

Exodus 28 Commentary

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Summary Chart of The Book of Exodus									
DELIVERANCE FROM OPPRESSION						PREPARATION FOR WORSHIP			
Redemption from Egypt Ex 1:1-18:27						Revelation from God Ex 19:1-40:38			
Getting Israel Out of Egypt						Getting Egypt Out of Israel!			
Narration						Legislation			
Birth of Moses Ex 1-2	Call of Moses Ex 3-6	Conflict with Pharaoh Ex 7-10	Exodus from Egypt Ex 11-12	Red Sea Crossed Ex 13-15	Journey To Sinai Ex 16-18	Law Given Ex 19-24	Tent Plan Ex 25-31	Idol Worship Ex 32-34	Tent Built Ex 35-40
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Suffering and Liberation of People of God				Guidance of God		Worship of God			
Moses and Burdens of Israel		Pharaoh and Plagues Upon Egypt		Red Sea Deliverance	Wilderness Provision	Sinai Instructions			
Bondage and Oppression				Deliverance and Provision		Law Pattern and Construction			
Israel in Egypt Ex 1:1-13:16				Israel to Sinai Ex 13:17-18:27		Israel at Sinai Ex 19:1-40:38			
God's People Enduring Bondage				God's Grace Revealed in Redemption		God's Glory Manifested in Worship			
Egypt 430 Years (15% of Exodus)				Wilderness 2 Months (30% of Exodus)		Mt Sinai 10 Months (55% of Exodus)			
From Groaning									To Glory!

Jensen's Survey of the Old Testament - online

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Click for Excellent Map of Route of the Exodus
Click another Exodus from Egypt
Click for Events during the Sojourn at Kadesh-Barnea

GENESIS	EXODUS
human effort and failure	divine power and triumph
word of promise	work of fulfillment
a people chosen	a people called
God's electing mercy	God's electing manner
revelation of nationality	realization of nationality

SUMMARY OF THE PENTATEUCH
(from Believer's Study Bible)

Exodus 28:1 "Then bring near to yourself Aaron your brother, and his sons with him, from among the sons of Israel, to

- take: Lev 8:2 Nu 16:9-11 17:2-9 2Ch 26:18-21 Heb 5:1-5
- among: Ex 28:41 29:1,9,44 30:30 31:10 35:19 Nu 18:7 De 10:6 1Ch 6:10 2Ch 11:14 Lu 1:8
- Nadab: Ex 6:23 24:1,9 Lev 10:1,12 Nu 2:4 26:61 1Ch 24:1-4
- [Exodus 28 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

NET Note outlines this chapter:

- Exodus 28:1-5 = instructions for preparing the garments
- Exodus 28:6-39 = details of the apparel
- Exodus 28:40-43 = warning against deviating from these

Then **bring near** to yourself Aaron your brother, and his sons with him, from among the sons of Israel, to minister as priest to Me--Aaron, Nadab and Abihu, Eleazar and Ithamar, Aaron's sons - Note that the priesthood is restricted to the family of Aaron and later to the tribe of Levi (to which Aaron belonged). By the same token in our day, men do not seek to be priests on their own accord. The fact is that every believer becomes a priest when he or she enters the New Covenant by grace through faith, even as every believer is now a true saint in contrast to many so-called saints ordained by men. But as an aside "holy ones" (eternally because they are in Christ = our position) are given the command to live holy (separated, set apart) lives for "like the Holy One who called you, **be** ([aorist imperative](#) see [our need to depend on the Holy Spirit to obey](#)) holy yourselves also in all your behavior;" (1 Peter 1:15+) So now you can now call yourself "Saint Jimmy" or "Saint Sarah," and you do not have to be recognized as such by a group of men in a church because you have been "recognized" by the God of Heaven (See [Accepted in the Beloved](#))! And so the apostle Peter writes

You (SAINTS, BORN AGAIN ONES - 1 Pe 1:3+) also, as living stones, are being built up as a spiritual house for a **holy priesthood**, to offer up spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ.... But you are A CHOSEN RACE, A **royal PRIESTHOOD**, A HOLY NATION, A PEOPLE FOR God's OWN POSSESSION, so that (**HERE IS OUR PRESENT PURPOSE! ARE YOU FULFILLING IT?**) you may proclaim the excellencies of Him who has called you out of darkness (ARE YOU TELLING THOSE WHO ARE STILL IN DARKNESS) into His marvelous light ([TAKE A MOMENT AND JOYFULLY PRAISE OUR RISEN, RETURNING, REIGNING REDEEMER](#) FOR RESCUING OUR SOUL FROM ETERNAL DEATH TO ETERNAL LIGHT, FROM DARKNESS INTO MARVELOUS LIGHT!); (1 Peter 2:5, 9+)

David Guzik - The priesthood of Israel was not earned by effort nor aspired to by ambition. It could only be inherited by birthright. One must be born into a priestly family. The priesthood was no place for ambition or self-glory. It was only entered into by God's call and invitation. In the New Covenant, our priesthood is also not earned nor aspired to. We are priests because of our new birth into Jesus' priestly family.

NET Note on bring near - The verb is the Hiphil imperative of the root קָרַב (qarav, "to draw near"). In the present stem the word has religious significance, namely, to present something to God, like an offering.

David Thompson - God instructed Moses to get his brother Aaron and his four sons Nadab, Abihu, Eleazar and Ithamar, and he was to set them aside as ministers for Him. These men were chosen by God to "minister as priest." Now the Hebrew word "priest" (kahan) is a word that primarily refers to a man, who is supposed to be somewhat of an intercessor in matters between God and man (William Gesenius, Hebrew Lexicon, p. 385). The word "minister" (shaw rath) is one that carries with it the idea of ministering as a servant (Ibid., p. 851). So the responsibility of these priests was to be a servant of God who ministered in representative matters between God and man. Now before we move on we must observe that only God could make one a priest. No one became a priest by popular election or by human choice. God was the one who determined who would be His chosen leader. I think there is a N.T. principle here and that is God is the One who gives different gifts to His people. For example, in ministry God gives the gift of pastor/teacher. It is a gift of God given to the church of God. He is the One who determines to whom He gives that gift (Eph. 4:8, 11-12). He determines who gets these gifts just as He determined who these priests would be.

Minister (as a priest) ([03547](#)) ([kahan](#) from **kohen** = priest) occurs as a plural verb and means to act or function as a priest. Gilbrant - Derived from the noun kōhfin , "priest," this verb occurs twenty-three times in the Bible with the meaning "to minister as a priest." It occurs only in the Piel stem. The verb has cognates in several Semitic languages. Mostly, it occurs in Middle Hebrew and later Aramaic dialects in the same semantic range as what is found in the Hebrew Bible. Also, the verb appears in Arabic with the meaning "to prophesy," a function which rarely accompanies priestly actions in the Hebrew Bible, especially after David centralized worship in Jerusalem. Usually the verb refers to ministering as a priest of the Lord in Israel, so of Aaron and

his sons (Ex 28:1, 3, 4, 41; 29:1, 44; 30:30; 31:10; 35:19; 39:41; 40:13, 15; Lev. 7:35; Num. 3:3f; Deut. 10:6; 1 Chr. 24:2) or of Aaron's descendants who succeeded him (Lev. 16:32; 1 Chr. 6:10).

At times **kāhan** refers to those excluded from ministering as a priest. Once Ezekiel foretold that disobedient Levitical priests would be excluded from ministering in the Messianic temple. "And they shall not come near unto me, to do the office of a priest unto me, nor to come near to any of my holy things, in the most holy place: but they shall bear their shame, and their abominations which they have committed" (Ezek. 44:13). It refers to Israel's national priesthood being taken away: "My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge. Because you have rejected knowledge, I also will reject you from being priest for Me; because you have forgotten the law of your God, I also will forget your children" (Hos. 4:6, NKJV). It refers to the Levitical priests whom Jeroboam excluded from ministering as priests to the golden calf in his dissident temple (2 Chr. 11:14). Figuratively, the verb is used of one who dresses himself in elaborate array comparable to that of a priest. "He has covered me with the robe of righteousness, as a bridegroom decks himself [literally, acts as priest] with ornaments" (Isa. 61:10+). ([Complete Biblical Library Hebrew-English Dictionary](#))

NIDOTTE - Perhaps the central concept of priesthood is mediation between the sphere of the divine and the ordinary world. A priest through his ritual actions and his words facilitates communication across the boundary separating the holy from the profane. The priests represented God to the people in the splendor of their clothing, in their behavior, and in oracles and instruction, while in sacrifice and intercession they represented the people to God (TDOT 7:70). The high priest represents the whole nation, regularly bearing the name of the twelve tribes into the Holy Place (Exod 28:29–30) and once a year making atonement for the people (Lev 16). However, priestly language is occasionally used of the nation of Israel. In Exod 19:6 Israel is called "a kingdom of priests and a holy nation." The priestly people are to mediate the knowledge and the blessing of the holy God to other peoples (cf. 15:11–17; 19:5–6; Lev 20:22–26).

Kahan - 23v - Exod. 28:1; Exod. 28:3; Exod. 28:4; Exod. 28:41; Exod. 29:1; Exod. 29:44; Exod. 30:30; Exod. 31:10; Exod. 35:19; Exod. 39:41; Exod. 40:13; Exod. 40:15; Lev. 7:35; Lev. 16:32; Num. 3:3; Num. 3:4; Deut. 10:6; 1 Chr. 6:10; 1 Chr. 24:2; 2 Chr. 11:14; Isa. 61:10; Ezek. 44:13; Hos. 4:6

Related Resources:

- Torrey Topical Textbook [Priests Christ, the High Priest](#)
- Baker Evangelical Dictionary [High Priest](#) [Christ as Priest](#)
- Charles Buck Dictionary [Priest](#)
- Easton's Bible Dictionary [Priest](#) [Chief Priest](#) [High Priest](#)
- Fausset Bible Dictionary [Priest](#) [High Priest](#)
- Hastings' Dictionary of the Bible [High Priest](#) [Priests and Levites](#) [Priest](#)
- Hastings' Dictionary of the NT [High Priest \(2\)](#) [High Priest](#) [Priest](#)
- [What was the biblical role of the high priest? | GotQuestions.org](#)
- International Standard Bible Encyclopedia [Course of Priests and Levites](#) [Priests and Levites Breastplate of the High Priest](#)
- Kitto Biblical Cyclopedia [Priest](#)
- The Nuttall Encyclopedia [Priest](#)
- The Jewish Encyclopedia [Priest](#)

Exodus 28:2 "You shall make holy garments for Aaron your brother, for glory and for beauty.

- **holy garments:** Ex 29:5-9,29,30 31:10 39:1,2 40:13 Lev 8:7-9,30 Nu 20:26-28 Ps 132:9,16 Isa 61:3,10 64:6 Zec 3:3,4 Ro 3:22 13:14 Ga 3:27 Heb 7:26 Rev 19:8
- **glory:** Ex 28:40 19:5,6 Nu 27:20,21 Job 40:10 Ps 90:16,17 96:6 149:4 Isa 4:2 Jer 9:23,24 Joh 1:14 1Co 1:30,31 Heb 2:9 2Pe 1:17 1Jn 3:2 Rev 5:10 19:8
- [Exodus 28 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

HOLY GARMENTS DESIGNED BY THE THRICE HOLY GOD

You shall make holy garments for Aaron your brother, for glory and for beauty- Note that these garments are not just any garments but are to be holy garments, set apart garments signifying set apart function of the priests to the Holy God

David Guzik - Since there was something glorious and beautiful—indeed, heavenly about the priestly service, it was appropriate to make the garments glorious and beautiful.

NET Note on for glory and for beauty - The expression is לְכָבוֹד וּלְתִפְאַרֶת (lékhavod ulétif'aret, “for glory and for beauty”). W. C. Kaiser (“Exodus,” EBC 2:465), quoting the NIV’s “to give him dignity and honor,” says that these clothes were to exalt the office of the high priest as well as beautify the worship of God (which explains more of what the text has than the NIV rendering). The meaning of the word “glory” has much to do with the importance of the office, to be sure, but in Exodus the word has been used also for the brilliance of the presence of Yahweh, and so the magnificence of these garments might indeed strike the worshiper with the sense of the exaltation of the service.

Thompson - Certainly if one is to minister for God, he needs to be properly dressed, spiritually speaking; but this is speaking of actual physical clothing. This garment was to be designed in such a way that it brought glory to God and was beautiful. This garment was not your typical garment that one would wear going to a grocery store. This was to be a very special garment.

Adam Clarke - Is then the dismal black, now worn by almost all kinds of priests and ministers, for glory and for beauty? Is it emblematic of any thing that is good, glorious, or excellent? How unbecoming the glad tidings announced by Christian ministers is a colour emblematical of nothing but mourning and woe, sin, desolation, and death!”

Exodus 28:3 "You shall speak to all the skillful persons whom I have endowed with the spirit of wisdom, that they make Aaron's garments to consecrate him, that he may minister as priest to Me."

NET Exodus 28:3 You are to speak to all who are specially skilled, whom I have filled with the spirit of wisdom, so that they may make Aaron's garments to set him apart to minister as my priest.

NLT Exodus 28:3 Instruct all the skilled craftsmen whom I have filled with the spirit of wisdom. Have them make garments for Aaron that will distinguish him as a priest set apart for my service.

ESV Exodus 28:3 You shall speak to all the skillful, whom I have filled with a spirit of skill, that they make Aaron's garments to consecrate him for my priesthood.

NIV Exodus 28:3 Tell all the skilled men to whom I have given wisdom in such matters that they are to make garments for Aaron, for his consecration, so he may serve me as priest.

KJV Exodus 28:3 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.

LXE Exodus 28:3 And speak thou to all those who are wise in understanding, whom I have filled with the spirit of wisdom and perception; and they shall make the holy apparel of Aaron for the sanctuary, in which apparel he shall minister to me as priest.

ASV Exodus 28:3 And thou shalt speak unto all that are wise-hearted, whom I have filled with the spirit of wisdom, that they make Aaron's garments to sanctify him, that he may minister unto me in the priest's office.

CSB Exodus 28:3 You are to instruct all the skilled craftsmen, whom I have filled with a spirit of wisdom, to make Aaron's garments for consecrating him to serve Me as priest.

NKJ Exodus 28:3 "So you shall speak to all who are gifted artisans, whom I have filled with the spirit of wisdom, that they may make Aaron's garments, to consecrate him, that he may minister to Me as priest.

NRS Exodus 28:3 And you shall speak to all who have ability, whom I have endowed with skill, that they make Aaron's vestments to consecrate him for my priesthood.

YLT Exodus 28:3 and thou -- thou dost speak unto all the wise of heart, whom I have filled with a spirit of wisdom, and they have made the garments of Aaron to sanctify him for his being priest to Me.

- wise hearted: Ex 31:3-6 35:30,35 36:1,2 Pr 2:6 Isa 28:24-26
- filled: De 34:9 Isa 11:2 1Co 12:7-11 Eph 1:17 Jas 1:17
- [Exodus 28 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

CLOTHES MAKE

THE MAN!

You shall speak to all the skillful persons (gifted artisans) **whom I have endowed with the spirit of wisdom, that they make Aaron's garments to consecrate him** - In other words God says "Clothes make My man!" The beauty and glory of the priest's garment clearly sets them apart from the mundane and profane.

David Guzik - God promised a special gifting from the Holy Spirit given to the craftsmen of these garments.. If it is really done to the glory of God, practical, manual service requires the leading of the Holy Spirit just as much as what we normally consider to be spiritual service.

Related Resources:

- [The Holy Spirit-Walking Like Jesus Walked!](#)
- [A Spirit Filled Church](#)

NET Note on skillful (literally "wise of heart") - The word for **"wise"** (חָכָמִים, khakhme, the plural construct form) is from the word group that is usually translated "wisdom, wise, be wise," but it has as its basic meaning "skill" or "skillful." This is the way it is used in Ex 31:3, 6 and Ex 35:10 etc. God gave these people "wisdom" so that they would know how to make these things. The **"heart"** for the Hebrews is the locus of understanding, the mind and the will. To be "wise of heart" or "wise in heart" means that they had the understanding to do skillful work, they were talented artisans and artists.

Alan Cole - The Hebrew slaves must have learned many Egyptian arts and crafts, such as metalwork, spinning, weaving and embroidery during their stay in Egypt." (TOTC-Ex)

NET Note on spirit of wisdom - There is no necessity to take this as a reference to the Holy Spirit who produces wisdom in these people, although that is **not totally impossible**. A number of English versions (e.g., NAB, NIV, NCV, NRSV, TEV, CEV, NLT) do not even translate the word "spirit." It probably refers to their attitude and ability. U. Cassuto has "to all the artisans skilled in the making of stately robes, in the heart [i.e., mind] of each of whom I have implanted sagacity in his craft so that he may do his craft successfully" (Exodus, 371).

NET Note on to consecrate him - Or "to sanctify him" (ASV) or "to consecrate him" (KJV, NASB, NRSV). It is the garments that will set Aaron apart, or sanctify him, not the workers. The expression could be taken to mean "for his consecration" (NIV) since the investiture is part of his being set apart for service.

Thompson - this garment was to be made by very skillful people whom God has "endowed with the spirit of wisdom." So God actually gave certain individuals the skill to be able to make clothing. This is not a skill He gave to everyone. We clearly see here that God gives different skills to different people so that He may carry out His will and work. Now I want you to observe from verse 3 the reason for this priestly garment--so that Aaron could be set apart and consecrated to minister as a priest to God. So this dress code was not so much designed for the people as it was for God. If Aaron were to be a servant minister for God, he needed to be dressed in a way that God deemed acceptable.

Exodus 28:4 "These are the garments which they shall make: a breastpiece and an ephod and a robe and a tunic of checkered work, a turban and a sash, and they shall make holy garments for Aaron your brother and his sons, that he may minister as priest to Me.

NET Exodus 28:6 "They are to make the ephod of gold, blue, purple, scarlet, and fine twisted linen, the work of an artistic designer.

NLT Exodus 28:6 "The craftsmen must make the ephod of finely woven linen and skillfully embroider it with gold and with blue, purple, and scarlet thread.

ESV Exodus 28:6 "And they shall make the ephod of gold, of blue and purple and scarlet yarns, and of fine twined linen, skillfully worked.

NIV Exodus 28:6 "Make the ephod of gold, and of blue, purple and scarlet yarn, and of finely twisted linen--the work of a skilled craftsman.

KJV Exodus 28:6 And they shall make the ephod of gold, of blue, and of purple, of scarlet, and fine twined linen, with cunning work.

LXE Exodus 28:6 And they shall make the shoulder-piece of fine linen spun, the woven work of the embroiderer.

ASV Exodus 28:6 And they shall make the ephod of gold, of blue, and purple, scarlet, and fine twined linen, the work of the skilful workman.

CSB Exodus 28:6 "They are to make the ephod of finely spun linen embroidered with gold, and with blue, purple, and scarlet yarn.

NKJ Exodus 28:6 "and they shall make the ephod of gold, blue, purple, and scarlet thread, and fine woven linen, artistically worked.

NRS Exodus 28:6 They shall make the ephod of gold, of blue, purple, and crimson yarns, and of fine twisted linen, skillfully worked.

YLT Exodus 28:6 and have made the ephod of gold, blue, and purple, and scarlet, and twined linen, work of a designer;

- **a breastpiece** . Ex 28:15 39:8-21 Isa 59:17 Eph 6:14 1Th 5:8 Rev 9:17
- **a breastpiece** : . Ex 28:6-14 39:2-5,21,22 Lev 8:7,8 1Sa 2:18 22:18 23:6 30:7 2Sa 6:14
- **a robe**: Ex 28:31-34 39:25,26
- **a tunic of checkered work**: Ex 28:29,40 Lev 8:7
- **a turban** : Ex 39:28 Lev 8:9
- **and a sash**: Isa 11:5
- [Exodus 28 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

THE PRIESTS' GARMENT
CLICK TO ENLARGE

These are the garments which they shall make: a breastpiece and an ephod and a robe and a tunic of checkered work, a turban and a sash, and they shall make holy garments for Aaron your brother and his sons, that he may minister as priest to Me - Note the garments are holy garments, not that there was anything supernatural or mystical about the garments, but it was what these beautiful, glorious garments represented - that the men so attired were representatives of the thrice Holy God! Notice the key word in this introduction to the priests - **to minister as priest to Me** (Ex 28:1,3, 4, 41). The priority of the priest was not to the people but to the God of the people! It is the same order today, for once we have ministered to Him, His Spirit will direct us to whom we are to minister for our good and His glory!

Thompson - according to verses 4-5 there were to be seven parts to this priestly garment, which was to be a "holy garment." He lists the parts here and then he will develop each one later in the chapter.

NET Note = The word תַּשְׁבֵּט (tashbets), which describes the tunic and which appears only in this verse, is related to a verb (also rare) of the same root in 28:39 that describes making the tunic. Their meaning is uncertain (see the extended discussion in C. Houtman, Exodus, 3:473–75). A related noun describes gold fasteners and the "settings," or "mountings," for precious stones (28:11, 13, 14, 20, 25; 36:18; 39:6, 13, 16, 18; cf. Ps 45:14). The word "fitted" in 28:4 reflects the possibility that "the tunic is to be shaped by sewing, ... so that it will fit tightly around the body" (C. Houtman, Exodus, 3:475).

In the NT as noted all believers are priests and we too have **abreastpiece** (breastplate) as described by Paul...

In the NT as noted all believers are priests and we too have a breastpiece (breastplate) as described by Paul...

Eph 6:14+ **Stand firm** (command - every divine command includes divine enablement by the Spirit) therefore, HAVING GIRDED YOUR LOINS WITH TRUTH, and HAVING PUT ON THE **BREASTPLATE OF RIGHTEOUSNESS**,

1Thess 5:8+ But since we are of the day, let us be sober (nepho), having put on (enduo) (When? At the time of our new birth we were clothed with) **the breastplate** of faith and love, and as a helmet, the hope of salvation.

Breastpiece (02833) (**hosen** - Arabic cognates mean beauty) is an ornamental chest covering made of the same material as the **ephod** and worn only by the high priest. It was also used to hold the Urim and Thummim. On it were twelve gems on which were engraved the names of the tribes of Israel. Gold cords fastened the upper rings to the gems on the shoulders of the ephod.

Harrison - The '**breastpiece**' was an elaborately embroidered square of cloth set with four squares of stones. Since it was essentially a small bag, the rendering of **hosen** by 'breastplate' (KJV, RV),

'breastpiece' (RSV, NEB) is entirely conjectural. (Ibid)

Hosen - 21v - Ex 25:7; 28:4, 15, 22-25, 26, 28-30; 29:5; 35:9, 27; 39:8-9, 15-17, 19, 21; Lev 8:8

TWOT - The breastplate symbolized the unity of the nation, the dependence of the people on the person and ministry of the high priest, their presence before God as a beloved people, and the channel of the revelation of God's will. With it were the Urim and Thummim whereby the will of God was conveyed to the people (Ex 28:15-30). The LXX designates it as the "oracle of judgment" for "breastplate of judgment" or "breastplate of the (oracular) decision," in Hebrew. It was considered the most important item among the distinctive garments of the high priest. Josephus's account of the breastplate is elaborate, but not entirely reliable (Josephus - Antiquities of the Jews 3.7.5)

Hatfield on breastpiece - A piece of elaborate embroidery about nine inches square worn by the high priest upon his breast. It was set with twelve stones with the name of one of the 12 tribes of Israel engraved on each stone (**Ed**: The names of the tribes were also written on the two stones that were on the shoulder of the ephod = Ex 28:11; 39:6); The breastplate was a special item worn by the high priest as he ministered in the tabernacle or Temple. Made like a purse, the breastplate was constructed of gold metal, blue, purple, and scarlet yarn, and of fine linen. It was securely tied to the ephod. See Leviticus 8:8). The breastplate was called breastplate of judgment (Exodus 28:15) because these stones were the means of making decisions (Exodus 28:28-29). See Exodus 28:2); (2) to be a means of making decisions (Exodus 28:30); and (3) to be a continuing memorial before the Lord (Exodus 28:29). ([Breastplate - Holman Bible Dictionary](#))

Torrey' Topic Breastplate

- A part of defensive armour 1 Kings 22:34
- A part of the high priest's dress Exodus 28:4
- FOR SOLDIERS
 - Made of iron Revelation 9:9
 - Bright and shining Revelation 9:17
- FOR THE HIGH PRIEST
 - Materials of Exodus 28:15 ; 39:8
 - Form and dimensions of Exodus 28:16 ; 39:9
 - Made from the offering of the people Exodus 35:9
- Had names of the tribes engraved on precious stones Exodus 28:17-21 ; 39:10,14
- Inseparably united to the ephod Exodus 28:22-28 ; 39:15-21
- The Urim and Thummim placed in Exodus 28:30 ; Leviticus 8:8
- Worn as a memorial Exodus 28:29 ; Isaiah 49:16
- ILLUSTRATIVE OF THE
 - Righteous judgment of Christ Isaiah 59:17
 - Defence of righteousness Ephesians 6:14
 - Defence of faith and love 1 Thessalonians 5:8

Related Resources:

- International Standard Bible Encyclopedia [Breastplate of the High Priest](#)
- Kitto Biblical Cyclopedia [Breastplate of the high priest](#)
- The Jewish Encyclopedia [Breastplate of the High Priest](#)
- American Tract Society [Breastplate](#)
- Easton's Bible Dictionary [Breastplate](#)
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- Webster Dictionary [Breastplate](#)
- Watson's Theological Dictionary [Breastplate](#)

Ephod ([Thumbnails and descriptions](#)) (0646)([epod](#)) is a masculine noun referring to the sacred vestment worn by the high priest. The word "ephod" is taken over directly from Hebrew, because no one knows how to translate it, nor is there agreement about its design. "A garment worn around the high priest's upper body that featured twelve semiprecious and precious stones on the front, each one bearing the name of one of the tribes of Israel (Ex. 28:4, 6, 12, 15, 25–28). The breastplate bearing the stones was on the front of the ephod itself. The ephod was made by a skilled workman and had two shoulder pieces which were fastened together to hold it securely. It also bore two stones, one on each of its shoulders that represented the tribes of Israel. Each stone had six of the tribes of Israel engraved on it." (Baker) The Hebrew word **ephod** also described a vestment worn by David (2Sa 6:14, 1Ch 15:27) and the boy Samuel (1Sa 2:18). Gideon made an ephod which was an idolatrous cultic object (Jdg 8:27) In Hos 3:4 it is one of the sacred items the sons of Israel will lose access to for a period of time (because of disobedience).

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Related Resources:

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Questions - [What was the significance of the ephod?](#)

Answer: In the Old Testament, the **ephod** has two meanings. In one group of passages, it signifies a garment; in another, very probably an image. As a garment the ephod is referred to in the priestly ordinances as a part of the official dress of the [high priest](#). It was to be made of threads “of blue and of purple, of scarlet, and fine twined linen” and embroidered in gold thread “with cunning work” (Exodus 28:4; 29:5; 39:2; Leviticus 8:7).

The ephod was held together by a girdle of similar workmanship sewed on to it. It had two shoulder pieces, which, as the name implies, crossed the shoulders, and were apparently fastened or sewed to the ephod in front. In dressing, the shoulder pieces were joined in the back to the two ends of the ephod. Nothing is said of the length of the garment. At the point where the shoulder pieces were joined together in the front “above the girdle,” two golden rings were sewed on, to which the breastplate was attached.

The word *ephod* has an entirely different meaning in the second group of passages, all of which belong to the historical books. It is certain that the word cannot here refer to a garment. This is evident in Judges 8:26–27, where it is recorded that Gideon took from the Ishmaelites, who were Midianite allies, golden earrings, weighing 1,700 shekels of gold, and made an “ephod thereof, and put it in his city, even in Ophrah,” where it was worshiped by all Israel. In Judges 17:5, Micah made an ephod and teraphim, or idol, for his sanctuary. The most natural inference from all these passages is that “ephod” here signifies an image that was set up in the sanctuary, especially since the word is cited with teraphim, which undoubtedly refers to graven images (Hosea 3:4). The conclusion is that *ephod*, in these cases, refers to a portable idol. Some scholars have suggested that the connection between the idol and the garment is that the idol was originally clothed in a linen garment, and the term *ephod* gradually came to describe the idol as a whole. ([GotQuestions.org](#))

Question: [What was the significance of the priestly garments?](#)

Answer: Exodus 28 contains a detailed description of the garments God commanded to be made and worn by the priests. These were “sacred garments” to bestow Aaron and his sons with “dignity and honor” (Ex 28:2).

God wanted Aaron to wear the “breastpiece of decision” to symbolize that the high priest represented the people before God: “Whenever Aaron enters the Holy Place, he will bear the names of the sons of Israel over his heart . . . as a continuing memorial before the Lord” (Exodus 28:29). It was called the “breastpiece of decision” because the Urim and Thummim, which were associated with the breastpiece, were used to determine God’s will in various matters.

Some parts of the priestly garments were worn for safety. The high priest was required to have gold bells attached to the hem of his garment, so that “the sound of the bells will be heard when he enters the Holy Place before the Lord and when he comes out, so that he will not die” (Exodus 28:35).

The turban was plain white, with a gold plate placed at the forehead. On the plate were inscribed the words “Holy to the Lord.” This gold plate “will be on Aaron’s forehead continually so that [the children of Israel] will be acceptable to the Lord” (Exodus 28:38). This reminder of consecration, placed so conspicuously on the outfit, symbolized the importance of approaching the Lord God in holiness.

All the garments worn by the Old Testament priests were symbolic of being set apart for God’s work of atoning for sin. Compliance with the “dress code” was required. This is noted in verse 43: “Aaron and his sons must wear [the garments] whenever they enter the tent of meeting or approach the altar to minister in the Holy Place, so that they will not incur guilt and die.”

While such elaborate garments may seem odd today, God used these distinctive garments to set His spiritual leaders apart from the other Israelites. Each piece of the priestly garments held significance related to the work the priests performed. The Israelites lived with a continual reminder of the importance of the priestly work. They also had a foreshadowing of Jesus, the “great high priest” (Hebrews 4:14), who would carry out God’s plan of atonement in true holiness and perfection. (Source: [GotQuestions.org](#))

Exodus 28:5 "They shall take the gold and the blue and the purple and the scarlet material and the fine linen.

- gold: Ex 25:3,4 39:2,3
- [Exodus 28 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

MATERIALS TO MAKE THE EPHOD

They shall take the gold and the blue and the purple and the scarlet material and the fine linen- They refers to the artisans,

the craftsmen skilled in making these garments.

Exodus 28:6 "They shall also make the ephod of gold, of blue and purple and scarlet material and fine twisted linen, the work of the skillful workman.

- **Twisted linen:** Ex 26:1
- [Exodus 28 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

CONSTRUCTION OF THE EPHOD

They shall also make the ephod of gold, of blue and purple and scarlet material and fine twisted linen, the work of the skillful workman - An **ephod** is a sleeveless vest worn close to the body, which probably extended down just below the hips. The material that this was made from is very expensive and beautiful—gold, blue, purple and scarlet colored material and fine twisted linen (Ex 28:6). This was the same material as that which comprised the inner curtains. This ephod had two shoulder pieces joined together (Ex 28:7). Either they were joined together by loops or straps or cords. We cannot tell whether this was a rectangle with a neck hole in the middle put over the head or whether it was two pieces tied together. According to verse 8, there must be some type of waist band that could cinch down the ephod on the priest. Carefully woven into this ephod were golden ornamental pieces which contained two onyx stones that contained the names of six sons of Israel on one side of the shoulder and six sons of Israel on the other side of the shoulder (Ex 28:9-10). These names were to be engraved by a jeweler (Ex 28:11). These two stones were to be mounted on the shoulder area of this ephod and would be a constant reminder that whenever this priest ministered, he not only was carrying out ministry for himself but for all of God's people. All of Israel was special to God.

Alan Cole - "Linen was the dress of the noble and the priest in Egypt, chosen both for coolness and cleanliness." (TOTC-Ex)

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Exodus 28:7 "It shall have two shoulder pieces joined to its two ends, that it may be joined."

- Ex 39:4
- [Exodus 28 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

It shall have two shoulder pieces joined to its two ends, that it may be joined- NKJV calls these "shoulder straps"

Exodus 28:8 "The skillfully woven band, which is on it, shall be like its workmanship, of the same material: of gold, of blue and purple and scarlet material and fine twisted linen."

- **skillfully woven band**, Ex 28:27,28 29:5 39:20,21 Lev 8:7 Isa 11:5 1Pe 1:13 Rev 1:13

- [Exodus 28 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

The skillfully woven band, which is on it, shall be like its workmanship, of the same material: of gold, of blue and purple and scarlet material and fine twisted linen.

NET Note on waistband - This is the rendering of the word כֶּשֶׁף (kheshev), cognate to the word translated “designer” in v. 6. Since the entire ephod was of the same material, and this was of the same piece, it is unclear why this is singled out as “artistically woven.” Perhaps the word is from another root that just describes the item as a “band.” Whatever the connection, this band was to be of the same material, and the same piece, as the ephod, but perhaps a different pattern (S. R. Driver, Exodus, 301). It is this sash that attaches the ephod to the priest’s body, that is, at the upper

Exodus 28:9 "You shall take two onyx stones and engrave on them the names of the sons of Israel,

- onyx: Ex 28:20 39:13 Ge 2:12 Job 28:16 Eze 28:13
- grave: Ex 28:36 39:6 2Ch 2:7 Song 8:6 Isa 49:16
- [Exodus 28 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

You shall take two onyx stones and engrave on them the names of the sons of Israel- In other words the names engraved are the original 12 sons of Jacob.

Bush - On each of the connecting pieces that went across the shoulders was set an arch or socket of gold, containing an onyx-stone (Chal. ‘Berylstone’) on which the names of the tribes of Israel were engraved is in a seal, six on each shoulder. Thus Maimonides; ‘He set on each shoulder a beryl-stone four-square, embossed in gold; and he graved on the two stones the names of the tribes, six on one stone and six on the other, according to their births. And the stone whereon Reuben was written, was on the right shoulder, and the stone whereon Simeon was written, was on the left.’ The Rabbins say, moreover, that the letters were so equally divided in these two inscriptions that Joseph’s name was written ‘Jehoseph’ in order to make just twenty-five letters in each stone.

Exodus 28:10 six of their names on the one stone and the names of the remaining six on the other stone, according to their birth.

- according to their birth: Ex 1:1-4 Ge 43:33
- [Exodus 28 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

six of their names on the one stone and the names of the remaining six on the other stone, according to their birth- Six names of the sons of Jacob are engraved on one **onyx** stone and the other six engraved on the other onyx stone. **According to their birth** means that the names of the sons of Israel would be listed according to their ages.

Bush on according to their birth - That is, according to the order of their respective births or ages. The arrangement is diversely understood by Josephus and most of the Rabbinical writers, according to the latter of whom the order was as follows:

LEFT	RIGHT
Gad, Asher, Issachar, Zebulon, Joseph, Benjamin	Reuben, Simeon, Levi, Judah, Dan, Naphtali

Exodus 28:11 "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.

- **engraves a signet:** Ex 28:21,36 Jer 22:24 Zec 3:9 Eph 1:13 Eph 4:30 2Ti 2:19 Rev 7:2
- **filigree settings of gold:** Ex 28:13,14,25 39:6,13,18

- [Exodus 28 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

As a jeweler engraves a signet, you shall engrave the two stones according to the names of the sons of Israel - He had just stated that the names were **according to their birth** and now Yahweh re-emphasizes the engraving is to be **according to the names of the sons of Israel**. Their names are on precious stones surely to signifying their preciousness to God, even though they are each sinful men. This is a reflection of God's lovingkindness and grace.

you shall set them in filigree settings of gold - The **filigree** was a lace-like ornamental work of intertwined wire made of gold, silver, copper, or bronze to receive settings of precious jewels.

NET Note - Expert stone or gem engravers were used to engrave designs and names in identification seals of various sizes. It was work that skilled artisans did.

Exodus 28:12 "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.

- the shoulders: Ex 28:7 Ps 89:19 Isa 9:6 12:2 Zec 6:13,14 Heb 7:25-28
- Aaron shall bear: Ex 28:29 39:6,7
- for a memorial: Ex 12:14 13:9 39:7 Ge 9:12-17 Lev 24:7 Nu 16:40 31:54 Jos 4:7 Isa 62:6 Zec 6:14 Lu 1:54,72 Ac 10:4
- [Exodus 28 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

THE HIGH PRIEST BRINGS THE TWELVE TRIBES BEFORE YAHWEH

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 - In other words this was a perpetual reminder that the priest ministers on behalf of the twelve tribes of Israel and thus their names would always be borne by the priests when they ministered to the LORD. The priests functioned as vicarious representatives. Whenever Aaron went into the Holy Place, it was as he went representing his identification with all 12 tribes. He in effect was bringing them also before God.

Guzik - While the first ministry of a priest is always unto God Himself, a priest also is constantly connected to the people, bearing them on his shoulders. The shoulders are a place of work; therefore in the priest's ministry unto the LORD, he also worked for and with the people.

Bush on memorial - That is, as a memorial for or in behalf of the children of Israel; a remembrancer to Aaron and to Israel that he appeared before God in the priestly office as a representative of the whole people. The meaning is in fact explained in the next clause.

Exodus 28:13 "You shall make filigree settings of gold,

- [Exodus 28 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

You shall make filigree settings of gold - These were settings for the stones.

Filigree (04865)(**mishbetsah** from **shāvats** = to weave in checker (or plaited) was lace-like ornamental work of intertwined wire made of gold, silver, copper, or bronze to receive settings of precious jewels. It describes shield-like frames for the stones. The Hebrew word means "to plait, checker." The noun occurs nine times in the Hebrew Bible, in two contexts. The first is that of constructing the breastpiece and ephod of the high priest, as instructions are given (Exo. 28:11, 13ff) and completed (39:13, 16, 18). The noun describes the settings which hold the gemstones. The noun appears once in the context of a royal wedding Psalm (Ps. 45:13). The apparel of the bride is described as having gold "embroidery." (Complete Biblical Library Hebrew-English Dictionary) Exod. 28:11; Exod. 28:13; Exod. 28:14; Exod. 28:25; Exod. 39:6; Exod. 39:13; Exod. 39:16; Exod. 39:18; Ps. 45:13

Exodus 28:14 and two chains of pure gold; you shall make them of twisted cordage work, and you shall put the corded

chains on the filigree settings.

- **chains of:** Ex 28:24 39:15
- of wreathen: Ex 28:22-25 39:17,18 1Ki 7:17 2Ki 25:17 2Ch 4:12,13
- [Exodus 28 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

and two chains of pure gold; you shall make them of twisted cordage work, and you shall put the corded chains on the filigree settings.

Exodus 28:15 "You shall make a breastpiece of judgment, the work of a skillful workman; like the work of the ephod you shall make it: of gold, of blue and purple and scarlet material and fine twisted linen you shall make it.

- **breastpiece:** Ex 28:4,30 39:8 Lev 8:8
- **after:** Ex 28:6 26:1
- [Exodus 28 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

THE PRIESTS' GARMENT
CLICK TO ENLARGE

THE BREASTPIECE OF JUDGMENT (Exodus 28:15-30)

You shall make a breastpiece of judgment, the work of a skillful workman- The breastpiece was attached to the ephod with gold chains. The judgment is related to the Urim and Thummim which were to be positioned over Aaron's heart when he went before the LORD, Ex 28:30 explaining "and Aaron shall carry the judgment of the sons of Israel over his heart before the LORD continually." **Cole** says "This explains why the garment may be called the '**breastplate of judgment**', since it contains the two oracular stones (Urim and Thummim), by means of which God's '**judgment**' might be made known."

NET Note on breastpiece of judgment - Heb "a breastpiece of decision" (חֹשֶׁן מִשְׁפָּט, hoshen mishpat; so NAB). The first word, rendered "**breastpiece**," is of uncertain etymology. This item was made of material similar to the **ephod**. It had four rows of three gems on it, bearing the names of the tribes. In it were the urim and thummim. J. P. Hyatt refers to a similar object found in the Egyptian reliefs, including even the twisted gold chains used to hang it from the priest (Exodus [NCBC], 282).

Like the work of the ephod you shall make it: of gold, of blue and purple and scarlet material and fine twisted linen you shall make it - The rich royal color theme continues.

Thompson - The priest's garment was to contain a breastplate . Now the Hebrew word for breastplate means "ornament" so this breastplate was to be a very distinct item that would stand out from the rest of the priest's attire. The item was to be made from the same material as the Ephod (28:15). He was to make this item to be a perfect square folded over double (28:16). This would make it strong enough to hold the stones

Eugene Merrill - In Exod. 28:15 this breastplate is said to be fashioned "for making decisions." The Urim and Thummim were apparently the reason why the breastplate was designated "the breastplate of decision" (Exod. 28:29-30). While some feel that the Urim and Thummim are descriptive terms for the 12 stones of the breastplate, they appear to be distinct from them here (see below). The first-century Jewish historian Josephus assigned oracular characteristics to the 12 stones of the breastplate claiming they would shine when Israel was to be victorious in war (Antiquities, 3.8.9). Later Talmudic tradition suggests that God's glory would illuminate the various letters of the tribes engraved upon the stones in an order that would spell out a message (Yoma, 73, a-b). Besides there being no indication in Scripture that this occurred, 5 of the 22 letters in the Hebrew alphabet do not appear in these 12 tribal names. The breastplate was made from the same material as the ephod and was attached to the ephod by means of chains and gold rings at the four corners of the breastplate (Exod. 28:15-30; 29:5; 39:8-21). The 12 stones attached to it apparently represented the 12 tribes of Israel as the high priest went before the LORD. There must have been some non-described pocket in which the Urim and Thummim could be held. ([The Bible Knowledge Word Study - Gen-Deut](#))

Exodus 28:16 "It shall be square and folded double, a span in length and a span in width.

- [Exodus 28 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

It shall be square and folded double, a span in length and a span in width

Bush - At each corner of the Breast-plate thus made into a square form was a golden ring. To the two upper ones were attached two golden chains of wreathen work, i. e. chains made of golden threads or wires braided together, which passed up to the shoulders and were there somehow fastened to the shoulder-pieces or to the onyx-stones. By means of these chains it was suspended on the breast. But to render it still more firm in its position, two laces or ribbons of blue were passed through the two rings at the two lower corners of the Breast-plate, and also through two corresponding rings in the Ephod, and then tied together a little above the girdle of the Ephod. This rendered the Breast-plate and Ephod inseparable, so that the latter could not be put on without being accompanied by the former, and the punishment of stripes was decreed against him who should attempt to divide the one from the other.

Exodus 28:17 "You shall mount on it four rows of stones; the first row shall be a row of ruby, topaz and emerald;

- **You shall mount on it** : Ex 28:9,11 39:10-21 Mal 3:17
- **the first row**: Eze 28:13 Rev 21:19-21
- **ruby**, Job 28:18 Pr 3:15 8:11 20:15 31:10 La 4:7
- **topaz**: Job 28:19 Rev 21:20
- **emerald**: Isa 54:11,12
- [Exodus 28 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

FOUR SETTINGS OF PRECIOUS STONES

You shall mount on it four rows of stones; the first row shall be a row of ruby, topaz and emerald- Each stone had one of the names of the twelve tribes inscribed on it. As we see in Ex 28:29, 30 Aaron was to bear the stones with these 12 names over his heart whenever he went before the LORD.

Guzik - This begins a list of twelve gemstones set in the breastplate of the high priest. It is impossible to know exactly what all of these gemstones were; but we can come to some likely conclusions. Revelation 21:19–20⁺ describes the foundations of the walls of the New Jerusalem with a series of twelve gemstones, which may answer to these stones in the breastplate. We cannot neglect the fact God commanded the tribes to have their names inscribed on gemstones—truly precious things. **God's people are indeed precious to Him.**

Ruby ('odem) - redness, the ruby, garnet, or some other red gem: sardius. [Septuagint \(Lxx\)](#) = **sardion** = carnelian, a precious stone, a gem of reddish or ruby color 'Odem is found 3x in OT - Ex 28:17; Exod. 39:10; Ezek. 28:13 = "You (MOST TAKE THIS AS A DESCRIPTION OF SATAN) were in Eden, the garden of God; **Every precious stone was your covering**: The ruby, the topaz and the diamond; The beryl, the onyx and the jasper; The lapis lazuli, the turquoise and the emerald; And the gold, the workmanship of your settings and sockets, Was in you. On the day that you were created They were prepared." (See [Is the king of Tyre prophecy in Ezekiel 28 referring to Satan?](#))

Topaz (pitdah) - [Septuagint \(Lxx\)](#) = **topazion** = a bright yellow to greenish-yellow precious stone perhaps modern chrysolite (from its gold color) and used once in NT in Rev 21:20⁺ = "the fifth, sardonyx; the sixth, sardius; the seventh, chrysolite; the eighth, beryl; the ninth, topaz; the tenth, chrysoprase; the eleventh, jacinth; the twelfth, amethyst." Pitdah is found 4x in the OT - Exod. 28:17; Exod. 39:10; Job 28:19; Ezek. 28:13 (= possibly the description of Satan)

Emerald (carbuncle - KJV)(**Bareketh** from **baraq** = to lighten, glitter) was a very elegant gem. [Septuagint \(Lxx\)](#) = **smaragdus** = a transparent, bright green transparent precious stone, a name given to the emerald and to malachite. **Smaragdus** is used in Rev 21:19⁺ = "The foundation stones of the city wall were adorned with every kind of precious stone. The first foundation stone was jasper; the second, sapphire; the third, chalcedony; the fourth, **emerald** (smaragdus). "

George Bush has a more detailed description of the 12 stones:

1. **SARDIUS.** (RUBY IN NAS, NET, SARDIUS IN ESV) Heb. אדם odem, from the radical אדם adam, to be

ruddy or red. Chal. סמקן samkan, and סמקתא samketha, red. Gr. σαρδίων, sardine, a name supposed to be taken from Sardis or Sardinia, where it was originally found. It was a stone of the ruby class, and answers to the carnelian of the moderns. The finest specimens now come from Surat, a city near the gulf of Cambay in India.

2. TOPAZ. Heb. פטדה pitdah. Etymology unknown. Gr. τοπαζιον, topazion, a name which Pliny says is derived from Topazos, an island in the Red Sea. Chal. ירקן yarkan and ירקתא yarketha, signifying green. It is supposed to be the modern chrysolite, and its color to have been a transparent green-yellow. It comes now from Egypt, where it is found in alluvial strata.

3. CARBUNCLE. (EMERALD IN NAS, BERYL IN NET) Heb. ברקת bareketh, from ברק barak, to lighten, glitter, or glisten; answering to the ἀνθράξ anthrax, of the Greeks, so called because when held to the sun it resembles a piece of bright burning charcoal. Indeed its name carbuncle means a little coal, and refers us at once to a lively coalred. Its modern name is the garnet. The Septuagint, Josephus, and Lat. Vulgate have rendered in this place by σμαραγδος smaragdus, emerald. But this is more properly the rendering of the next in order. The carbuncle and the emerald have in fact in some way become transposed in the Greek version.

4. EMERALD. (TURQUOISE = NASB, NET) Heb. נופך nophek. Gr. ἀνθράξ. This gem is undoubtedly the same with the ancient smaragdus, or emerald, one of the most beautiful of all the precious stones. It is characterised by a bright green color, with scarcely any mixture, though differing somewhat in degrees. The true Oriental emerald is now very scarce. The best that are at present accessible are from Peru. In the time of Moses they came from India.

5. SAPPHIRE. Heb. ספיר sappir. Gr. σάπφειρος sapphiros. The word is very nearly the same in all known languages, and as to the sapphire itself it is, after the diamond, the most valuable of the gems, exceeding all others in lustre and hardness. It is of a sky-blue, or fine azure color, in all the choicest specimens, though other varieties occur. Indeed among practical jewellers it is a name of wider application perhaps than that of any of the rest of the precious stones. Pliny says that in his time the best sapphires came from Media. At present they are found in greater or less perfection in nearly every country.

6. DIAMOND. Heb. יהלם yahalom, from הלם halam, to beat, to smite upon, so called from its extraordinary hardness, by which like a hammer it will beat to pieces any of the other sorts of stones. Thus the Greeks called the diamond ἀδάμας, adamas, from Gr. α, not and δαμάω, damao, to subdue, on account of its supposed invincible hardness. Accordingly Pliny says of diamonds, that 'they are found to resist a stroke on the anvil to such a degree that the iron itself gives way and the anvil is shattered to pieces.' This is no doubt exaggerated and fabulous, but it is sufficient to justify the propriety of the Hebrew name, that diamonds are much harder than other precious stones, and in this all are agreed. This quality of the diamond, together with its incomparable brilliancy, renders it by far the most valuable of all the gems. The Gr. here has ἵασπις jaspis, or jasper.

7. LIGURE. (jacinth) Heb. לשם leshem. Gr. ληγυριον, ligurion. This is one of the most doubtful of the precious stones as to color. It is supposed to be closely related to the hyacinth (jacinth) of the moderns, which is a red strongly tinged with orange-yellow.

8. AGATE. Heb. שבו shebo. Gr. ἀχάτης, achates, agate. This is a stone of a great variety of hues, which is thought by some to be identical with the chrysopras, and if so it is probably that a golden green was the predominant color.

9. AMETHYST. Heb. אהלמה ahlamah. Gr. ἀμεθυστος, amethystos, from α, not, and μεθυστος, drunken, because wine drunk from an amethyst cup was supposed by the ancients to prevent inebriation. The oriental amethyst is a transparent gem, the color of which seems to be composed of a strong blue and a deep red; and according as either prevails, affording different tinges of purple, and sometimes even fading to a rose color. It comes from Persia, Arabia, Armenia, and the East Indies.

10. BERYL. Heb. תרשיש tarshish. Gr. χρυσολιθος, chrysolithos. A pellucid gem of a sea or bluish green. But if, as many mineralogists and critics suppose, the beryl is the same as the chrysolite, it is a gem of yellowish green color, and ranks at present among the topazes.

11. ONYX. Heb. שהם shoham; called onyx from Gr. ονυξ, onyx, from its resemblance of its ground color to that lunated spot at the base of the human nail, which the Greek word signifies. It is a semi-pellucid stone of a fine flinty texture, of a waterish sky-colored ground, variegated with bands of white and brown, which run parallel to each other. It is here rendered by the Gr. βηρυλλιον, beryllion, beryl, from some apparent confusion in the

order of the names. See Note on Gen. 2:12.

12. JASPER. Heb. יַשְׁפֶּה yashpeh. Gr. ονυχιον, onuchion. The similarity of the Hebrew name has determined most critics to consider the jasper as the gem intended by this designation. This is a stone distinguished by such a vast variety of hues, that it is extremely hazardous to fix upon any one as its distinguishing color. The brown Egyptian variety is conjectured to have been the one selected for the Breast-plate.

Exodus 28:18 and the second row a turquoise, a sapphire and a diamond;

- emerald: {Nophech,} an emerald, the same with the ancient {smaragdus;} one of the most beautiful of all the gems, and of a bright green colour, without any mixture. Ex 39:11 Eze 27:16
- sapphire: Ex 24:10 Job 28:6,16 Song 5:14 Eze 1:26 10:1 Rev 4:3
- diamond: Jer 17:1 Eze 28:13
- [Exodus 28 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

and the second row a turquoise, a sapphire and a diamond - See [description by George Bush](#).

Exodus 28:19 and the third row a jacinth, an agate and an amethyst;

- a figure: Ex 39:12
- an agate: Isa 54:12
- [Exodus 28 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

and the third row a jacinth, an agate and an amethyst - See [description by George Bush](#).

Exodus 28:20 and the fourth row a beryl and an onyx and a jasper; they shall be set in gold filigree.

- a beryl: Eze 1:16 10:9 Da 10:6 Rev 21:20
- an onyx: Ex 28:9
- a jasper: Rev 4:3 21:11,18-20
- fillings, Ex 28:13
- [Exodus 28 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

and the fourth row a beryl and an onyx and a jasper - See [description by George Bush](#).

they shall be set in gold filigree

NET Note - U. Cassuto (Exodus, 375–76) points out that these are the same precious stones mentioned in Ezek 28:13 that were to be found in Eden, the garden of God. So the priest, when making atonement, was to wear the precious gems that were there and symbolized the garden of Eden when man was free from sin. **(ADDENDUM** - The description in Ezekiel 28:13 is actually of the highest angel Satan).

Exodus 28:21 "The stones shall be according to the names of the sons of Israel: twelve, according to their names; they shall be like the engravings of a seal, each according to his name for the twelve tribes.

- twelve: Ex 28:9-11
- according to: 1Ki 18:31 Lu 22:30 Jas 1:1 Rev 7:4-8 21:12
- [Exodus 28 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

The stones shall be according to the names of the sons of Israel: twelve, according to their names; they shall be like the engravings of a seal, each according to his name for the twelve tribes - Note repetition of "name," emphasizing the stones

represent the names of the 12 tribes.

Exodus 28:22 "You shall make on the breastpiece chains of twisted cordage work in pure gold.

- Ex 28:14
- [Exodus 28 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

You shall make on the breastpiece chains of twisted cordage work in pure gold- This will be used for attachment.

Exodus 28:23 "You shall make on the breastpiece two rings of gold, and shall put the two rings on the two ends of the breastpiece.

- Ex 25:11-15
- [Exodus 28 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

You shall make on the breastpiece two rings of gold, and shall put the two rings on the two ends of the breastpiece- Also used for attachment.

Exodus 28:24 "You shall put the two cords of gold on the two rings at the ends of the breastpiece.

- [Exodus 28 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

You shall put the two cords of gold on the two rings at the ends of the breastpiece- Also used for attachment.

Exodus 28:25 "You shall put the other two ends of the two cords on the two filigree settings, and put them on the shoulder pieces of the ephod, at the front of it.

- **two cords:** Ex 28:14 39:15
- **on the shoulder pieces:** Ex 28:7
- **of the ephod:** Ex 39:4
- [Exodus 28 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

THE PRIESTS' GARMENT
CLICK TO ENLARGE

BREASTPIECE ATTACHED TO THE EPHOD

You shall put the other two ends of the two cords on the two filigree settings, and put them on the shoulder pieces of the ephod, at the front of it - NLT = "Tie the other ends of the cords to the gold settings on the shoulder-pieces of the ephod." NET = "the other two ends of the two chains you will attach to the two settings and then attach them to the shoulder pieces of the ephod at the front of it."

Exodus 28:26 "You shall make two rings of gold and shall place them on the two ends of the breastpiece, on the edge of it, which is toward the inner side of the ephod.

NET Exodus 28:26 You are to make two rings of gold and put them on the other two ends of the breastpiece, on its edge that is on the inner side of the ephod.

NLT Exodus 28:26 Then make two more gold rings and attach them to the inside edges of the chestpiece next

to the ephod.

ESV Exodus 28:26 You shall make two rings of gold, and put them at the two ends of the breastpiece, on its inside edge next to the ephod.

NIV Exodus 28:26 Make two gold rings and attach them to the other two corners of the breastpiece on the inside edge next to the ephod.

- [Exodus 28 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

You shall make two rings of gold and shall place them on the two ends of the breastpiece, on the edge of it, which is toward the inner side of the ephod - More attachment of breastpiece to the ephod.

Exodus 28:27 "You shall make two rings of gold and put them on the bottom of the two shoulder pieces of the ephod, on the front of it close to the place where it is joined, above the skillfully woven band of the ephod.

NET Exodus 28:27 You are to make two more gold rings and attach them to the bottom of the two shoulder pieces on the front of the ephod, close to the juncture above the waistband of the ephod.

NLT Exodus 28:27 And make two more gold rings and attach them to the front of the ephod, below the shoulder-pieces, just above the knot where the decorative sash is fastened to the ephod.

ESV Exodus 28:27 And you shall make two rings of gold, and attach them in front to the lower part of the two shoulder pieces of the ephod, at its seam above the skillfully woven band of the ephod.

NIV Exodus 28:27 Make two more gold rings and attach them to the bottom of the shoulder pieces on the front of the ephod, close to the seam just above the waistband of the ephod.

- **woven band of the ephod.:** Ex 28:8
- [Exodus 28 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

You shall make two rings of gold and put them on the bottom of the two shoulder pieces of the ephod, on the front of it close to the place where it is joined, above the skillfully woven band of the ephod

Exodus 28:28 "They shall bind the breastpiece by its rings to the rings of the ephod with a blue cord, so that it will be on the skillfully woven band of the ephod, and that the breastpiece will not come loose from the ephod.

NET Exodus 28:28 They are to tie the breastpiece by its rings to the rings of the ephod by blue cord, so that it may be above the waistband of the ephod, and so that the breastpiece will not be loose from the ephod.

NLT Exodus 28:28 Then attach the bottom rings of the chestpiece to the rings on the ephod with blue cords. This will hold the chestpiece securely to the ephod above the decorative sash.

ESV Exodus 28:28 And they shall bind the breastpiece by its rings to the rings of the ephod with a lace of blue, so that it may lie on the skillfully woven band of the ephod, so that the breastpiece shall not come loose from the ephod.

NIV Exodus 28:28 The rings of the breastpiece are to be tied to the rings of the ephod with blue cord, connecting it to the waistband, so that the breastpiece will not swing out from the ephod.

- a lace: Ex 28:31,37 39:30,31 Nu 15:38
- [Exodus 28 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

BINDING WITH A BLUE CORD

They shall bind the breastpiece by its rings to the rings of the ephod with a blue cord, so that it will be on the skillfully woven band of the ephod, and that the breastpiece will not come loose from the ephod - Separate pieces are securely joined

together.

Bush - Of these two rings nothing was said in the account of the construction of the Ephod above; probably because the use of them would not so fully appear till the Breast-plate and its position came to be described as is done in the present context.

Exodus 28:29 "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.

- in the: Ex 28:15,30
- upon: Ex 28:12 Jer 30:21 Ro 10:1
- a: Song 8:6 Isa 49:15,16
- [Exodus 28 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

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

NET Note - So Aaron will have the names of the tribes on his shoulders (v. 12) which bear the weight and symbol of office (see Isa 9:6; 22:22), and over his heart (implying that they have a constant place in his thoughts [Deut 6:6]). Thus he was to enter the presence of God as the nation's representative, ever mindful of the nation's interests, and ever bringing the remembrance of it before God (S. R. Driver, Exodus, 306).

Bush- Aaron shall bear the names, &c., in the breast-plate of judgment upon his heart. The phrase 'upon his heart' is not properly to be understood in this connexion in a physical sense, as if equivalent to 'upon his breast,' 'upon his bosom.' This is not the usage of the Hebrew in regard to the word 'heart.' After a pretty thorough examination of the many hundreds of cases in which the term occurs in the sacred writers, we have not been able to find a single instance, apart from the present, in which it is unequivocally employed in a physiological sense, to denote that grand organ of the human body which anatomists call 'the heart.' The passage which comes nearest to such a sense is that in Is. 1:5, 'The whole head is sick, and the whole heart faint.' Yet even here the metaphorical sense is predominant; for as the sickness is not corporeal, but moral, so the members affected are to be considered as equally figurative. According to the prevailing usage of Scripture, the heart is regarded as the seat of intelligence and emotion. The feelings of love, hope, fear, joy, sorrow, &c., are referred to the heart; and in the present case we cannot question that although as a matter of fact the Breast-plate was worn over the region of the heart, **yet the dominant idea conveyed by the phrase is, that Aaron was to bear these names of the tribes in his kind and affectionate remembrance whenever he went into the holy place. The beautiful sculptured gems were to be to him a memorial or memento of the fact that the interests of the whole people were committed to him as their representative, and that he should never cease to feel burdened in soul with this grave responsibility, especially whenever he was called to act in his capacity as sacerdotal judge of the chosen tribes.** In this fact we are no doubt at liberty to read one very interesting feature of the typical intent of the jewelled Breast-plate. The priesthood of Aaron shadowed forth the infinitely greater and more glorious priesthood of Christ. In the execution of his office as the great High Priest of the Church, he was ordained to enter into the holy place, there to appear in the presence of God for us. This he has done. He ascended to heaven after his resurrection, that he might there complete the work he had begun on earth. On his heart are engraven the names of all his people, and not one of them is overlooked or forgotten. He presents them all before his Father, as the objects of his own kind and solicitous sympathy and care, and they are dear to the Father, because they are dear to the Son. As he thus bears these his jewels on his heart while they are toiling and travelling here below, so will he finally transfer them from his bosom to his head, making them to adorn his diadem forever in the kingdom of his glory.

But this does not forbid the supposition, that in relation to God the stones of the Breast-plate may have subserved still another purpose. Certain it is that the whole scope of the context leads us to view them as indicating not only the subjects, but also the instruments, of those judicial decisions about which they were employed. They were in some way made use of as a medium of the oracular responses which the High Priest obtained by consultation from Jehovah in behalf of the Jewish people. But as this presents them in a distinct point of view, as intimately connected, if not absolutely identified, with the Urim and Thummim, we shall defer the sequel of our remarks on the Breast-plate till we come to the consideration of that very interesting but abstruse subject.

Exodus 28:30 "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.

- **Urim and Thummim**, Lev 8:8 Nu 27:21 De 33:8 Jud 1:1 20:18,23,27,28 1Sa 23:9-12 1Sa 28:6 30:7,8 Ezr 2:63 Ne 7:65
- **bear the judgment**: Zec 6:13
- **upon his heart**: 2Co 6:11,12 7:3 12:15 Php 1:7,8 Heb 2:17 4:15 9:12,24
- [Exodus 28 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

URIM AND THUMMIM FOR GUIDANCE

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

Guzik - The use of the discerning tools of Urim and Thummim is described on a few occasions (Numbers 27:21, 1 Samuel 28:6, Ezra 2:63, and Nehemiah 7:65) and their use may be implied in other passages (Judges 1:1; 20:18, 23). The names Urim and Thummim mean "Lights and Perfections." We aren't sure what they were or how they were used. The best guess is that they were a pair of stones, one light and another dark, and each stone indicated a "yes" or "no" from God. The High Priest would ask God a question, reach into the breastplate, and pull out either a "yes" or a "no." Many consider the Urim and Thummim as crude tools of discernment. In fact, they are better than the tools many Christians use today. It would be better to use the Urim and Thummim than rely on feelings, or outward appearances, or to simply use no discernment at all. The key to the effectiveness of the Urim and Thummim was that God's Word gave them. In seeking God through the Urim and Thummim, one was really going back to God's Word for guidance, because it was the word of God that commanded their place and allowed their use. **Today, if we have the same focus on God's Word, He will guide us also.** One old preacher was asked to explain the Urim and Thummim. He said,

*"Well, this is how I understand it. When I need to know God's will, I get out my Bible and I **do a lot of usin' and thummin' through my Bible**, and God always speaks to me." More Christians would know God's will if they did more usin' and thummin'."*

Related Resources:

- Article on [The Will Of God](#)
- [How can I know God's will for my life? What does the Bible say about knowing God's will? | GotQuestions.org](#)
- [How can I know what God's plan is? | GotQuestions.org](#)

NET Note - The Urim and the Thummim were two objects intended for determining the divine will. There is no clear evidence of their size or shape or the material of which they were made, but they seem to have been familiar items to Moses and the people. The best example of their use comes from 1 Sam 14:36–42. Some have suggested from the etymologies that they were light and dark objects respectively, perhaps stones or sticks or some other object. They seem to have fallen out of use after the Davidic period when the prophetic oracles became popular. It may be that the title "breastpiece of judgment" indicates that these objects were used for making "decisions" (J. P. Hyatt, Exodus [NCBC], 283–84). U. Cassuto has the most thorough treatment of the subject (Exodus, 378–82); he lists several very clear rules for their uses gathered from their instances in the Bible, including that they were a form of sacred lot, that priests or leaders of the people only could use them, and that they were used for discovering the divine will in areas that were beyond human knowledge.

NET Note - "judgment" (KJV, ASV, NASB, NRSV). The term is מִשְׁפָּט (mishpat), the same word that describes the breastpiece that held the two objects. Here it is translated "decisions" since the Urim and Thummim contained in the breastpiece represented the means by which the LORD made decisions for the Israelites. The high priest bore the responsibility of discerning the divine will on matters of national importance.

Joseph Parker - The **Urim** (light) and the **Thummim** (perfection). What the Urim and the Thummim actually were no man has been able to find out. But whatever they were, there can be no doubt as to what our Urim and Thummim are. We are not left without light and perfection.... Our Urim and Thummim are the Old and New Testaments. Keep these in the heart; be at home with them in all their wondrous variety of speech, of doctrine, of song, of inspiration, and of instruction of every kind; and then you never can stray far from the path providential that makes its own course straight up to the God who started the mysterious Outgoing.

Urim (0224)(urim possibly the plural of **ur** = flame, light, fire - [Isa 31:9](#), [Ezek 5:2](#)) masculine plural noun which some lexicons state means light or fire.

John MacArthur - The etymological source of these two terms (urim and thummim), as well as the material nature of the objects represented by them, cannot be established with any degree of finality. Clearly two separate objects were inserted into the breastpiece and became thereby an essential part of the High-Priest's

official regalia. Aaron and his successors bore over their heart “the judgment of the sons of Israel,” i.e., “judgment” in the sense of giving a verdict or decision. The passages in which the terms appear (Lev 8:8; Nu 27:21; Dt 33:8; 1Sa 28:6; Ezra 2:63; Ne 7:65) and those which record inquiries of the Lord when a High-Priest with the ephod was present (Josh 9:14; Jdg 1:1, 2; 20:18; 1Sa 10:22; 23:2, 4, 10–12; 1Ch 10:14) allow for the following conclusions: 1) that these two objects represented the right of the High-Priest to request guidance for the acknowledged leader who could not approach God directly, as Moses had done, but had to come via the God-ordained priestly structure, and 2) that the revelation then received gave specific direction for an immediate problem or crisis, and went beyond what could be associated with some sort of sacred lots providing merely a wordless “yes” and “no” response. (MacArthur study Bible)

Rooster - The **Urim** and **Thummim** were inside the breastpiece pouch. In the ancient world the breastpiece was often associated with royal attire and may have been considered the most important of the high priestly garments. It was made from the same material as the ephod (Ex 28:15). The breastpiece symbolized the unity of the nation, the dependence of the people on the person and ministry of the high priest, their presence before God as a beloved people, and the channel of the revelation of God’s will. With it were the Urim and Thummim whereby the will of God was conveyed to the people (Ex 28:15–30). (Many suggest they resembled modern dice, which were cast to the ground to obtain a yes or no answer from the Lord.) The breastpiece especially illustrated the representative character of the high priest, for he bore the name of the tribes of Israel and represented the nation as a whole when he entered the sanctuary of God (Ex 28:29). In this ministry the high priest typifies the work of Christ, who entered into the heavenly sanctuary on the part of his people and is an Advocate before the Father (Heb 2:17; 3:1; 4:14, 15; 5:5, 10; 6:20; 7:26; 8:1; 9:11 [10:21]). (*ibid*)

NET Note - The Urim and Thummim were two small objects used in the casting of lots to discern the will of God (see [Ex 28:30](#); [Nu 27:21](#); [Dt 33:8](#); [1Sa 14:41](#) in the LXX and [Ex 28:6](#); [Ezra 2:63](#) and [Neh 7:65](#)). It appears that by casting them one could obtain a yes or no answer, or no answer at all ([1Sa 28:6](#); J. E. Hartley, Leviticus [WBC], 111-12). See the extensive discussion in J. Milgrom, Leviticus (AB), 1:507–11.

Urim - 7v

Exodus 28:30 "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.

Leviticus 8:8 He then placed the breastpiece on him, and in the breastpiece he put the **Urim** and the Thummim.

Numbers 27:21 "Moreover, he shall stand before Eleazar the priest, who shall inquire for him by the judgment of the **Urim** before the LORD. At his command they shall go out and at his command they shall come in, both he and the sons of Israel with him, even all the congregation."

Deuteronomy 33:8 Of Levi he said, "Let Your Thummim and Your **Urim** belong to Your godly man, Whom You proved at Massah, With whom You contended at the waters of Meribah;

1 Samuel 28:6 When Saul inquired of the LORD, the LORD did not answer him, either by dreams or by **Urim** or by prophets.

Ezra 2:63 The governor said to them that they should not eat from the most holy things until a priest stood up with **Urim** and Thummim.

Nehemiah 7:65 The governor said to them that they should not eat from the most holy things until a priest arose with **Urim** and Thummim.

Milgrom notes that "From these citations, a few facts can be deduced. The Urim and Thummim were a form of oracle placed inside a pocket, “the breastpiece of decision,” worn by the high priest on his chest. According to the Priestly tradition they were used exclusively by the high priest inside the Tabernacle, as stated explicitly in the Lord’s charge to Moses: “he shall present himself to Eleazar, the priest, who shall on his behalf seek the decision of the Urim before the Lord” (Num 27:21a). Most likely, the high priest had to station himself inside the shrine so that he could be physically closer to the symbolic seat of the Godhead, the Ark. This may be inferred from Jdg 20:27–28: “The Israelites inquired of the Lord (for the Ark of God’s Covenant was there in those days, and Phineas son of Eleazar son of Aaron the priest ministered before him in those days), ‘Shall we again take the field....’ ” The interpolation, presumably by a Priestly editor, makes it clear that the use of the Urim and Thummim is associated with the Ark and they must be consulted in its proximity." (Leviticus 1–16: a new translation with introduction and commentary)

Thummin (08550) (**tummiym** some lexicons say it is related to [08537] **tom** = completeness, integrity, but this is not definitive) is of uncertain derivation. We may get a clue as to the sense of Thummin from the Lxx, which translates it as **aletheia** (= truth) in 3 uses (**Ex 28:30**, **Lev 8:8**, **Dt 33:8**), **teleios** (speaks of completion or totality of something) in one passage (**Ezra 2:63**) and **photizo** (**Eph 1:18** = "enlighten" one's heart) in one passage (**Neh 7:65**). Combining all three Greek words, we can get some sense as to the function of the Thummin (although this is still somewhat conjectural).

Easton's Bible Dictionary has one of the longest specific discussions of **Thummin** - Perfection (LXX., "truth;" Vulg., "veritas"), Exodus 28:30; Deuteronomy 33:8; Judges 1:1; 20:18; 1 Samuel 14:3,18; 23:9; 2Sa 21:1 . What the "Urim and Thummin" were cannot be determined with any certainty. All we certainly know is that they were a certain divinely-given means by which God imparted, through the high priest, direction and counsel to Israel when these were needed. The method by which this was done can be only a matter of mere conjecture. They were apparently material objects, quite distinct from the breastplate, but something added to it after all the stones had been set in it, something in addition to the breastplate and its jewels. They may have been, as some suppose, two small images, like the teraphim (Compare Jdg 17:5; 18:14,17,20; Hos 3:4), which were kept in the bag of the breastplate, by which, in some unknown way, the high priest could give forth his divinely imparted decision when consulted. They were probably lost at the destruction of the temple by Nebuchadnezzar. They were never seen after the return from captivity.

Merrill - The Urim and Thummim - These Hebrew words are transliterations of two superlative plurals meaning "lights" and "perfections." The definite article is always used in relation to these terms until the postexilic period. The urim mentioned only 4x in the Pentateuch (**Ex 28:30**; here, **Nu 27:21**; **Deut. 33:8**). It is also mentioned once during the early monarchy (**1Sa 28:6**) and twice after the exile (**Ezra 2:63**; **Neh. 7:65**). The Thummim is combined with the urim 5x out of these seven (missing in **Nu 27:21**; **1Sa 28:6**). These two items are never actually described in the Scriptures but appear to be stones or gems (or at least something that was tangible) that were placed within the breastplate of the high priest. They were intended as a means of divine guidance for the nation by means of the high priest (the breastplate is called in **Ex 28:15** a "breastplate for making decisions"). It is not known how Aaron and his successors used these items though they may have functioned as "yes" and "no" or "true" and "false" answers to questions put to the high priest. The two stones may have been engraved with symbols to distinguish the two or they may have been of two different colors. However, in **1Sa 28:6** the Urim is literally placed between the terms "dreams" and "prophets," which may suggest that there was a correspondingly personal revelation through the mind of the priest who wore the breastplate. A great difficulty in seeing the Urim and Thummim function merely as a form of lot oracle is that when a revelation was given by this means it was declared in the form of God speaking and often included more information than a mere positive or negative response to the question (e.g., **1Sa 10:22**; **2Sa 5:23-24**). It appears that the gift of prophecy was often part of this process of discernment. Perhaps the prophetic revelation was accompanied by a confirmatory sign using the Urim and Thummim in some manner. What is clear however, is that "the Urim and Thummim are characterized as belonging to God, who entrusted this revelatory means to Levi (**Dt. 33:8**) in the person of the high priest. The civil leader was expected to inquire of Yahweh through the high priest about all matters pertaining to the execution of his office [**Nu 27:21**]" (C. Van Dam, **NIDOTTE**, 1:330). Certainly the placement of the Urim and Thummim in the breastplate of the high priest who would represent the nation before the LORD would indicate that the high priest was to seek from the LORD God alone the answers to questions that were not possible to discern from the revelation already given to the nation by the LORD. (Ibid)

Thummim - 5v -

Exodus 28:30 "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.

Leviticus 8:8 He then placed the breastpiece on him, and in the breastpiece he put the Urim and the **Thummim**.

Deuteronomy 33:8 Of Levi he said, "Let Your **Thummim** and Your Urim belong to Your godly man, Whom You proved at Massah, With whom You contended at the waters of Meribah;

Ezra 2:63 The governor said to them that they should not eat from the most holy things until a priest stood up with Urim and **Thummim**.

Nehemiah 7:65 The governor said to them that they should not eat from the most holy things until a priest

Question: [What were the Urim and Thummim?](#) |

Answer: The Urim ("lights") and Thummim ("perfections") were gemstones that were carried by the high priest of Israel on the ephod / priestly garments. They were used by the high priest to determine God's will in some situations. Some propose that God would cause the **Urim and Thummim** to light up in varying patterns to reveal His decision. Others propose that the **Urim and Thummim** were kept in a pouch and were engraved with symbols identifying yes / no and true / false.

It is unclear whether the **Urim and Thummim** were on, by, or in the high priest's ephod. No one knows the precise nature of the **Urim and Thummim** or exactly how they were used. The Bible simply does not give us enough information. References to the **Urim and Thummim** are rare in the Bible. They are first mentioned in the description of the breastplate of judgment (Exodus 28:30; Leviticus 8:8). When Joshua succeeded Moses as leader over Israel, he was to receive answers from God by means of the **Urim** through Eleazar the high priest (Numbers 27:21). The **Urim and Thummim** are next mentioned in Moses' dying blessing upon Levi (Deuteronomy 33:8). The following Scriptures likely also speak of the **Urim and Thummim**: Joshua 7:14-18; 1 Samuel 14:37-45; and 2 Samuel 21:1. (Source: GotQuestions.org)

Exodus 28:31 "You shall make the robe of the ephod all of blue.

- Ex 28:4,28 39:22 Lev 8:7
- [Exodus 28 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

THE PRIESTS' GARMENT
CLICK TO ENLARGE

Rev 1:13⁺ - and in the middle of the lampstands I saw one like a son of man, **clothed in a robe reaching to the feet**, and girded across His chest with a golden sash.

Comment - Trench says "*The long robe is every where in the East the garment of dignity and honour.*" The Greek word for robe reaching to the feet is *poderes* found only here in the NT of Jesus Christ - all use of *poderes* = Ex 25:7; Ex 28:4; Ex 28:31; Ex 29:5; Ex 35:9; Ezek 9:2; Ezek 9:3; Ezek 9:11; Zech 3:4; Rev 1:13)

You shall make the robe of the ephod all of blue- "This was the basic covering of the priest, made of all blue, and seamless and with no tear for the head opening." (Guzik)

Bush - This is a garment distinct from any that has yet been mentioned. It is called the 'robe of the ephod,' simply because it was worn immediately under it. Its Hebrew name is מַעִיל **me'il**, rendered in the Gr. **υποδυτην ποδηρη**, an under-garment reaching down to the feet. The **me'il** was a distinguishing priestly vestment, and therefore Christ appears, Rev. 1:13⁺, 'clothed with a garment down to the feet (*podere*),' to show himself the Great High Priest of the church. It was a long linen gown of sky blue color, reaching to the middle of the leg.

NET Note - The מַעִיל (*mé'il*), according to S. R. Driver (Exodus, 307), is a long robe worn over the ephod, perhaps open down the front, with sleeves. It is made of finer material than ordinary cloaks because it was to be worn by people in positions of rank.

Exodus 28:32 "there shall be an opening at its top in the middle of it; around its opening there shall be a binding of woven work, as like the opening of a coat of mail, so that it will not be torn.

NET Exodus 28:32 There is to be an opening in its top in the center of it, with an edge all around the opening, the work of a weaver, like the opening of a collar, so that it cannot be torn.

NLT Exodus 28:32 with an opening for Aaron's head in the middle of it. Reinforce the opening with a woven collar so it will not tear.

ESV Exodus 28:32 It shall have an opening for the head in the middle of it, with a woven binding around the opening, like the opening in a garment, so that it may not tear.

NIV Exodus 28:32 with an opening for the head in its center. There shall be a woven edge like a collar around

this opening, so that it will not tear.

- as it were: Ex 39:28 2Ch 26:14 Ne 4:16 Job 41:26
- that it be not rent: Joh 19:23,24 Eph 4:3-16
- [Exodus 28 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

there shall be an opening at its top in the middle of it; around its opening there shall be a binding of woven work, as like the opening of a coat of mail, so that it will not be torn

Criswell - Jesus, the divine High Priest, also wore a robe that was made in one piece (cf. John 19:23 = "Then the soldiers, when they had crucified Jesus, took His outer garments and made four parts, a part to every soldier and also the tunic; now the tunic was seamless, woven in one piece.").

Bush - This **was all of one piece**, and so formed as to be put on, not like other garments which are open in front, but like a surplice, over the head, having a hole at the top for the head to pass through, which was strongly hemmed round with a binding or welt to prevent it from rending, and with openings or arm-holes in the sides in place of sleeves.

NET Note - Top - The "mouth of its head" probably means its neck; it may be rendered "the opening for the head," except the pronominal suffix would have to refer to Aaron, and that is not immediately within the context.

NET Note on woven work - that is, "the work of a weaver." The expression suggests that the weaving was from the fabric edges itself and not something woven and then added to the robe. It was obviously intended to keep the opening from fraying.

NET Note on coat of mail - The expression כִּפֵּי תַּחְרָא (kéfi takhra') is difficult. It was early rendered "like the opening of a coat of mail." It occurs only here and in the parallel 39:23. Tg. Onq. has "coat of mail." S. R. Driver suggests "a linen corselet," after the Greek (Exodus, 308)

Exodus 28:33 "You shall make on its hem pomegranates of blue and purple and scarlet material, all around on its hem, and bells of gold between them all around:

- And: Ex 39:24-26
- pomegranates: 1Ki 7:18 2Ki 25:17
- bells: Zec 14:20
- [Exodus 28 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

POMEGRANATES AND GOLDEN BELLS

You shall make on its hem pomegranates of blue and purple and scarlet material, all around on its hem, and bells of gold between them all around

Criswell - The bells evidently were so that the people, who could not see into the tabernacle itself, would be able to hear the service of the Lord being performed.

Bush - Round its lower border were tassels made of **blue, purple, and scarlet**, in the form of **pomegranates**, interspersed with small **gold bells**, in order to make a noise when the High Priest went into or came out from the holy place, the reason of which is given below. We are not informed of the exact number of the pomegranates and bells. The Rabbinical writers are mostly unanimous in saying, there were 72 in all, which is doubtless as probable as any other conjecture on the subject. It will be observed, that while the body of the Robe was entirely of blue, this ornamental appendage in the skirts was richly dyed of variegated hues, and must have rendered the whole a vestment of exquisite beauty.

NET Note - pomegranates - This must mean round balls of yarn that looked like pomegranates. The fruit was very common in the land, but there is no indication of the reason for its choice here. Pomegranates are found in decorative schemes in Ugarit, probably as signs of fertility. It may be that here they represent the blessing of God on Israel in the land. The bells that are between them possibly have the intent of drawing God's attention as the priest moves and the bells jingle (anthropomorphic, to be sure), or that the people would know that the priest was still alive and moving inside. Some have suggested that the pomegranate may have recalled the forbidden fruit eaten in the garden (the gems already have referred to the garden), the reason for the priest entering for atonement, and the bells would divert the eye (of God) to remind him of the need. This is possible but far from supportable, since nothing is said of the reason, nor is the fruit in the garden identified.

Bush - Thou shalt make pomegranates. רִמּוֹן rimmon. The term 'pomegranate' is compounded of poma, apple, and granata, grained, from its resemblance, when opened, to an apple full of grain. It grows wild in Palestine, and in other parts of Syria, as well as in Persia, Arabia, Egypt, and the southern parts of Europe, and in some portions of our own country. The fruit is the size of an orange, flattened at the end like an apple; and when cultivated is of a beautiful color and highly grateful flavor. The rind is at first green; but in August and September when the fruit is ripe, it assumes a brownish-red color, becomes thick and hard, yet easily broken. The inside of the pomegranate is of a bright pink, with skinny partitions like those of the orange, filled with a subacid juice and a great multitude of white and purplish red seeds. The flower, which is of a scarlet color, is peculiarly beautiful, and it is probably to the flower that allusion is had, Cant. 4:3, where the royal bridegroom compares the cheeks of his bride to a 'piece of pomegranate,' though others understand by this a section of the fruit itself, the cheeks being called in the Talmudic language, the pomegranates of the face. The annexed cut will give an idea of the form of the fruit and flower of this plant, both which are among the most striking objects of the vegetable world.

Exodus 28:34 a golden bell and a pomegranate, a golden bell and a pomegranate, all around on the hem of the robe.

- Ps 89:15 Song 2:3 4:3,13 6:7,11 8:2 Joh 15:4-8,16 Col 1:5,6,10
- [Exodus 28 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

ALTERNATING BELLS AND POMEGRANATES

a golden bell and a pomegranate, a golden bell and a pomegranate, all around on the hem of the robe

Exodus 28:35 "It shall be on Aaron when he ministers; and its tinkling shall be heard when he enters and leaves the holy place before the LORD, so that he will not die.

- goeth in: Lev 16:2 Heb 9:12
- [Exodus 28 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

THE TINKLING BELL

It shall be on Aaron when he ministers; and its tinkling shall be heard when he enters and leaves the holy place before the LORD, so that he will not die

Guzik - On its hem, between the ornate pomegranates of blue and purple, were bells, so the priest could be heard while ministering before God—if he were to die, the bells would stop ringing and he could be pulled out of the Most Holy Place. The sound of the bells would remind the priest of the solemn nature of his work, and remind him so that he may not die.

Alan Cole - The tinkling bells were presumably so that the people outside could trace the movements of the priest within, who was of course invisible to them. By this they would know that his offering had been accepted, and that he had not been struck dead. "The pomegranates (symbols of fruitfulness) were either hanging as 'bobbles' between the bells, or else embroidered on the fabric."

NET Note - heard - God would hear the bells and be reminded that this priest was in his presence representing the nation and that the priest had followed the rules of the sanctuary by wearing the appropriate robes with their attachments.

Related Resource:

- [Did the high priest have a rope tied to him when he entered the Holy of Holies? | GotQuestions.org](#)

Exodus 28:36 "You shall also make a plate of pure gold and shall engrave on it, like the engravings of a seal, 'Holy to the LORD.'

NET Exodus 28:36 "You are to make a plate of pure gold and engrave on it the way a seal is engraved: "Holiness to the LORD."

NLT Exodus 28:36 "Next make a medallion of pure gold, and engrave it like a seal with these words: HOLY TO THE LORD.

ESV Exodus 28:36 "You shall make a plate of pure gold and engrave on it, like the engraving of a signet, 'Holy to the LORD.'

NIV Exodus 28:36 "Make a plate of pure gold and engrave on it as on a seal: HOLY TO THE LORD.

KJV Exodus 28:36 And thou shalt make a plate of pure gold, and grave upon it, like the engravings of a signet, HOLINESS TO THE LORD.

LXE Exodus 28:36 And thou shalt make a plate of pure gold, and thou shalt grave on it as the graving of a signet, Holiness of the Lord.

ASV Exodus 28:36 And thou shalt make a plate of pure gold, and grave upon it, like the engravings of a signet, HOLY TO JEHOVAH.

CSB Exodus 28:36 "You are to make a pure gold medallion and engrave it, like the engraving of a seal: HOLY TO THE LORD.

NKJ Exodus 28:36 "You shall also make a plate of pure gold and engrave on it, like the engraving of a signet: HOLINESS TO THE LORD.

NRS Exodus 28:36 You shall make a rosette of pure gold, and engrave on it, like the engraving of a signet, "Holy to the LORD."

YLT Exodus 28:36 'And thou hast made a flower of pure gold, and hast opened on it -- openings of a signet -- 'Holy to Jehovah;'

- **engrave on it:** Ex 28:9,11
- **HOLINESS:** Ex 39:30 Lev 8:9 10:3 19:2 Ps 93:5 Eze 43:12 Zec 14:20 Heb 7:26 Heb 12:14 1Pe 1:15,16 2:9 Rev 21:27
- [Exodus 28 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

THE PRIESTS' GARMENT
CLICK TO ENLARGE

HOLY TO THE LORD

You shall also make a plate of pure gold and shall engrave on it, like the engravings of a seal, 'Holy to the LORD. "The turban was a simple wound linen headpiece. More important than the turban itself was the gold plate with the inscription HOLINESS TO THE LORD." The inscription HOLINESS TO THE LORD indicated that first and foremost the high priest was the servant of God, not man. (Guzik) "Hence it was not lawful for the high priest, say the Jews, to put off his bonnet to whomsoever he met, were he never so great a man; lest the same name and glory of God, whose person he sustained, should seem to submit to any man." (Trapp)

NET Note - plate - The word צִיִּט (tsits) seems to mean "a shining thing" and so here a plate of metal. It originally meant "flower," but they could not write on a flower. So it must have the sense of something worn openly, visible, and shining. The Rabbinic tradition says it was two fingers wide and stretched from ear to ear, but this is an attempt to give details that the Law does not give (see B. Jacob, Exodus, 818). The **engraving** was a perpetual reminder of the holiness that was due the LORD (Heb "Yahweh"), that all the clothing, the furnishings, and the activities were to come under that description. This corresponded to the symbolism for the whole nation of binding the law between the eyes. It was to be a perpetual reminder of commitment.

Bush - Thou shalt make a plate of pure gold, &c. Heb. צִיִּט [tzitz](#). Gr. πετάλον, petal, leaf (ED: e.g., "of the Olympian wreath of wild olive" - LSJM). Vulg. 'Lamina,' plate Arab. 'Fillet.' Luth. 'Forehead-plate' The original word צִיִּט [tzitz](#), from צוץ tzutz, to flourish, is generally understood to signify a flower, and the Greek rendering *petal* would seem to be founded upon this sense, implying either that the plate was itself of the form of a flower, or was curiously wrought with flower-work....

Bush - HOLINESS TO THE LORD. Heb. קֹדֶשׁ לַיהוָה **kodesh la-Yehovah**, holiness to Jehovah, or the holiness of Jehovah, according to the Gr. which has ἁγιασμὸς κυρίου, the holiness, or sanctification, of the Lord. This was perhaps the most conspicuous object of the High Priest's dress, and was in fact a significant memento of the character of the entire service in which he sustained so prominent a part. By this inscription the wearer became 'as a city set on a hill, which cannot be hid;' the bright memorial incessantly, though silently, proclaiming to the eye, to the heart, to the conscience, 'a holy God, a holy service, a holy minister, a

holy people, and a holy covenant.' The children of Israel could not look upon it without being reminded of the great principle which Jehovah would have to pervade all his worship, and which is elsewhere so solemnly announced, '**I will be sanctified in them that come nigh me.**' (Lev 10:3+) **And to the saints in all ages it should serve as a remembrancer of the equivalent intimation, that as 'He which hath called us is holy, so are we to be holy in all manner of conversation.'** (1 Peter 1:15⁺, cf 2 Cor 7:1⁺)

Exodus 28:37 "you shall fasten it on a blue cord, and it shall be on the turban; it shall be at the front of the turban.

- **blue:** Ex 28:28,31 Nu 15:38
- the mitre it: Ex 28:4 29:6 39:30,31 Lev 8:9 Zec 3:5
- [Exodus 28 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

you shall fasten it on a blue cord, and it shall be on the turban; it shall be at the front of the turban

Alan Cole - "The turban (literally something wound around: the Talmud tells us that eight yards of material were used)."

George Bush - **And thou shalt put it on a blue lace** An idiomatic expression for 'put upon it.' It was to hang by a ribbon of blue upon the Mitre, as is intimated in the words following, and as represented in the cut. The Talmudists however say, there were three ribbons, one at each ear, and one in the middle passing over the head. We have accordingly so represented it on the smaller figure in the cut, as there is no inconsistency in supposing it to have been the case. **it shall be on the turban** Heb. מצנפת [mitznepheth](#), from צנף *tzanaph*, to wrap, to enwrap, to roll round. The term applies itself at once to the style of head-dress common among the Arabs, Turks, Persians, and other Oriental nations, called the [turban](#), and formed of a number of swathes or foldings of cloth. As nothing is said of the precise form of the High Priest's Mitre, we are doubtless at liberty to suppose it justly represented in the main by an eastern turban, though perhaps of more than usual amplitude.....The Mitre of Aaron merely covered the crown and upper part of the head without descending low upon the forehead, which was left bare for the golden Plate to lie upon it below the edge of the Mitre. In this respect the Mitre of the High Priest differed from the bonnets of the common priests, which having no plate sunk lower on the forehead. In other points the general resemblance was very striking.

Exodus 28:38 "It shall be on Aaron's forehead, and Aaron shall take away the iniquity of the holy things which the sons of Israel consecrate, with regard to all their holy gifts; and it shall always be on his forehead, that they may be accepted before the LORD.

NET Exodus 28:38 It will be on Aaron's forehead, and Aaron will bear the iniquity of the holy things, which the Israelites are to sanctify by all their holy gifts; it will always be on his forehead, for their acceptance before the LORD.

NLT Exodus 28:38 Aaron must wear it on his forehead so he may take on himself any guilt of the people of Israel when they consecrate their sacred offerings. He must always wear it on his forehead so the LORD will accept the people.

ESV Exodus 28:38 It shall be on Aaron's forehead, and Aaron shall bear any guilt from the holy things that the people of Israel consecrate as their holy gifts. It shall regularly be on his forehead, that they may be accepted before the LORD.

NIV Exodus 28:38 It will be on Aaron's forehead, and he will bear the guilt involved in the sacred gifts the Israelites consecrate, whatever their gifts may be. It will be on Aaron's forehead continually so that they will be acceptable to the LORD.

KJV Exodus 28:38 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.

LXE Exodus 28:38 And it shall be on the forehead of Aaron; and Aaron shall bear away the sins of their holy things, all that the children of Israel shall sanctify of every gift of their holy things, and it shall be on the forehead of Aaron continually acceptable for them before the Lord.

ASV Exodus 28:38 And it shall be upon Aaron's forehead, and Aaron shall 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 Jehovah.

CSB Exodus 28:38 It will be on Aaron's forehead so that Aaron may bear the guilt connected with the holy offerings that the Israelites consecrate as all their holy gifts. It is always to be on his forehead, so that they may find acceptance with the LORD.

NKJ Exodus 28:38 "So it shall be on Aaron's forehead, that Aaron may bear the iniquity of the holy things which the children of Israel hallow in all their holy gifts; and it shall always be on his forehead, that they may be accepted before the LORD.

NRS Exodus 28:38 It shall be on Aaron's forehead, and Aaron shall take on himself any guilt incurred in the holy offering that the Israelites consecrate as their sacred donations; it shall always be on his forehead, in order that they may find favor before the LORD.

YLT Exodus 28:38 and it hath been on the forehead of Aaron, and Aaron hath borne the iniquity of the holy things which the sons of Israel do hallow, even all their holy gifts; and it hath been on his forehead continually for a pleasing thing for them before Jehovah.

- **take away the iniquity** : Ex 28:43 Lev 10:17 22:9 Nu 18:1 Isa 53:6,11,12 Eze 4:4-6 Joh 1:29 2Co 5:21 Heb 9:28 1Pe 2:24 3:18
- **accepted**: Lev 1:4 22:27 23:11 Isa 56:7 60:7 Eph 1:6 1Pe 2:5
- [Exodus 28 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

It shall be on Aaron's forehead, and Aaron shall take away the iniquity of the holy things which the sons of Israel consecrate, with regard to all their holy gifts - The idea of the line is that the people will consecrate as holy things gifts they bring to the sanctuary.

Guzik - Even the gifts and sacrifices Aaron and the other priests brought before the Lord were touched with iniquity. Yet when God's appointed priest in God brought them in God's appointed way, God accepted them.

and it shall always be on his forehead, that they may be accepted before the LORD- "Holiness—not as a legalistic list of rules, but in the power of a life separated to God—is essential for anyone who will appear before God. Hebrews 12:14 reinforced this principle: "Pursue peace with all people, and holiness, without which no one will see the Lord."

NET Note - the iniquity of the holy things- The construction "the iniquity of the holy things" is difficult. "Holy things" is explained in the passage by all the gifts the people bring and consecrate to Yahweh. But there will inevitably be iniquity involved. U. Cassuto explains that Aaron "will atone for all the transgressions committed in connection with the order of the service, the purity of the consecrated things, or the use of the holy gifts, for the declaration engraved on the plate will prove that everything was intended to be holy to the Lord, and if aught was done irregularly, the intention at least was good" (Exodus, 385).

Bush on shall take away the iniquity of the holy things- The implication plainly is, that there might be, unconsciously perhaps to the offerers, some defects in the oblations presented, which were graciously pardoned—a frequent sense of borne or carried in the Scriptures—by the intercession of the High Priest appearing before God perfectly attired and crowned in the manner presented. The efficacy, however, of this intermediation on the part of Aaron appears to be in some way more especially concentrated in this resplendent inscribed plate upon his forehead, and this we think can only be understood by reference to the typical character which the High Priest sustained. Christ, we well know, is represented as 'bearing the sins,' (Heb 9:23) i. e. the punishment due to the sins of men. Aaron in his office was a type of Christ, and accordingly is represented not only as making an atonement in general for the sins of the people, by the sacrifices offered, but also as making an atonement for the imperfections of the atonement itself. This was done, it appears, by what we may term the memorial and typical virtue of the shining plate of the Mitre, upon the inscription of which God is supposed to look and thereby be reminded of that perfect 'holiness to the Lord' which should so preeminently distinguish the great Mediator whom Aaron represented. The following passages must be taken in this connexion in order fully to convey the import of the language, Ps. 84:9, 'Behold, O God our shield, and look upon the face of thine anointed.' Ps. 132:9, 10, 'Let thy priests be clothed with righteousness; and let thy saints shout for joy. For thy servant David's sake, turn not away the face of thine anointed.' i. e. be propitious by looking upon the face; regard the significance of the golden plate. The prayers embracing this expression appear to have a special allusion to the imperfections of the holy things of the people of God.

Exodus 28:39 "You shall weave the tunic of checkered work of fine linen, and shall make a turban of fine linen, and you shall make a sash, the work of a weaver.

- **embroider**: Ex 28:4

- the girdle: Ex 28:8
- needlework: Ps 45:14
- [Exodus 28 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

THE PRIESTS' GARMENT
CLICK TO ENLARGE

You shall weave the tunic of checkered work of fine linen, and shall make a turban of fine linen, and you shall make a sash, the work of a weaver - The tunic and the turban were both woven from fine linen, cooler in the desert heat.

Bush - You shall weave the tunic of checkered work of fine linen. Heb. כתנת [kethoneth](#). This was the innermost of the sacerdotal vestments, being a long robe with sleeves to the wrists, which sat close to the body, and extended down to the feet. This garment was not peculiar to the High Priest, but was similar to that worn by the other priests while officiating. What became of the tunic of the High Priests we do not know; but that of the common priests was unravelled when old, and made into wicks for the lamps burnt in the feast of tabernacles.

NET Note - weave - It is difficult to know how to translate וְשִׁבְּטָהּ ([véshibbatsta](#)); it is a Piel perfect with the vav (ו) consecutive, and so equal to the imperfect of instruction. Some have thought that this verb describes a type of weaving and that the root may indicate that the cloth had something of a pattern to it by means of alternate weaving of the threads. It was the work of a weaver (39:27) and not so detailed as certain other fabrics (26:1), but it was more than plain weaving (S. R. Driver, Exodus, 310). Here, however, it may be that the fabric is assumed to be in existence and that the action has to do with sewing (C. Houtman, Exodus, 3:475, 517).

Bush - you shall make a sash (girdle), the work of a weaver. Heb. אבנט [abnet](#). This was a piece of fine twined linen, embroidered with blue, purple, and scarlet, and which went round the body. **Josephus** says it was embroidered with flowers; and also states that it was four fingers broad, and that, after being wound twice around the body, it was fastened in front, and the ends allowed to hang down to the feet, on common occasions; but that, when officiating at the altar, the priest threw them over his left shoulder. **Maimonides** says the Girdle was three fingers broad, and thirty-two cubits long; being, as its length necessarily implies, wound many times round the body. As this Girdle was so narrow, its length, if this statement be correct, will not seem extraordinary to those who are acquainted with the ordinary length of Oriental girdles, and the number of times they are carried around the body. The **Girdle** was worn over the embroidered coat by the common priests, to whom this coat, unlike the attire of the High Priest, formed the outer garment.

Exodus 28:40 "For Aaron's sons you shall make tunics; you shall also make sashes for them, and you shall make caps for them, for glory and for beauty.

- **Aaron's:** Ex 28:4 39:27,29,41 Lev 8:13 Eze 44:17,18
- **caps:** Ex 29:9
- **glory:** Ex 28:2 1Ti 2:9,10 6:9-11 Tit 2:7,10 1Pe 3:3,4 5:5
- [Exodus 28 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

For Aaron's sons you shall make tunics; you shall also make sashes for them, and you shall make caps for them, for glory and for beauty - These garments were also for glory and beauty but less ornate than the garment of the High Priest.

Guzik on less ornate garments for Aaron's sons - This is because the regular priests, though important, had a far lesser office than the High Priest—and were appropriately clothed for this lower position.. Even so, the High Priest's clothing, in total, speaks more of Jesus' glory and beauty than of ours. We are (or should be) content with simple linen robes.

NET Note - caps - This refers to a band of linen wrapped around the head, forming something like a brimless convex cap, resembling something like a half egg. It refers to the headgear of ordinary priests only (see S. R. Driver, Exodus, 310–11).

Bush - Bonnets (caps). Heb. מגבעות [migbaoth](#). Gr. κίθαρεις, tiaras. Vulg. 'Tiaras.' As a different term is used to designate the article here mentioned from that which is applied to the Mitre of the High Priest, there was probably some difference in the form; but what it was precisely it is difficult to say According to the Jewish writers the Bonnets came down lower upon the forehead than the Mitre, and rose up higher like an hillock, as the original is derived from גֶּבַע ge'ba, a hillock, a knoll. In other words they were of a more conical shape than the Mitre This, however, does not convey a very distinct idea, and we must refer the reader to the accompanying cut for a view, which is at best conjectural, of the probable difference between them.

Bush - For glory and for beauty. Nothing is more obvious than that the priestly attire was to be so ordered as to present an air of impressive splendor and gorgeousness, that a becoming reverence might be inspired towards the persons of those who wore them.

But to us, they present merely a gaudy spectacle, a showy pageant, except so far as we fix our eye upon their typical import. Here, and here only, in the **glory** of grace and the **beauty** of holiness, which they shadowed forth, do we behold the true **glory** and **beauty** of these sacred robes. It is only as the light of the substance is reflected upon the symbol, that the symbol itself can at all shine in our eyes. But when we discern in these beauteous robes an image of the spiritual attire of the saints, the true royal hierarchy, who are made at once kings and priests unto God, we feel no restraint in letting our admiration go forth towards the external adornments.

Exodus 28:41 "You shall put them on Aaron your brother and on his sons with him; and you shall anoint them and ordain them and consecrate them, that they may serve Me as priests."

NET Exodus 28:41 "You are to clothe them— your brother Aaron and his sons with him— and anoint them and ordain them and set them apart as holy, so that they may minister as my priests.

NLT Exodus 28:41 Clothe your brother, Aaron, and his sons with these garments, and then anoint and ordain them. Consecrate them so they can serve as my priests.

ESV Exodus 28:41 And you shall put them on Aaron your brother, and on his sons with him, and shall anoint them and ordain them and consecrate them, that they may serve me as priests.

NIV Exodus 28:41 After you put these clothes on your brother Aaron and his sons, anoint and ordain them. Consecrate them so they may serve me as priests.

KJV Exodus 28:41 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.

LXE Exodus 28:41 And thou shalt put them on Aaron thy brother, and his sons with him, and thou shalt anoint them and fill their hands: and thou shalt sanctify them, that they may minister to me in the priest's office.

ASV Exodus 28:41 And thou shalt put them upon Aaron thy brother, and upon 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.

CSB Exodus 28:41 Put these on your brother Aaron and his sons; then anoint, ordain, and consecrate them, so that they may serve Me as priests.

NKJ Exodus 28:41 "So you shall put them on Aaron your brother and on his sons with him. You shall anoint them, consecrate them, and sanctify them, that they may minister to Me as priests.

NRS Exodus 28:41 You shall put them on your brother Aaron, and on his sons with him, and shall anoint them and ordain them and consecrate them, so that they may serve me as priests.

YLT Exodus 28:41 and thou hast clothed Aaron thy brother with them, and his sons with him, and hast anointed them, and hast consecrated their hand, and hast sanctified them, and they have been priests to Me.

- anoint them: Ex 29:7 30:23-30 40:15 Lev 10:7 Isa 10:27 61:1 Joh 3:34 2Co 1:21,22 1Jn 2:20,27
- and consecrate them: Heb. fill their hand, Ex 29:9,24,35 Lev 8:1-36 Nu 3:3 Eze 43:26 Heb 5:4 7:28
- minister: Ex 28:1,4
- [Exodus 28 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

PREPARATION FOR SERVICE

ANOINTING, ORDINATION, CONSECRATION

You shall put them on Aaron your brother and on his sons with him; and you shall anoint them and ordain them and consecrate them, that they may serve Me as priests (see [kahan](#)) - Ordain means to fill the hand full. Morgan says the idea of filling of the open hand, "signifies the perfect equipment of the anointed one for the discharge of that ministry." **Consecrate** means to "set them apart as holy."

Guzik - Anoint describes the application of the sacred oil upon the head. In the consistent idiom of the Bible, it represents the filling and continual reliance upon the power and work of the Holy Spirit.

Morgan - Consecrate "Is the translation of two Hebrew words, meaning the **filling of the open hand**, and signifies the perfect equipment of the anointed one for the discharge of that ministry."

NET Note - The instructions in this verse anticipate chap. 29, as well as the ordination ceremony described in Lev 8 and 9. The

anointing of Aaron is specifically required in the Law, for he is to be the High Priest. The expression "ordain them" might also be translated as "install them" or "consecrate them"; it literally reads "and fill their hands," an expression for the consecration offering for priesthood in Lev 8:33. The final instruction to sanctify them will involve the ritual of the atoning sacrifices to make the priests acceptable in the sanctuary.

NET Note - ordain them - Heb "fill their hand." As a result of this installation ceremony they will be officially designated for the work. It seems likely that the concept derives from the notion of putting the priestly responsibilities under their control (i.e., "filling their hands" with work). See note on the phrase "ordained seven days" in Lev 8:33.

Anoint (04886) (**masah/maschah**) is a verb which basically means to smear something on, to rub with oil, to anoint (as in setting one apart for office or function - Elisha as prophet = 1Ki 19:16, kings for office = 1Sa 9:16 = Saul, 1Sa 16:12 = David, 1Ki 1:39 = Solomon) and by implication to sanctify (set aside for sacred purpose) or consecrate (dedicate for a sacred purpose) (altar = Nu 7:10; vessels for worship - Ex 29:36 = "you shall anoint it to consecrate it;" Ex 30:26, 40:9-10). In the first OT use, Jacob **"anointed"** a pillar" and made a vow to God (Ge 31:13; Lxx = alepho = to anoint by applying a liquid - Jesus' feet were anointed with perfume - Lk 7:38, 46). **Baker** adds that "The anointing was done with oil to symbolize the elevation of the person to a new position such as priest or king (2Sa 5:3)."

Masah is used of Aaron being **anointed** (Ex 28:41+, Ex 29:7+, Ex 29:29+) and is translated in the [Septuagint \(Lxx\)](#) with [chrio](#) which means to anoint and in the NT only referred to an anointing by God of someone, setting them apart for special service under divine direction (2Co 1:21). In Lk 4:18+ **chrio** refers to the anointing of Jesus for His ministry (quoting from Isa 61:1+ which also uses chrio to translate masah) **Chrio** also refers to Jesus' being anointed in Hebrew 1:9+ **"YOU HAVE LOVED RIGHTEOUSNESS AND HATED LAWLESSNESS; THEREFORE GOD, YOUR GOD, HAS ANOINTED YOU WITH THE OIL OF GLADNESS ABOVE YOUR COMPANIONS."**

Chrio is used twice in Acts of Jesus:

(Luke 4:18+) "THE SPIRIT OF THE LORD IS UPON ME, BECAUSE HE ANOINTED ME TO PREACH THE GOSPEL TO THE POOR. HE HAS SENT ME TO PROCLAIM RELEASE TO THE CAPTIVES, AND RECOVERY OF SIGHT TO THE BLIND, TO SET FREE THOSE WHO ARE OPPRESSED,

(Acts 4:27+) "For truly in this city there were gathered together against Your holy servant Jesus, Whom You **anointed**, both Herod and Pontius Pilate, along with the Gentiles and the peoples of Israel,

(Acts 10:38+) "You know of Jesus of Nazareth, how **God anointed Him with the Holy Spirit** and with power, and how He went about doing good and healing all who were oppressed by the devil, for God was with Him.

Believer's have an anointing, one using [chrio](#) and the other two using a derivative [chrisma](#).

2 Cor 1:21-22 Now He who establishes us with you in Christ and **anointed** ([chrio](#)) us is God, Who also sealed us and gave us the Spirit in our hearts as a pledge.

1 John 2:20, 27+ But you have an **anointing** ([chrisma](#) from [chrio](#)) from the Holy One, and you all know. (2:27+) As for you, the **anointing** ([chrisma](#) from [chrio](#)) which you received from Him abides in you, and you have no need for anyone to teach you; but as His **anointing** ([chrisma](#) from [chrio](#)) teaches you about all things, and is true and is not a lie, and just as it has taught you, you abide in Him.

MacArthur comments on the First John passages - Two characteristics mark genuine Christians in contrast to the antichrists. First, the Holy Spirit ("the anointing," 1 John 2:27) guards them from error (cf. Ac 10:38; 2Co 1:21). Christ as the Holy One (Lk 4:34; Ac 3:14) imparts the Holy Spirit as their illuminating guardian from deception. Second, the Holy Spirit guides the believer into knowing "all things" (Jn 14:26; 16:13). True Christians have a built-in lie detector and persevere in the truth. Those who remain in heresy and apostasy manifest the fact that they were never genuinely born again (cf. 1 Jn 2:19).

Masah described the "holy **anointing** oil (ingredients Ex 30:23-24), a perfume mixture, the work of a perfumer; it shall be a holy **anointing** oil." (Ex 30:25).

Masah also referred to common things such as painting a house (Jer 22:14), applying oil to the body (Amos 6:6), rubbing oil on a shield (Isa 21:5) spreading oil on wafers (Ex. 29:2), spreading oil on unleavened bread (Ex 29:2).

Victor Hamilton notes that "There is a fourfold theological significance of mashach. First, to anoint an individual or an object indicated an authorized separation for God's service. Moses anointed Aaron "to sanctify him" (Lev 8:12;cf. Ex 29:36 for the altar). Note the expression "anointed to the Lord" (1Chr 29:22). Masah, while representing a position of honor, also represents increased responsibility. Both Saul and David are called to account for their sin with the reminder. "I (the Lord) anointed (mashach) you king" (1Sa 15:17; 2Sa 12:7). Secondly, though the agent might be the priest or prophet, writers speak of anointed ones as those whom the Lord anointed (e.g. 1Sa 10:1; 2Sa 12:7). Such language underscores that it is God who is the authorizing agent; that the anointed is inviolable (1Sa 24:8ff.); and that the anointed one is to be held in special regard (cf. 1Sa 26:9ff.). Thirdly, one may infer that divine enablement was understood as accompanying mashach. Of both Saul and David it is said in connection with their anointing that "the Spirit of God came mightily upon him" (1Sa 10:6ff; 1Sa 16:13ff.)." Finally, mashach was associated with the coming promised Deliverer, Jesus (cf. Isa 61:1). (TWOT)

Masah is used most frequently in the Pentateuch and the historical books and only twice in the prophets, although both uses are notable as both refer to Messianic prophecies...

Isa 61:1+ The Spirit of the Lord GOD is upon me, Because the LORD has **anointed** me To bring good news to the afflicted; He has sent me to bind up the brokenhearted, To proclaim liberty to captives, And freedom to prisoners;

Dan 9:24+ "Seventy weeks have been decreed for your people and your holy city, to finish the transgression, to make an end of sin, to make atonement for iniquity, to bring in everlasting righteousness, to seal up vision and prophecy, and to **anoint** the most holy [place].

Consecrate (Sanctify, make holy) ([06942](#))(**qadash**) means to set apart for a specific use. Removed from common use. To be holy. To show one's self to be holy. To consecrate or dedicate. To set apart a person or thing from all common or secular purposes to some religious use. Everything consecrated to God was separated from all profane use. **Webster's Dictionary** definition #2 for consecrate is convicting - "make or declare sacred; esp **devote irrevocably to worship of God** by a solemn ceremony." **Qadash** could refer to anything reserved exclusively for God (Ex 13:2, 12, 13; Nu 18:15) **Qadash** signifies an act or a state in which people or things are set aside for use in the worship of God, i.e., they are consecrated or made sacred for that purpose. They must be withheld from ordinary (secular) use and treated with special care as something which belongs to God (Ex 29:21). Otherwise, defilement makes the sanctified object unusable (cf. Dt 22:9; Eze 44:19; 46:20).

The Septuagint renders qadash with [hagiozo](#) which means to set apart from profane and unto the work of God. This is the effect of the prayer of Jesus and the Word of Truth in John 17:17. It is used of believers to describe their usefulness to the LORD in **2 Timothy 2:21+** "Therefore, if a man cleanses himself from these things, he will be a vessel for honor, **sanctified** ([perfect tense](#)), useful to the Master, prepared for every good work."

THOUGHT - This last use begs the question -- is there anything in your life from which you need to make a separation so that you might be useful to the Lord and prepared for every good work. It is the same idea as abiding in the Vine (in Christ). We cannot be abiding in unholy and abiding in holy and any "work" we try to do will effect nothing of eternal value! (read Jesus' words in John 15:5).

Qadash is used with various objects:

- people of Israel - Ex 19:10, 14; Joshua 7:13
- altar in the Temple - Ex 29:36; 1Ki 8:64
- priests - Ex 28:41; 29:1; 1Sa 7:1
- mountain - Ex 19:23
- Sabbath - Ge 2:3; Ex 20:8
- new building - Neh 3:1
- fast - Joel 1:14; 2:15

Exodus 28:42 "You shall make for them linen breeches to cover their bare flesh; they shall reach from the loins even to the thighs.

- breeches: Ex 20:26 39:28 Lev 6:10 16:4 Eze 44:18 Rev 3:18
- [Exodus 28 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

You shall make for them linen breeches to cover their bare ("naked") flesh; they shall reach from the loins even to the thighs - Linen was cool in the desert.

Adam Clarke has an interesting remark on why the body was to be totally covered - This was probably a reaction to the nakedness of many pagan priests while performing their rituals. "This command had in view the necessity of purity and decency in every part of the Divine worship, in opposition to the shocking indecency of the pagan worship in general, in which the priests often ministered naked, as in the sacrifices to Bacchus."

George Bush - You shall make for them linen breeches Heb. מכסֵּי בד miknesē bad; more properly linen drawers, which though last mentioned were the first put on. 'The ancient Jews, like the modern Arabs and some other Orientals, did not generally wear drawers or trousers. **Maimonides** says that the drawers worn by the priests reached from above the navel to the knee, and had no opening before or behind, but were drawn up around the body by strings, like a purse. This resembles the linen drawers worn by the Turks and Persians at the present day, except that they reach rather below the knee. They are very wide altogether, and when drawn on are fastened very tight around the body by means of a string or girdle, which runs through a hem in the upper border.' Pict. Bible

In concluding this account of the priestly robes, it may be useful to repeat that the robes common to all were—the Drawers, the Embroidered Coat, the Girdle, and the Turban; but, besides this, the **High Priest wore the Ephod, the Robe of the Ephod with its Bells and Pomegranates, the Breast-plate over the Ephod, the Shoulder-pieces of onyx-stone, and the engraved ornament of pure gold in front of his turban**. The Rabbins seem to have the sanction of the Scripture for their opinion, that the robes were so essential a part of the priestly character, that without them a priest had no more right than private persons, or even foreigners, to officiate at the altar. It seems that the old robes of the priests, as already mentioned in the Note on v. 39, were unravelled, to be burnt as wicks for the lamps at the feast of tabernacles. What was done with those of the High Priest is not known; but analogy would seem to render it probable that they were similarly used for the lamps in the tabernacle. We may remark also that as **no shoes or sandals are mentioned among the sacred vestments**, it is supposed the priests always ministered barefoot. This is perhaps confirmed by the fact that Moses, before the symbol of Jehovah at the burning bush, was commanded to put off his shoes. (Ex 3:5)

Exodus 28:43 "They shall be on Aaron and on his sons when they enter the tent of meeting, or when they approach the altar to minister in the holy place, so that they do not incur guilt and die. It shall be a statute forever to him and to his descendants after him.

- **approach the altar:** Ex 20:26
- **do not incur guilt and die:** Lev 5:1,17 20:19,20 22:9 Nu 9:13 18:22 Mt 22:12,13
- **and die :** Ex 27:21 Lev 17:7
- [Exodus 28 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

They shall be on Aaron and on his sons when they enter the tent of meeting, or when they approach the altar to minister in the holy place, so that they do not incur guilt and die - They could not enter the tent of meeting without the priestly attire.

Paul describes (many more passages could be quoted) the believer's eternal attire:

He (GOD THE FATHER) made Him (CHRIST) Who knew no sin to be sin on our behalf (SUBSTITUTIONARY ATONEMENT), so that (PURPOSE?) we might become the **righteousness** of God in Him (CHRIST). (2 Cor 5:21_±)

"But by His doing you are in (IN COVENANT, IN ONENESS WITH) Christ Jesus, Who became to us wisdom from God, and **righteousness** and sanctification, and redemption,.." (1 Cor 1:30)

It shall be a statute forever to him and to his descendants after him - Forever for the Levitical priests, but now forever for every NT priest! We can never enter into the presence of Jehovah unless we are clothed in the righteousness of Christ!

NET Note - guilt and die - The text has וְלֹא יָשׁוּ׳אֲוֹן (vélo'-yis'u 'avon vametu). The imperfect tense here introduces a final clause, yielding a purpose or result translation ("in order that" or "so that"). The last verb is the perfect tense with the vav consecutive, and so it too is equal to a final imperfect—but it would show the result of bearing the iniquity. The idea is that if they approached the holy things with a lack of modesty, perhaps like the pagans who have nakedness and sexuality as part of the religious ritual, they would pollute the holy things, and it would be reckoned to them for iniquity and they would die.

NET Note - So the priests were to make intercession for the people, give decisions from God's revealed will, enter his presence in

purity, and represent holiness to Yahweh. The clothing of the priests provided for these functions, but in a way that brought honor and dignity. A priest was, therefore, to serve in purity, holiness, and fear (Malachi). There is much that can be derived from this chapter to form principles of spiritual leadership, but the overall point can be worded this way: Those whom God selects to minister to the congregation through intercessory prayer, divine counsel, and sacrificial worship, must always represent the holiness of Yahweh in their activities and demeanor.

David Guzik - A Contrast between Jesus' clothing when He accomplished His great priestly work and the garments of the High Priest

1. Jesus wore no beautiful ephod—only a purple robe for mocking.
2. Jesus had no precious gems were on His shoulders, only a cross that we deserved.
3. Jesus had no breastplate with “Israel on His heart,” yet He died of a broken heart for Israel—and all of mankind.
4. As the High Priest, Jesus had a seamless robe that was not torn, but it was stripped away at the cross.
5. Jesus heard no delicate sound of bells proving that the High Priest was alive, only the sound of pounding nails ensuring our High Priest's death.
6. Jesus wore no fine linen turban, rather a painful crown of thorns.
7. Jesus had no headplate reading HOLINESS TO THE LORD, but a life and death showing nothing but holiness to the LORD!
8. Jesus had no linen trousers to hide His nakedness, rather He bore our sins on the cross in a naked shame.