֶׁר
even into the utter	H413	the people	they shall put off	H853	garments	H834
H2435		H5971	H6584		H899	
הַמָּה	מִשְׁרָתָם	וְהִנֵּי יָחוּ	אֹתָם	בְּלִשְׁכֹת		
H1992	wherein they ministered	H0	and lay	H853	chambers	
	H8334		H3240		H3957	
הֵם	וְלָבְשׁוּ	בְּגָדֵיהֶם:	אֲחֵרִים	וְלֹא		
them in the holy	and they shall put	garments	on other	H3808		
H6944	H3847	H899	H312			
וְיִקְדָּשׁוּ	אֶת	הָעָם	בְּגָדֵיהֶם:			
and they shall not sanctify	H853	the people	garments			
H6942		H5971	H899			

Additional Cross-References

Ezekiel 46:20 (Parallel theme): Then said he unto me, This is the place where the priests shall boil the trespass offering and the sin offering, where they shall bake the meat offering; that they bear them not out into the utter court, to sanctify the people.

Leviticus 6:27 (Holy): Whatsoever shall touch the flesh thereof shall be holy: and when there is sprinkled of the blood thereof upon any garment, thou shalt wash that whereon it was sprinkled in the holy place.

Exodus 29:37 (Holy): Seven days thou shalt make an atonement for the altar, and sanctify it; and it shall be an altar most holy: whatsoever toucheth the altar shall be holy.

Exodus 30:29 (Holy): And thou shalt sanctify them, that they may be most holy: whatsoever toucheth them shall be holy.

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