

Zonē of Glory
Rev. George M. Schwab, Ph.D.
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Exod 28:4

(BHS)

וְאֵלֶּה הַבְּגָדִים אֲשֶׁר יַעֲשׂוּ
חֹשֶׁן וְאַפֹּד וּמְעִיל
וְכִתְנֹת תְּשֻׁבֵץ מְצַנְפֹת וְאַבְגָּט
וְעֲשׂוּ בְגָדֵי־קֹדֶשׁ
לְאַהֲרֹן אֶחָיו וְלִבְנָיו
לְכַהֲנֹת־לִי:

(NIV)

These are the garments they are to make:
a breastpiece, an ephod, a robe,
a woven tunic, a turban and a sash.
They are to make these sacred garments
for your brother Aaron and his sons,
so they may serve me as priests.

The lines are pretty linear with English. Just let the NIV help you with vocabulary. Notice that “ephod” is a transliteration of the second Hebrew word of line 2. “Aaron” is the first word of line 5 (with the preposition of course). I have colored two. Red is “robe,” which in Greek is *poderes*. Blue is “sash,” Greek *zonē* (in English a girded area: “zone”).

The book of Exodus is exciting, isn't it? You get a baby saved from a river, a miraculous burning bush, ten plagues, the sea parting, an evil army drowned. But later chapters get bogged down with tedious detail like making the Tabernacle, its furniture, and Aaron's apparel. Now, be honest. What do you do when you read through that latter material? You zone out, right? I bet your eyes glaze over, and you start merely scanning until you get to an exciting bit again.

Typically, Christians read the Bible looking for two things. First, some theological truth or doctrinal proof-text. Second, some moral imperative. Once a point of doctrine or a command is identified, then the text has value. Here is

God's sovereignty. There it commands purity in worship. Here is Christ's divinity. There it says to believe. We read it this way—and are content.

But Scripture has extensive passages that are not amenable to that approach. So reading some texts that way becomes unbearably boring, a mere duty with no payoff. Another problem is that we get impatient with long texts that paint a picture. It is hard to “see it” in our imaginations.

It takes patience and a different attitude to discover the worth of these passages. To get in the zone, we must learn to desire more from them. So I am going to give you an interpretative scheme that hopefully will help make Aaron's vestments come alive. Originally, Meredith Kline inspired me to see it this way. Here we go:

What happened to Moses when he was on God's mountain? He reflected the Shekinah, and shined gloriously for a time after he descended. Now, imagine that Adam and Eve similarly radiated God's glory. (Perhaps sin later exposed their nakedness so they lost their glory-covering. See 2 Cor 5:2 – 4). What if Aaron's priestly garb also constituted a glory-covering, with its lustrous metals, kaleidoscopic gems, and vibrant fabrics that prismatically scattered light? Hold that thought.

Within sacred zones (Tabernacle and Temple) were the menorah (a stylized tree with seven lamps like the seven lights in the sky), loaves of bread (made from fields of grain), a wash basin (the sea) thickly rimmed with plant life and resting on oxen (1 Kings 7:23 – 24), an altar of uncut (natural) stones and earth, and so on. Cherubim sewn into the curtain recalled Eden. Aaron dressed resplendently while ministering in the Tabernacle. As such, he recalled

glorious humanity in Eden, in perfect union with God. He was a picture of mankind in God's world, created as holy and faithful servants reflecting their Creator's glory. Does the text have your attention yet?

But there is more! Now take a look at the highlighted Hebrew. Their corresponding Greek words are used in the description of the glorified Christ in Rev 1:13. He stands among the menorah, his face blazing white like the sun, clothed with a *poderes* and a golden *zonē*. Aaron's apparel recalled Adam reflecting God's glory—but Jesus is the Glory of God Incarnate. Thus Aaron's priestly garments are also a picture of the glorified Christ.

But there is more! We await Jesus, “who will transform our lowly body to be like his glorious body” (Phil 3:21a). We will look like him. So, Aaron's apparel harks back to glorious unfallen humanity and points forward to the consummation, the glory that someday you will perfectly reflect with Jesus.

But there is more! Today, you also have vestments. You are to put on the full armor of God. Put on the new man (Eph 6:11). Put on the armor of light, casting off works of darkness (Rom 13:12). Put on Jesus (13:14). Aaron imaged the Glory of God, in a recreation of Eden—as Christians put on Christ today, imaging him in the glory of holiness and righteousness.

Pretty amazing, right? All this from a passage that generally elicits a yawn. Now go and live like you are excited about it!