

THE ROBES AND GARMENTS OF ISRAEL'S PRIESTS

BIBLE TEXT : Exodus 28:1-43; 29:29, 30; 39:1-31

LESSON 97 Junior Course

MEMORY VERSE: " I will greatly rejoice In the LORD,...for he hath clothed me with the garments of salvation," (Isaiah 61:10).

BIBLE TEXT in King James Version

Exodus 28:1-43 (KJV)

¹ And take thou unto thee Aaron thy brother, and his sons with him, from among the children of Israel, that he may minister unto me in the priest's office, *even* Aaron, Nadab and Abihu, Eleazar and Ithamar, Aaron's sons.

² And thou shalt make holy garments for Aaron thy brother for glory and for beauty.

³ And thou shalt speak unto all *that are* wise hearted, whom I have filled with the spirit of wisdom, that they may make Aaron's garments to consecrate him, that he may minister unto me in the priest's office.

⁴ And these *are* the garments which they shall make; a breastplate, and an ephod, and a robe, and a broidered coat, a mitre, and a girdle: and they shall make holy garments for Aaron thy brother, and his sons, that he may minister unto me in the priest's office.

⁵ And they shall take gold, and blue, and purple, and scarlet, and fine linen.

⁶ And they shall make the ephod *of* gold, *of* blue, and *of* purple, *of* scarlet, and fine twined linen, with cunning work.

⁷ It shall have the two shoulderpieces thereof joined at the two edges thereof; and *so* it shall be joined together.

⁸ And the curious girdle of the ephod, which *is* upon it, shall be of the same, according to the work thereof; *even of* gold, *of* blue, and purple, and scarlet, and fine twined linen.

⁹ And thou shalt take two onyx stones, and grave on them the names of the children of Israel:

¹⁰ Six of their names on one stone, and *the other* six names of the rest on the other stone, according to their birth.

¹¹ With the work of an engraver in stone, *like* the engravings of a signet, shalt thou engrave the two stones with the names of the children of Israel: thou shalt make them to be set in ouches of gold.

¹² And thou shalt put the two stones upon the shoulders of the ephod *for* stones of memorial unto the children of Israel: and Aaron shall bear their names before the LORD upon his two shoulders for a memorial.

¹³ And thou shalt make ouches *of* gold;

¹⁴ And two chains *of* pure gold at the ends; *of* wreathen work shalt thou make them, and fasten the wreathen chains to the

BIBLE REFERENCES:

NOTES:

God's Attention to Details

When God ordained the priesthood at the time the Tabernacle was set up in the wilderness, He told Moses not only the particular duties of Aaron and his sons, but He told him also what clothes they must wear. We find that God was very careful that everything be done exactly according to His Word. It is just as important today that we follow the teachings of the Bible in every little detail.

The clothes of Aaron and his sons were to be holy garments, and no one else could wear any clothes like them. The children of God today are clothed with an adornment which the people of the world cannot imitate: "He hath clothed me with the garments of salvation, he hath covered me with the robe of righteousness" (Isaiah **61:10**).

God had a reason for all the articles of dress which the priests wore. They pictured the inward graces of the holy men of God. They must be of fine linen, and John tells us in Revelation that the fine linen is the righteousness of the saints. Their clothes were to be for "glory and for beauty." When Peter spoke of the adorning of the children of God, he said, "Whose adorning let it not be that outward adorning ... but let it be the hidden man of the heart, . . . even the ornament of a meek and quiet spirit, which is in the sight of God of great price" (I Peter 3:3, 4).

The Robes of the High Priest

The robes of the high priest were of even greater beauty than those of the other priests. He had a more holy work to do for the Lord, and his holiness must be greater. Upon his head he wore a mitre. It was made of fine linen, folded and wound around his head as a turban. Upon the front was a plate of gold upon which were engraved the words, HOLINESS TO THE LORD. Whenever the people looked at the high priest and saw that plate of gold, they would think of God's holiness.

The greater the work the Lord calls us to do, the more we must pray and consecrate so that we will have the spirit in us that will "adorn" us for that work. The high priest's fine linen garments were richly embroidered with gold and brightly colored threads. The robe was without sleeves, and hung almost to his ankles. Around the bottom were many little golden bells, a pomegranate of needlework between each one. No one could enter the Tabernacle but the priests, so the tinkling of the bells on the high priest's robes as he moved about told the people who were listening outside that he was alive and was making intercession before God for

ouches.

¹⁵ And thou shalt make the breastplate of judgment with cunning work; after the work of the ephod thou shalt make it; *of gold, of blue, and of purple, and of scarlet, and of fine twined linen, shalt thou make it.*

¹⁶ Foursquare it shall be *being* doubled; a span *shall be* the length thereof, and a span *shall be* the breadth thereof.

¹⁷ And thou shalt set in it settings of stones, *even* four rows of stones: *the first row shall be a sardius, a topaz, and a carbuncle: this shall be* the first row.

¹⁸ And the second row *shall be* an emerald, a sapphire, and a diamond.

¹⁹ And the third row a ligure, an agate, and an amethyst.

²⁰ And the fourth row a beryl, and an onyx, and a jasper: they shall be set in gold in their inclosings.

²¹ And the stones shall be with the names of the children of Israel, twelve, according to their names, *like* the engravings of a signet; every one with his name shall they be according to the twelve tribes.

²² And thou shalt make upon the breastplate chains at the ends *of* wreathen work *of* pure gold.

²³ And thou shalt make upon the breastplate two rings of gold, and shalt put the two rings on the two ends of the breastplate.

²⁴ And thou shalt put the two wreathen *chains* of gold in the two rings *which are* on the ends of the breastplate.

²⁵ And *the other* two ends of the two wreathen *chains* thou shalt fasten in the two ouches, and put *them* on the shoulderpieces of the ephod before it.

²⁶ And thou shalt make two rings of gold, and thou shalt put them upon the two ends of the breastplate in the border thereof, which *is* in the side of the ephod inward.

²⁷ And two *other* rings of gold thou shalt make, and shalt put them on the two sides of the ephod underneath, toward the forepart thereof, over against the *other* coupling thereof, above the curious girdle of the ephod.

²⁸ And they shall bind the breastplate by the rings thereof unto the rings of the ephod with a lace of blue, that *it* may be above the curious girdle of the ephod, and that the breastplate be not loosed from the ephod.

²⁹ And Aaron shall bear the names of the children of Israel in the breastplate of judgment upon his heart, when he goeth in unto the holy *place*, for a memorial before the LORD continually.

³⁰ And thou shalt put in the breastplate of judgment the Urim and the Thummim; and they shall be upon Aaron's heart, when he goeth in before the LORD: and Aaron shall

them.

Over this robe the high priest wore the ephod, "of gold, of blue, and of purple, of scarlet, and fine twined linen, with cunning work." Part of it hung over his shoulders in back and the other part over his chest. It was fastened on each shoulder by a clasp or buckle; and also upon each shoulder was an onyx stone, the names of six tribes engraved on one, and the names of the other six tribes on the other. The Children of Israel could not go in before God themselves, but the priest carried their names upon his shoulders when he went into the Holy Place.

The Breastplate

The priest also carried the names of the Children of **Israel upon his** heart before the Lord in the form of a breastplate set with twelve stones. Each stone was different, and upon each was engraved the name of one of the tribes of Israel. Only the high priest wore ' the ephod with the precious breastplate; so we see that Israel must depend upon the high priest, alone, for intercession before God. There we see Jesus Pictured again in the person of the high priest. Jesus has gone into Heaven to make intercession before God for His people here on earth.

The most important parts of all the dress of the high priest were the Urim and Thummim. It was by these that the priests learned the will of God. No one knows exactly what they looked like, but God told Moses: "Thou shalt put in the breastplate of judgment the Urim and the Thummim; and they shall be upon Aaron's heart, when he goeth in before the LORD: and Aaron shall bear the judgment of the children of Israel upon his heart before the LORD continually" (Exodus **28:30**).

God did not speak to the priests as He had to Moses, "face to face." They must depend upon the Urim and Thummim to know the will of God.

Many years later, in the time of David, when the ark was not at the Tabernacle, the will of God was still learned in this way. David knew that Saul was trying to overthrow him, and he wanted to know what action God wanted him to take. So he called the priest Abiathar to bring the ephod so he could inquire of the Lord. God answered him through the Urim and Thummim (I Samuel 23).

It is believed that the Children of Israel also learned in this way which tribe should be first to go up to fight against the Canaanites, as recorded in Judges 1: 1, 2; and in Judges **20:18** we read: "And the children of Israel arose, and went up to the house of God, and asked counsel of God, and said, Which of us shall go up first to the battle against the children of Benjamin? And the LORD said, Judah shall go up first." But one time when Saul inquired of God, after he had sinned, there was no answer, "neither by dreams, nor by Urim, nor by prophets" (I Samuel 28:6).

Whatever the Urim and Thummim were, they did reveal the will of God and gave the high priest wisdom to judge the people. The judgment of God is not "after the sight of his

bear the judgment of the children of Israel upon his heart before the LORD continually.

³¹ And thou shalt make the robe of the ephod all of blue.

³² And there shall be an hole in the top of it, in the midst thereof: it shall have a binding of woven work round about the hole of it, as it were the hole of an habergeon, that it be not rent.

³³ And *beneath* upon the hem of it thou shalt make pomegranates of blue, and of purple, and of scarlet, round about the hem thereof; and bells of gold between them round about:

³⁴ A golden bell and a pomegranate, a golden bell and a pomegranate, upon the hem of the robe round about.

³⁵ And it shall be upon Aaron to minister: and his sound shall be heard when he goeth in unto the holy *place* before the LORD, and when he cometh out, that he die not.

³⁶ And thou shalt make a plate of pure gold, and grave upon it, *like* the engravings of a signet, HOLINESS TO THE LORD.

³⁷ And thou shalt put it on a blue lace, that it may be upon the mitre; upon the forefront of the mitre it shall be.

³⁸ And it shall be upon Aaron's forehead, that Aaron may bear the iniquity of the holy things, which the children of Israel shall hallow in all their holy gifts; and it shall be always upon his forehead, that they may be accepted before the LORD.

³⁹ And thou shalt embroider the coat of fine linen, and thou shalt make the mitre of fine linen, and thou shalt make the girdle of needlework.

⁴⁰ And for Aaron's sons thou shalt make coats, and thou shalt make for them girdles, and bonnets shalt thou make for them, for glory and for beauty.

⁴¹ And thou shalt put them upon Aaron thy brother, and his sons with him; and shalt anoint them, and consecrate them, and sanctify them, that they may minister unto me in the priest's office.

⁴² And thou shalt make them linen breeches to cover their nakedness; from the loins even unto the thighs they shall reach:

⁴³ And they shall be upon Aaron, and upon his sons, when they come in unto the tabernacle of the congregation, or when they come near unto the altar to minister in the holy *place*; that they bear not iniquity, and die: *it shall be* a statute for ever unto him and his seed after him.

Exodus 29:29-30 (KJV)

²⁹ And the holy garments of Aaron shall be his sons' after him, to be anointed therein, and to be consecrated in them.

³⁰ And that son that is priest in his stead

eyes, neither ... after the hearing of his ears" (Isaiah 11:3). He looks at the heart and can tell whether people are telling the truth or not. The high priest was a judge among the people, but he still had to ask wisdom of the Lord.

Our Part in Intercession

The Lord has chosen to clothe His children in the beauties of holiness. He has adorned us with spiritual adornment; He has covered us with the garments of praise. When the priest entered that beautiful sanctuary in which only the finest of linen fabrics and the purest of gold had been used to show respect for God's Holy Place, he had to be clothed in holy garments to be worthy to minister before the Lord. How then can man dare to minister unto the Lord with soiled garments, robes spotted by sin? If a person is a sinner he has no right to do anything in the worship of God. All he can do is to pray in humble repentance, "God, be merciful to me a sinner." God will hear such a prayer that comes from the heart, and will wash all his sins away and make him a Christian, with clean garments.

When we are sanctified we are adorned with more of the Spirit of God, which brings about that beauty of holiness. God has blessed us with spiritual blessings, and He expects us to do something for Him. We must bear our brothers upon our hearts in prayer before God. If they are sick we ask God to heal them; when they are happy, we rejoice with them; in their sorrow we weep with them and pray that God will help them bear their burden. We carry upon our hearts in prayer not only our own family, those we love most, but all God's children. "Pray one for another.... The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much" (James 5:16).

Discernment

When the Holy Spirit comes into our heart and we are baptized with the Holy Ghost, He gives us the understanding to tell the false things from the true. When we are saved we feel a certain amount of that discernment, and still more when we are sanctified. But as we walk close to the Lord after we have the baptism of the Holy Spirit, He will give us greater understanding. We should pray much to have Him teach us His will.

We do not want to judge our brother; Jesus is the One who judges. But we do not believe the things that are wrong, nor agree with the things that God hates. His Spirit teaches us what is true, and leads us in the path of righteousness and true holiness. We can know when we are led by the Spirit of God and not by the spirit of the enemy, because the Spirit and the Word of God agree.

Let us ever live so that God can answer us by His Spirit, just as the priests of old learned the will of God through the Urim and Thummim.

QUESTIONS

- 1 Describe the garments of the priests.
- 2 What was the inscription upon the gold plate on the mitre?
- 3 What does white linen typify?

shall put them on seven days, when he cometh into the tabernacle of the congregation to minister in the holy *place*.

Exodus 39:1-31 (KJV)

¹ And of the blue, and purple, and scarlet, they made cloths of service, to do service in the holy *place*, and made the holy garments for Aaron; as the LORD commanded Moses.

² And he made the ephod *of* gold, blue, and purple, and scarlet, and fine twined linen.

³ And they did beat the gold into thin plates, and cut *it into* wires, to work *it* in the blue, and in the purple, and in the scarlet, and in the fine linen, *with* cunning work.

⁴ They made shoulderpieces for it, to couple *it* together: by the two edges was it coupled together.

⁵ And the curious girdle of his ephod, that *was* upon it, *was* of the same, according to the work thereof; *of* gold, blue, and purple, and scarlet, and fine twined linen; as the LORD commanded Moses.

⁶ And they wrought onyx stones inclosed in ouches of gold, graven, as signets are graven, with the names of the children of Israel.

⁷ And he put them on the shoulders of the ephod, *that they should be* stones for a memorial to the children of Israel; as the LORD commanded Moses.

⁸ And he made the breastplate *of* cunning work, like the work of the ephod; *of* gold, blue, and purple, and scarlet, and fine twined linen.

⁹ It was foursquare; they made the breastplate double: a span *was* the length thereof, and a span the breadth thereof, *being* doubled.

¹⁰ And they set in it four rows of stones: *the first row was* a sardius, a topaz, and a carbuncle: this *was* the first row.

¹¹ And the second row, an emerald, a sapphire, and a diamond.

¹² And the third row, a ligure, an agate, and an amethyst.

¹³ And the fourth row, a beryl, an onyx, and a jasper: *they were* inclosed in ouches of gold in their inclosings.

¹⁴ And the stones *were* according to the names of the children of Israel, twelve, according to their names, *like* the engravings of a signet, every one with his name, according to the twelve tribes.

¹⁵ And they made upon the breastplate chains at the ends, *of* wreathen work *of* pure gold.

¹⁶ And they made two ouches *of* gold, and two gold rings; and put the two rings in the two ends of the breastplate.

¹⁷ And they put the two wreathen chains of gold in the two rings on the ends of the

4 How should a man be spiritually adorned before he is fit to minister unto the Lord?

5 What was the Urim and Thummim?

6 What is our Urim and Thummim?

breastplate.

¹⁸ And the two ends of the two wreathen chains they fastened in the two ouches, and put them on the shoulderpieces of the ephod, before it.

¹⁹ And they made two rings of gold, and put *them* on the two ends of the breastplate, upon the border of it, which *was* on the side of the ephod inward.

²⁰ And they made two *other* golden rings, and put them on the two sides of the ephod underneath, toward the forepart of it, over against the *other* coupling thereof, above the curious girdle of the ephod.

²¹ And they did bind the breastplate by his rings unto the rings of the ephod with a lace of blue, that it might be above the curious girdle of the ephod, and that the breastplate might not be loosed from the ephod; as the LORD commanded Moses.

²² And he made the robe of the ephod *of* woven work, all *of* blue.

²³ And *there was* an hole in the midst of the robe, as the hole of an habergeon, *with* a band round about the hole, that it should not rend.

²⁴ And they made upon the hems of the robe pomegranates *of* blue, and purple, and scarlet, *and* twined *linen*.

²⁵ And they made bells *of* pure gold, and put the bells between the pomegranates upon the hem of the robe, round about between the pomegranates;

²⁶ A bell and a pomegranate, a bell and a pomegranate, round about the hem of the robe to minister *in*; as the LORD commanded Moses.

²⁷ And they made coats *of* fine linen *of* woven work for Aaron, and for his sons,

²⁸ And a mitre *of* fine linen, and goodly bonnets *of* fine linen, and linen breeches *of* fine twined linen,

²⁹ And a girdle *of* fine twined linen, and blue, and purple, and scarlet, *of* needlework; as the LORD commanded Moses.

³⁰ And they made the plate of the holy crown *of* pure gold, and wrote upon it a writing, *like to* the engravings of a signet, HOLINESS TO THE LORD.

³¹ And they tied unto it a lace of blue, to fasten *it* on high upon the mitre; as the LORD commanded Moses.