

TORAHSCOPE: Tetzaveh (You shall command)

by Mark Huey posted 26 February, 2010 www.outreachisrael.net

Exodus 27:20-30:10
Ezekiel 43:10-27

“Bloodied Garments”

“Then you shall take the other ram, and Aaron and his sons shall lay their hands on the head of the ram. You shall slaughter the ram, and take some of its blood and put *it* on the lobe of Aaron's right ear and on the lobes of his sons' right ears and on the thumbs of their right hands and on the big toes of their right feet, and sprinkle the *rest of the* blood around on the altar. Then you shall take some of the blood that is on the altar and some of the anointing oil, and sprinkle *it* on Aaron and on his garments and on his sons and on his sons' garments with him; so he and his garments shall be consecrated, as well as his sons and his sons' garments with him” (Exodus 29:19-21).

Tetzaveh begins to stipulate many of the steps required for Israel to become the kingdom of priests and holy nation that God requires of it. He communicates through Moses many of the particulars that separate the Levites out from the other tribes. Aaron and his sons are specifically called out to perform some critical tasks related to the functions of the high priest.

While reading this portion a number of times, I was overwhelmed by the minute details that were stated for the various garments and implements used by the high priest in his ministerial functions. The variety of colors, different material types, precious metals and stones, and their locations on the specific garments was very intriguing. Of course, all of the typology was not overlooked. Obviously, the high priest was representative of the ultimate High Priest, Yeshua.

Much speculation has been given about how all of the colors and material types are simply symbolic of the different aspects of the Messiah and His work as the High Priest. It is beneficial to contemplate these symbols and their significance and foreshadowing. Among the most notable of the symbols was the fact that the high priest went into the Holy of Holies once a year with the names of the twelve tribes of Israel in two places on his apparel. First, the names were engraved on two onyx stones and placed on the shoulders. Wearing these indicated that the high priest was bearing their weight on himself:

“You shall take two onyx stones and engrave on them the names of the sons of Israel, six of their names on the one stone and the names of the remaining six on the other stone, according to their birth. As a jeweler engraves a signet, you shall engrave the two stones according to the names of the sons of Israel; you shall set them in filigree *settings* of gold. You shall put the two stones on the shoulder pieces of the ephod, *as* stones of memorial for the sons of Israel, and Aaron shall bear their names before the LORD on his two shoulders for a memorial” (Exodus 28:9-12).

Next, the breastplate of judgment had twelve precious stones engraved with the names of the twelve tribes. This was placed over the high priest's heart and was a constant reminder of their presence before God:

“Aaron shall carry the names of the sons of Israel in the breastpiece of judgment over his heart when he enters the holy place, for a memorial before the LORD continually. You shall put in the breastpiece of judgment the Urim and the Thummim, and they shall be over Aaron's heart when he goes in before the LORD; and Aaron shall carry the judgment of the sons of Israel over his heart before the LORD continually” (Exodus 28:29-30).

In these two very symbolic ways, we are today reminded of the role of our High Priest, Yeshua. According to the author of Hebrews, Yeshua is the High Priest who is seated at the right hand of the Father in Heaven, interceding for all who have placed their faith in Him:

“Therefore He is able also to save forever those who draw near to God through Him, since He always lives to make intercession for them. For it was fitting for us to have such a high priest, holy, innocent, undefiled, separated from sinners and exalted above the heavens; who does not need daily, like those high priests, to offer up sacrifices, first for His own sins and then for the

sins of the people, because this He did once for all when He offered up Himself. For the Law appoints men as high priests who are weak, but the word of the oath, which came after the Law, *appoints* a Son, made perfect forever. Now the main point in what has been said is *this*: we have such a high priest, who has taken His seat at the right hand of the throne of the Majesty in the heavens, a minister in the sanctuary and in the true tabernacle, which the Lord pitched, not man. For every high priest is appointed to offer both gifts and sacrifices; so it is necessary that this *high priest* also have something to offer” (Hebrews 7:25-8:3).

Further on in this portion we see a very dramatic event take place, when the high priest and his sons are finally anointed and then consecrated for ministry:

“You shall slaughter the ram, and take some of its blood and put *it* on the lobe of Aaron's right ear and on the lobes of his sons' right ears and on the thumbs of their right hands and on the big toes of their right feet, and sprinkle the *rest of the* blood around on the altar. Then you shall take some of the blood that is on the altar and some of the anointing oil, and sprinkle *it* on Aaron and on his garments and on his sons and on his sons' garments with him; so he and his garments shall be consecrated, as well as his sons and his sons' garments with him” (Exodus 29:20-21).

Here, the blood of the ram anoints not only the high priest and his sons, but they are also sprinkled by the mixture of the blood and the anointing oil. This gruesome procedure gives a vivid impression of the identification that the Holy One requires of the high priest and his sons with the requirement for a blood sacrifice. This, of course, reminds us of the dual role that Yeshua performed when, at the time of His sacrifice, He not only was the high priest, but also the bloody sacrifice required to atone for the sin of mankind. Certainly, at the time of His crucifixion, His followers were reminded of these images when the high priest and his sons were being consecrated.

Later, the author of Hebrews gives further edification as to what the blood of the Messiah is really all about:

“But when Messiah appeared *as* a high priest of the good things to come, *He entered* through the greater and more perfect tabernacle, not made with hands, that is to say, not of this creation; and not through the blood of goats and calves, but through His own blood, He entered the holy place once for all, having obtained eternal redemption. For if the blood of goats and bulls and the ashes of a heifer sprinkling those who have been defiled sanctify for the cleansing of the flesh, how much more will the blood of Messiah, who through the eternal Spirit offered Himself without blemish to God, cleanse your conscience from dead works to serve the living God?” (Hebrews 9:11-14).

May we all be thankful that Yeshua was not only willing to be sprinkled with blood, but that the blood that He shed was His own, atoning for the sins of man. He had much more than the bloodied garments of the high priest and his sons. It was His unblemished blood that saves us who believe! May we also learn to better serve the living God!

Mark Huey (B.A., Vanderbilt University in History and Graduate Studies at Embry-Riddle Aeronautical University) is the Director of Outreach Israel Ministries (www.outreachisrael.net). He is the author of several books, including: *TorahScope, Volumes I & II*, and *Counting the Omer: A Daily Devotional Toward Shavuot*. He is also co-author of *Hebraic Roots: An Introductory Study*.

Unless otherwise noted, Scripture quotations are from the *New American Standard, Updated Edition* (NASU), © 1995, published by The Lockman Foundation.