

Exodus Chapter 28 Continued

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

By the rings at the lower ends of it, as it was by the rings at the upper ends of it to the shoulder pieces of the ephod. Or "lift it up", so some interpret it as if it was said, they shall lift up the breastplate to join it with the ephod that is above it.

"Unto the rings of the ephod with a lace of blue": This blue lace was put both into the rings of the breastplate and into the rings of the ephod, and so being tied in a knot, fastened them together. As the shoulder pieces of the ephod and the breastplate were coupled above, with wreathen chains of gold put into rings: now this was done.

"That it may be above the curious girdle of the ephod": That the breastplate might be above it, or else the lace of blue.

"And that the breastplate be not loosed from the ephod": But be kept tight and close to it by the wreathen chains above, and by the knots of blue lace below. Which may denote the conjunction of the prophetic and priestly offices in Christ. The former being signified by the breastplate of judgment, in which the Urim and Thummim were, and the latter by the ephod. Or else the union of the saints to Christ. The bond of which is everlasting love, from which there can be no separation. This union can never be dissolved, his people can never be loosed from him, they are members of his body, and one spirit with him.

Here we see this lace strip of blue showing spiritually that the heavenly is what holds all of this together.

Exodus 28:29 "And Aaron shall bear the names of the children of Israel in the breastplate of judgment upon his heart, when he goeth in unto the holy [place], for a memorial before the LORD continually."

"Aaron," Shall not only bear the names of the twelve tribes upon his shoulders (verse 12), but also upon his heart. He shall thus make a double presentation of them to God continually. The explanation is somewhat fanciful, that the names on the shoulder stones indicated that the people were somewhat of a burden to him, while those on the stones of the breast plate, being upon his breast, indicated that he bore them affection. The breast and the shoulder were probably chosen as being conspicuous and honorable positions.

This is just telling us over again, that a minister (then and now), must keep his people upon his heart and think of their needs before his own.

Exodus 28:30 "And thou shalt put in the breastplate of judgment the Urim and the Thummim; and they shall be upon Aaron's heart, when he goeth in before the LORD: and

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

"Urim and the Thummim": The purpose for the "breastplate" was for "judgment" (verse 15). The Urim and Thummim were deposited in the pouch and functioned as sacred lots used as the means of making judgments (verse 30). The word Urim begins with the first letter of the Hebrew alphabet and Thummim begins with the last letter. This may imply the lots were restricted to giving either positive or negative responses to questions asked of them. A good translation of the terms into English is "curses and perfections," meaning that if Urim dominated when the lots were cast, the answer would be "no"; but if Thummim dominated, the answer would be "yes."

The passages in which the terms Urim and the Thummim appear (Lev. 8:8; Num. 27:21; Deut. 33:8; 1 Sam. 28:6; Ezra 2:63; Neh. 7:65), and those which record inquiries of the Lord when a High-Priest with the ephod was present (Joshua 9:14; Judges 1:1-2; 20:18; 1 Sam. 10:22; 23:2, 4, 10-12; 1 Chron. 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;
- (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" or "no" response.

We do not know how many there were, what they looked like, or exactly how they were used. There were numerous instances in the Old Testament where they were employed, even though it was not always explicitly stated in such cases. It was not like throwing dice, because the results were not determined by chance. The priest knew that the lots' outcome was "of the Lord" (Prov. 16:33).

(Acts 1:23-26), is the last mention of a divine decision mediated through lots. When the Holy Spirit came in power on the Day of Pentecost (Acts 2:1-4), the need for the casting of lots disappeared.

This concern for his people was continued, as long as he was the high priest. This tells our pastors of our churches today of the great responsibility they have toward their members.

Verses 31-39: The "hem" of Aaron's robe was interspersed with golden "bells." The sound of the bells indicated to those outside the Most Holy Place that the high priest was alive, he had not been consumed by the Lord's anger while fulfilling his duties.

Verses 31-35 Explain about the priest's outer garment.

Exodus 28:31 "And thou shalt make the robe of the ephod all [of] blue."

This was next under the ephod, and reached down to the knees, without sleeves, and was put on over the head, having holes on the sides to put the arms through. Or, as Maimonides describes it, was not sewed together on the sides at all. The hole on the top, through which the head was put, was carefully bound about that it might not tear in the putting on. The bells gave notice to the people in the outer court when he went into the holy place to burn incense, that they might then apply themselves to their devotions at the same time (Luke 1:10). In token of their concurrence with him, and their hopes of the ascent of their prayers to God in the virtue of the incense he offered. Aaron must come near to minister in the garments that were appointed him, so that he doesn't die. It is at his peril if he attends otherwise than according to the institution.

Exodus 28:32 "And there shall be a hole in the top of it, in the midst thereof: it shall have a binding of woven work round about the hole of it, as it were the hole of an habergeon, that it be not rent."

“Hole of a habergeon”: A flexible metal covering used by the Egyptians for protection in battle.

This means that around the neck where the head went through was not left raw, where the linen garment could ravel away, but had binding around the opening so it wouldn't ravel out.

Exodus 28:33 "And [beneath] upon the hem of it thou shalt make pomegranates [of] blue, and [of] purple, and [of] scarlet, round about the hem thereof; and bells of gold between them round about:"

“Bells of gold”: The sound of the tinkling bells sewn on the hem of the High-Priest's robe signaled those waiting outside the Holy Place that their representative ministering before the Lord as still alive and moving about, fulfilling his duties.

Exodus 28:34 "A golden bell and a pomegranate, a golden bell and a pomegranate, upon the hem of the robe round about."

The bells were hung between the pomegranates, which were said to have amounted to seventy-two. And the use of them seems to have been to announce to the people when the high priest entered the most holy place, that they might accompany him with their prayers. And also, to remind himself to be attired in his official dress, to minister without which was death.

These "pomegranates" which were the fruit of the land of the Hebrews, represented to God that the high priests came from the people. These "pomegranates" on the special robe of the priest were red, blue and purple. This could be associated with the fruit of the Spirit spiritually. This robe of peace that the high priest wore had these pomegranates, which was the fruit of the land, on it. This is peaceable fruit. Jesus, who brought peace and rooted the Christian in love, expects us to bear fruit. These "golden bells" brought a beautiful melody as he walked. In fact, it served two purposes.

The beautiful melody was pleasing unto God. If the high priest was not accepted of God when he entered the Holy of Holies and God killed him, they could tell that the bells had stopped chiming and knew he was dead. They could drag him out with the rope tied to his leg. It seemed also, that

if God didn't hear these bells ringing when they came in, He was angry with the priest. The high priest wore this special garment, when he went to speak to God for the people. The garment he wore on Day of Atonement when he went into the Holy of Holies, had no ornamentation. The shed blood that he carried in and put on the mercy seat, was what kept the high priest safe.

Exodus 28:35 "And it shall be upon Aaron to minister: and his sound shall be heard when he goeth in unto the holy [place] before the LORD, and when he cometh out, that he die not."

Its sound, i.e. the sound of the robe, that the people, who stood without, when they heard the sound of the bells within the tabernacle, might have a sensible proof that the high priest was performing the sacred rite in their behalf, though he was out of their sight.

"That he die not": The bells also bore witness that the high priest was, at the time of his administration, duly attired in the dress of his office. And so was not incurring the sentence of death (see Exodus 28:43). An infraction of the laws for the service of the sanctuary was not merely an act of disobedience; it was a direct insult to the presence of Yahweh from His ordained minister, and justly incurred a sentence of capital punishment (compare Exodus 30:21; Lev. 8:35; 10:7).

This was just saying that he must not come in unto God without God being aware he was coming and going. These bells sounded with every step and he could be kept up with easily with this sound.

Verses 36-38: "Mitre": The headdress carried the declaration essential to worship and priestly representation. Namely the holiness of the Lord, and in so doing reminded the High-Priest and all others that their approach to God must be done with reverence.

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."

The plate, though a mere ornament of the mitre, was, at once, its most conspicuous and its most significant feature. Placed directly in front, right over the forehead, and probably of burnished gold, it would attract universal attention, and catch the eye even more than the breast plate. Its position made it "the culminating point of the whole priestly attire", and its inscription gave to that position extraordinary force and significance.

For it taught that "holiness to the Lord" is the very highest crown and truest excellence of religion. That to which all ceremonial is meant to conduce, that without which all the paraphernalia of worship must ever be in God's sight a mockery. It set this truth conspicuously before the eyes, and was apt to impress it upon the hearts of all. It taught the high priest himself not to rest upon outward forms, but to aim in his own person, and teach the people to aim continually, at internal holiness. The extreme importance of this, causes the putting forward at once of the plate and its inscription before any account of the "mitre" is given.

Exodus 28:37 "And thou shalt put it on a blue lace, that it may be upon the mitre; upon the forefront of the mitre it shall be."

Compare (Exodus 39:31), where we read "they tied unto it a lace of blue." Probably the two ends of the plate were perforated, and a blue lace or cord passed through the holes and tied to the plate, which was then put in front of the turban and kept in place by the two cords being tied together at the back of the head.

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."

It shall be upon his forehead, that Aaron may bear the iniquity of the sacred things. Imperfection attaches to everything that man does; and even the sacrifices that the people offered to God required to be atoned for and purified. It was granted to the high priest in his official capacity to make the necessary atonement, and so render the people's gifts acceptable. For this purpose, he was invested with an official holiness, proclaimed by the inscription upon the plate, which exhibited him as the type and representative of that perfectly Holy One. Through whom alone can any real atonement be made to the Father? It shall be always upon his forehead, i.e., whenever he ministers.

The Hebrew word translated "mitre", is an unusual word in that it was used only for the name of the high priest's headdress. This headdress of linen was very similar to a turban. This ribbon that went around the head held this metal plate that proclaimed "HOLINESS TO THE LORD", in the front of the headdress. This "mitre", worn in the presence of God seems to show the high priest's humility before God. The linen this was made of symbolized righteousness. The person representing the people to God must have righteousness. They must be in right standing with God. This "mitre" could be showing Jesus' power and authority.

(Ezekiel chapter 21:25-27), tells of some person who really is evil having a mitre or diadem on, proclaiming to be the leader of God's kingdom when, in fact, he is the antichrist. He is told to remove this headdress of authority. It appears that he will be of Hebrew descent and have great church power, as well as world power. At any rate, this mitre shows power and authority. The metal plate, which proclaimed Holiness to the Lord, showed in the Spirit that the Lord must be on the mind of the high priest always. The forehead is a symbol of man's mind or will. A person with the mind of Christ proclaims HOLINESS TO THE LORD. The world calls people crazy who believe in God. The Christian's mind should be stayed on God. Jesus is the greatest high priest of all time.

Hebrews 4:14 "Seeing then that we have a great high priest, that is passed into the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold fast [our] profession."

Hebrews 7:26-27 "For such a high priest became us, [who is] holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners, and made higher than the heavens;" "Who needeth not daily, as those high priests, to offer up sacrifice, first for his own sins, and then for the people's: for this he did once, when he offered up himself."

Exodus 28:39 "And thou shalt embroider the coat of fine linen, and thou shalt make the mitre [of] fine linen, and thou shalt make the girdle [of] needlework."

A long tunic or cassock. Josephus says that it was worn next the skin, that it reached to the feet, and that it had closely fitting sleeves. The verb translated "embroider" appears rather to mean weave in diaper work. The tissue consisted of threads of one and the same color diapered in checkers, or in some small figure.

The girdle of needlework": The girdle of the work of the embroiderer (Exodus 26:1; 35:35). The word translated "girdle" is different from that so rendered (see the note in Exodus 28:80), and is probably Egyptian. Josephus says that it was wound several times round the body, and that its ends ordinarily hung down to the feet, but was thrown over the shoulder when the priest was engaged in his work.

“Coat (or tunic) ... girdle”: An undergarment.

This is saying that all of this was worked in fine linen, a cunning needlework.

Verses 40-43: Special garments were also made for Aaron’s sons. The “trousers” protected the priests from unintentional immodesty as they led the people in worship.

The rest of the priests also had distinctive dress to wear, visually setting them apart from the ordinary citizen. Failure to comply with the dress regulations when serving in the sanctuary brought death. Such a severe consequence stressed the importance of their duties and should have motivated the priests not to consider their priestly role as a mundane, routine, and thankless task.

Exodus 28:40 "And for Aaron's sons thou shalt make coats, and thou shalt make for them girdles, and bonnets shalt thou make for them, for glory and for beauty."

I.e., linen tunics like that of the high priest already described (see the note on Exodus 28:39), but not woven in any peculiar fashion.

"Girdles": Perhaps similar to the inner girdle of the high priest, but nowhere described.

"Bonnets": Rather, caps. Plain, close-fitting caps, like those so commonly worn in Egypt, seem to be intended. The word used, migbâ’ah, is derived from gâbia’, “a cup” or “basin.”

"For glory and for beauty": It is certainly remarkable that so plain a dress as that of the ordinary priests, a white tunic, a girdle, which may or may not have been embroidered, and a plain white close-fitting cap; should be regarded as sufficing “for glory and for beauty.” White robes, however, are in Scripture constantly represented as eminently glorious (Dan. 7:9; Mark 9:3; John 20:12; Acts 1:10; Rev. 4:4; 6:11; 7:9-14; 15:6).

Aaron's sons were to have special garments as well, but they were plainer. Their garments were for priests; whereas Aaron's garment was for the high priest. There were several differences. The son's or priests' clothing was made of fine white linen with no embroidery. Their entire outfit was a coat, girdle and bonnet. There was no breastplate and no engraved stones. These priests were really symbolic of members of the churches today. They had access to the Holy Place, but do not bear the great responsibility for the people that the high priest did. These priests had on white robes.

The victorious Christians in heaven are dressed in white robes of righteousness. Jesus is the pattern the Christians look to, the high priest was the pattern the priest looked to. This girdle or belt the priests wore was the girdle of truth for the Christians' mentioned (in chapter 6 of Ephesians). These "bonnets" of the priests were for beauty and glory. The Christians headdress is the helmet of salvation (Ephesians 6:7).

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."

Moses was by these words commanded to take the part in the consecration of Aaron and his sons which he is related to have taken (in Leviticus 8:6-30).

"And shalt anoint them": He anointed Aaron by pouring the holy oil upon his head (Lev. 8:12); but his sons only by sprinkling some of it upon their garments, as he did upon Aaron's also, together with some blood of the sacrifice (Exodus 29:21; Lev. 8:30).

"And consecrate them": In the Hebrew it is, Thou shalt fill their hands; alluding, probably, to the ceremony of putting into their hands the ensigns of their office, or to that of putting the wave-offering into their hands, that they might wave it before the Lord (Exodus 29:24; Lev. 8:27).

Hebrew, fill their hand, i.e. present them to God with part of the sacrifice in their hands, as we find (Exodus 29:24), by that rite putting them into their office.

"And sanctify them": By all this, set them apart, and devote them to the sacred office of priesthood.

"That they may minister unto me in the priest's office": By offering sacrifices for the people, burning incense, and doing other things relative to the office.

It seems that the garments we have been describing above, and in the last few lessons, were the only acceptable attire of the high priest and his sons, the priests, when they came into the Holy Place or the Holy of Holies to minister to God. There were no exceptions. Each garment had a purpose and a meaning. Moses was instructed to put these garments on all of them, anoint them for the priesthood and teach them how to be acceptable to God.

Exodus 28:42 "And thou shalt make them linen breeches to cover their nakedness; from the loins even unto the thighs they shall reach:"

Or "the flesh of nakedness", that part of the body which ought not to be naked and exposed to view, and which, when it is, causes shame and ridicule. What part is designed is easily gathered from the next clause; great care was taken, in the service of God's house, to preserve decency, prevent immodesty, and to guard against laughter and levity. And the like care should be always taken (see Exodus 28:2).

"From the loins even unto the thigh they shall reach": They were to reach above the navel near the heart, and to the end of the thigh, which is the knee. As Maimonides says; who also observes, that they had strings, but had no opening before or behind, but were drawn up round like a purse. They were a sort of drawers, and somewhat like our sailors' trousers.

Exodus 28:43 "And they shall be upon Aaron, and upon his sons, when they come in unto the tabernacle of the congregation, or when they come near unto the altar to minister in the holy [place]; that they bear not iniquity, and die: [it shall be] a statute for ever unto him and his seed after him."

Not the linen breeches only, but all the other garments.

"When they come into the tabernacle of the congregation": Even into that part of it where the people assembled, the court of the tabernacle, and where was the altar of burnt offering, on which they offered the sacrifices of the people, but never without the priestly garments on.

"Or when they came near unto the altar to minister in the holy place": At the altar of incense which stood there. Or when they came to trim the lamps of the candlestick, and set the shewbread on the table, and take away the old, which candlestick and shewbread table were both in the holy place.

"That they bear not iniquity and die": Be guilty of sin in not having their priestly garments on in time of service, and so bear the punishment of it and die for it. The Targum of Jonathan adds: with flaming fire, with fire from heaven, such as Nadab and Abihu were afterwards consumed with. A high priest that had not the eight garments on, or a common priest that had not his four garments, his service was illegal and rejected, and he was guilty of death by the hand of heaven. As Maimonides says; that is, he was deserving of immediate death from the hand of God, and might expect it.

"It shall be a statute for ever unto him, and his seed after him": As long as the Aaronic priesthood continued, until Christ should arise, made a high priest, not after the order of Aaron, but after the order of Melchizedek. And should put an end to the priesthood of the former, by answering and fulfilling all the types and shadows of it. This respects all that is said in this chapter concerning the vestments of the priests, one and another.

These garments of righteousness (linen), were not to be decorated as the embroidered coat. These were used for a special purpose: to cover the nakedness of the legs and hips. The first result of sin in the Bible was that man discovered he was naked. The Christian's sins have been forever covered with the righteousness (white linen), of Jesus Christ. The truth is that our sins are no more. Jesus as Christ washed us in His precious blood and our sins have been washed away.

We are clothed in white robes, washed in His blood. We have taken on His righteousness. We too are acceptable to God in our white linen. Many in our society would try to do away with the blood of the cross of Calvary, but it is the shed blood of Jesus Christ that makes us acceptable to the Father. If we did not have this blood of the precious Lamb of God (Jesus Christ), covering us, our nakedness (sin), would be unacceptable to the Father. I believe this is the spiritual meaning of these "linen breeches".

Exodus Chapter 28 Continued Questions

1. What did this "blue lace" that joins show spiritually?
2. Where shall Aaron bear the names of the sons of Israel?
3. What is this saying to the ministers of our day?
4. What two things were to be put into the breastplate?
5. How long was a high priest to be concerned about his people?
6. What color was the robe of the ephod to be?
7. What two ornamental things were to be around the hem of the garment?
8. What were the colors of the fruit mentioned?
9. What were the bells to be made of?
10. What did the "pomegranates" spiritually mean?
11. What does Jesus expect Christians to do that is represented by these "pomegranates"?
12. What two purposes did the bells fulfill?
13. Describe the garment the high priest wore on Day of Atonement?
14. What protected him, when he went into the Holy of Holies?
15. What was the plate for the headdress made of?
16. What was the high priest's headdress called?
17. What was written on the plate?
18. This mitre, the high priest wore, showed _____ to God.
19. "Linen" symbolizes what?

20. In Ezekiel, we read of an evil one wearing a mitre or diadem. Who is he, probably?
21. What should be on the mind of the High priest continually?
22. Who was the greatest high priest of all?
23. Describe the Christian's high priest.
24. How did Aaron's sons' coats differ from Aaron's?
25. What garment do victorious Christians wear in heaven?
26. The girdle the Christians wear is what?
27. What is the Christian's headdress?
28. What was the headdress of the priests?
29. What was Moses to do to the priests to consecrate them to God?
30. What were the breeches to be made of?
31. What was their purpose?
32. What was the first result of sin in the Bible?
33. Our sins are not just hidden. If we are a Christian, they are what?
34. What is the move in the Christian world that would actually do away with our salvation, if it is successful?
35. What is the spiritual meaning of the "linen breeches"?