

Numbers 15:38

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

Speak unto the children of Israel, and bid them that they make them fringes in the borders of their garments throughout their generations, and that they put upon the fringe of the borders a ribband of blue:

Analysis

Speak unto the children of Israel, and bid them that they make them fringes in the borders of their garments... and that they put upon the fringe of the borders a ribband of blue. God commands tassels with blue cord on garment corners as reminders to obey His commandments (Numbers 15:39-40). The blue cord recalled heaven and divine authority. The visible reminders helped Israel remember and keep God's laws. Jesus wore such tassels (Matthew 9:20; 14:36). This teaches that physical reminders can aid spiritual obedience. The Pharisees' enlarged tassels for show (Matthew 23:5) perverted the purpose. Reformed theology values means that aid godliness without becoming mere externalism.

Historical Context

The Hebrew *tsitsit* (fringes/tassels) with blue (*tekhelet*) cord became Jewish practice continuing today. The blue dye came from a specific sea creature, making it expensive and symbolically significant. The four-cornered garment requirement led to the later prayer shawl (*tallit*) tradition. Archaeological evidence includes ancient textiles with fringes. Jesus' criticism of ostentatious tassels (Matthew 23:5) addressed pride, not the practice itself. The woman who touched Jesus' hem (Matthew 9:20) likely grasped His *tsitsit*. Modern Orthodox Judaism continues this

practice. The principle of physical reminders for spiritual truth appears throughout Scripture (Passover, Lord's Supper, etc.).

Related Passages

Hebrews 11:1 — Definition of faith

Romans 1:17 — The righteous shall live by faith

Study Questions

1. How can physical reminders aid our spiritual life without becoming mere externalism or show?
2. What legitimate practices help you remember and obey God's word daily?

Interlinear Text

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|------------------------------|-------|-------------------|-------|----------------|-------|----------------|-------|-------------------------------------|-------|
| Speak | H413 | unto the children | H1121 | of Israel | H3478 | and bid | H559 | and say unto the children of Israel | H413 |
| H1696 | | | | | | | | | |
| them that they make | H6213 | them fringes | H6734 | in the borders | H5921 | in the borders | H3671 | of their garments | H899 |
| | | | | | | | | | |
| throughout their generations | H1755 | and that they put | H5414 | them fringes | H5921 | them fringes | H6734 | in the borders | H3671 |
| | | | | | | | | | |
| a ribband | H6616 | of blue | H8504 | | | | | | |
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Additional Cross-References

Matthew 23:5 (Parallel theme): But all their works they do for to be seen of men: they make broad their phylacteries, and enlarge the borders of their garments,

Deuteronomy 22:12 (Parallel theme): Thou shalt make thee fringes upon the four quarters of thy vesture, wherewith thou coverest thyself.

Matthew 9:20 (Parallel theme): And, behold, a woman, which was diseased with an issue of blood twelve years, came behind him, and touched the hem of his garment:

Luke 8:44 (Parallel theme): Came behind him, and touched the border of his garment: and immediately her issue of blood stanch'd.

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