



## MORRISON ZION EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH

[www.mzluth.org](http://www.mzluth.org)

December 20, 2023

Pastor James Enderle

Midweek Advent Week 4

Reading: [Isaiah 61:1-3, 6-8, 10-11](#)

Devotion: [Exodus 28:15-30](#)

### **The Clothing of the King Robed in Righteousness**

Welcome to worship today at Morrison Zion Lutheran Church. We exist to glorify God. We have set out to do this by gathering around the Gospel so that we may grow in the Gospel and go to others with this Gospel.

Grace and peace to you from God our Father and from Jesus Christ, our Lord:

During the holiday season, during Christmas, when you gather together with relatives, do you ever pull out what used to be the old album (we used to have albums with photos in them) and look back at family pictures? Some of you probably still have that. For the younger generation, now what do we do? We pull out our phone and we go through/search through and look at old pictures of family. We do that with our kids and pull it out. "Look, this is Isaiah. He looks like Eli when he was a kid." For the older generations, you look back and you look at those pictures of years ago, is it interesting to look at what fashion was like a generation or two ago? I even find it interesting if you turn on the TV and watch any older TV shows, even from the 90's, like the older episodes of Friends, the hair and the clothing that they wore. We think "Oh, people dressed that way?" Then you look back in the 60's and the 70's.

One of my favorite shows when we got our new TV (we had all these channels that showed one thing over and over again) was this show called Supermarket Sweep. Do any of you remember that show? Supermarket Sweep was where they go shopping in a supermarket and they gather all the goods and try to get the most expensive things (kind of like the Price is Right). What I loved about it was that it was in the early 90's/late 80's and the fashion was so 80's and 90's—the sweaters and the perms. It's easy to look back at fashion and say "What was that like?" Or maybe "That was fashionable?" Today we look and say "What is fashion like today?" We have a lot of different types of fashion and there are all sorts of things that people wear.

I think when we read what God has His prophets/priests wear when He talks about Aaron and the people going into the temple, you might say "That's some interesting fashion." You read that and you say "Man, what does that look like? What would that be like?" What is fascinating about this is we kind of think priests are really prevalent in

the Old Testament. They are, but this is actually the first time we get a picture of a regular Israelite priest. The only priest before this was Melchizedek. He was a really unique priest who was both a king and a priest. Then there was Moses' father, who was a priest. But we don't really hear much about them. So finally now we are getting into the priestly things and what priests are to do. This is about the time when he was explaining everything about the tabernacle, God's temple, God's presence among the people at that time.

We look at this and we read all that, but it's kind of hard to imagine, so here is a picture to help. This is kind of a picture of what that would look like. You can see the garments there. You can see all of the different colors that are there. It talks about the blue and the purple and the scarlet robe in this beautiful gown. In the verses before, it talks about how this is supposed to be beautiful. These are God's priests and He wants to show the beauty of who He is on this priest. There are other times when we wear white and we are not meant to stress who we are today. But here they were stressing who GOD is by what they wore.

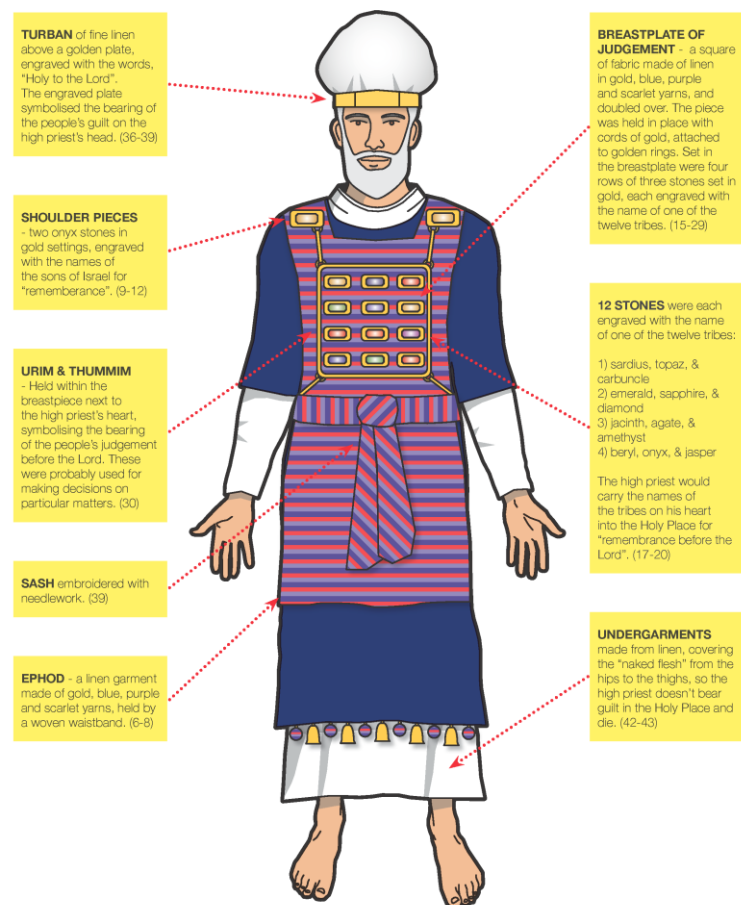
He has specific directions about what they are supposed to have on these garments, like these 12 stones—different types of gems and stones. Why do you think 12? It says that it is to represent the 12 sons of Israel/the 12 tribes of Israel. Those are the 12 here. But if you also look at the top (the two Shoulder Pieces), those would also have the inscriptions (between the two of them) of the 12 tribes of Israel.

So you have the 12 tribes of Israel (one on each of the stones on the chest), and on the two Shoulder Pieces are also the 12 tribes of Israel. That's interesting because 12 and 12 is what we talk about in the Old Testament (the 12 tribes of Israel), the New Testament

## THE HIGH PRIEST'S GARMENTS

EXODUS 28

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(the 12 disciples), and God's people. Why would the priest go in front of God with the names and these stones representing the 12 tribes of Israel? It talks about it right at the end. When he goes in before the Lord, he shall bear the names of the people of Israel on his heart.

So was it just the priests going before the people? No, he was going there representing ALL of the people because what was the priest to do? He was going to intercede. He was going to do sacrifices. Was it for him? Was it for himself? Not just for himself, but for ALL of the people. So this priest, who would wear all of this clothing, the whole list of it (a regular priest would just wear four pieces of clothing, but the high priest would have eight pieces of clothing that people would have to help them put on), was showing it was not about him but about the people. Here God is saying this priest is going and he is representing ALL of His people. He was going to make sacrifices and to pray to God.

But as we look at Exodus, if we only look at the priests and what God wanted for them and we see it only in the context of the Old Testament, we are really missing what it's all about. What is this all representing? When we heard the words of Isaiah, as he prophesied, he said that one would come who would be anointed by the Lord. He said ***The Spirit of the Sovereign Lord is on me, because the Lord has anointed me to proclaim good news to the poor.*** Do you know who opened up the Bible and referenced this and said "Today these words speak about me"? "Today these words are fulfilled." Jesus said it in [Luke 4](#). It says that He is the one promised. He is the anointed one. When we look to the high priest and what he wore, what it is really representing is Jesus.

We know that Jesus is our Prophet, Priest and King. He came to speak God's Word, to conquer sin and death, but He came as the Priest to sacrifice for us, not over and over again like the priest did in the Old Testament. How many times? He did it once, for all. He sacrificed, not with the blood of animals that could not really take away the sins of the people, but with what? He sacrificed with His own blood; His own holy and precious blood.

If you go back to the picture of the high priest, what is interesting is what he is wearing is very similar to what the tabernacle was made of. It's kind of like the tabernacle (the presence of God) is going out and ministering to the people. The presence of God, the temple of God is out and serving and ministering to the people. Who is that? When we read what we are going to read very soon, in a few, short days, the traditional Gospel Lesson for Christmas Day, which is [John 1](#), ***The Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us.*** Do you know the cool translation for that is not just "dwelling," but it is "tented" among us? What is a tent in the Old Testament? It is the tabernacle. This is the tabernacle. This is God's presence living and breathing among us.

So as we look to a high priest who comes out from the tabernacle and represents the tabernacle in the Old Testament, we see Christ. Christ, who represents not just Him but all of us. As we think about Him and what He is and how He represents us, how the high priest wore the people, what that means for us and our sins forgiven, I think we examine sometimes what we are wearing, not in a physical way but what we show to the world, are we proud of our Christianity? We can say yes. I'll post something on Facebook but am I willing to wear my Christianity in difficult conversations, share it with friends and family that maybe have a different view than me now or when the rest of society is speaking against what we believe? I think as we see how Christ represented us and wore us proudly, the High Priest did that, it's good for us to examine how we struggle to wear Christ. We struggle, in the midst of everything else, to show that He is important in our life and how better than in this season of busy-ness. But even after that, as things wear down, we examine our checkbook, our schedules and we can say "Am I proud of my faith? Am I proud of Christ and do I show that in how I live?" No one is going to be able to tell you if you are doing that enough or right.

The honest truth is that we are never going to do it perfectly, but that's why we have our perfect High Priest. The High Priest who takes away those sins, the times where I don't want to witness, the times I don't want to wear Christ out to others. That High Priest who went and in fact, even though the high priests in the Old Testament were dressed in beautiful clothing, what happened to our High Priest? He was stripped of His clothing. He came from heaven, was born into this world as a lowly child, born in the manger and had nothing special about Him. Finally, He is arrested, beaten, put on trial, stripped of everything and laid bare to pay for our sins.

But as He does that, the beauty of what that means—in the words of Isaiah, it says ***"For he has clothed me with garments of salvation and arrayed me in a robe of his righteousness..."***—that beautiful exchange that happens where we look at that Priest and that beautiful, amazing clothing that He has, that's what we get to wear. Robes of righteousness covering our sin and our fear and our doubts because of what Christ has done. Our High Priest who is wearing us, who wears our sins and takes them to the cross, nailed them to the cross, defeats them and rises again so that we can be clothed in righteousness.

When you look at fashion, when you are getting ready this Christmas season on Christmas Eve/Christmas Day, getting ready for pictures, you can look at all the different fashions, but take heart in the fashion that Christ has given you—that clothing of perfection and righteousness all because of our High Priest; the High Priest of Jesus and His perfect sacrifice for you. Amen.

***And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.*** [\(Philippians 4:7\)](#) Amen.