

KNOWING JESUS THROUGH THE STUDY OF THE TABERNACLE

Part 5 – The Priestly garments

The word priest comes from a Hebrew root word meaning "to draw near". The children of Israel, as sinners, could not approach unto such a Holy God of themselves. The need for the High Priest in the Old Testament illustrated the need for a Mediator.

The consecration, the duties, the regulations and the garments of the High Priest point to the Lord Jesus and His work.

The high priest, arrayed in the stately garments of his office, methodically entered into the tabernacle to begin his day of ministry. Did it really make any difference how he dressed when representing the nation of Israel before God? **YES**. Couldn't he come in garments of his own choosing, style, or design? **NO he could not come in garments of his own choosing!**

Garment was called **Holy**, for they were set apart only to be worn during service in the tabernacle. **Glorious**, because they exalted the priestly office in the eyes of the people. **Beautiful**, for their colors harmonized with the tabernacle furnishings. The look of the priest was to match the function of his ministry as he worshiped God in the beauty of holiness.

The garments of the priests were so important that the ones chosen to make these garments were "wise hearted". God had filled them with special knowledge and skill through the Holy Spirit on how to make the priestly clothes. There are forty-three verses in Exodus 28 to describe in minute detail how each item of clothing was to be made.

Instruction for the garments given: Exodus 28:1-43

1 "Then bring near to you Aaron your brother, and his sons with him, from among the people of Israel, to serve me as priests—Aaron and Aaron's sons, Nadab and Abihu, Eleazar and Ithamar. 2 And you shall make holy garments for Aaron your brother, for glory and for beauty. 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. 4 These are the garments that they shall make: a breastpiece, an ephod, a robe, a coat of checker work, a turban, and a sash. They shall make holy garments for Aaron your brother and his sons to serve me as priests. 5 They shall receive gold, blue and purple and scarlet yarns, and fine twined linen.

6 "And they shall make the ephod of gold, of blue and purple and scarlet yarns, and of fine twined linen, skillfully worked. 7 It shall have two shoulder pieces attached to its two edges,

so that it may be joined together. 8 And the skillfully woven band on it shall be made like it and be of one piece with it, of gold, blue and purple and scarlet yarns, and fine twined linen. 9 You shall take two onyx stones and engrave on them the names of the sons of Israel, 10 six of their names on the one stone, and the names of the remaining six on the other stone, in the order of their birth. 11 As a jeweler engraves signets, so shall you engrave the two stones with the names of the sons of Israel. You shall enclose them in settings of gold filigree. 12 And you shall set the two stones on the shoulder pieces of the ephod, as stones of remembrance for the sons of Israel. And Aaron shall bear their names before the Lord on his two shoulders for remembrance. 13 You shall make settings of gold filigree, 14 and two chains of pure gold, twisted like cords; and you shall attach the corded chains to the settings.

15 “You shall make a breastpiece of judgment, in skilled work. In the style of the ephod you shall make it—of gold, blue and purple and scarlet yarns, and fine twined linen shall you make it. 16 It shall be square and doubled, a span its length and a span its breadth. 17 You shall set in it four rows of stones. A row of sardius, topaz, and carbuncle shall be the first row; 18 and the second row an emerald, a sapphire, and a diamond; 19 and the third row a jacinth, an agate, and an amethyst; 20 and the fourth row a beryl, an onyx, and a jasper. They shall be set in gold filigree. 21 There shall be twelve stones with their names according to the names of the sons of Israel. They shall be like signets, each engraved with its name, for the twelve tribes. 22 You shall make for the breastpiece twisted chains like cords, of pure gold. 23 And you shall make for the breastpiece two rings of gold, and put the two rings on the two edges of the breastpiece. 24 And you shall put the two cords of gold in the two rings at the edges of the breastpiece. 25 The two ends of the two cords you shall attach to the two settings of filigree, and so attach it in front to the shoulder pieces of the ephod. 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. 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. 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. 29 So Aaron shall bear the names of the sons of Israel in the breastpiece of judgment on his heart, when he goes into the Holy Place, to bring them to regular remembrance before the Lord. 30 And in the breastpiece of judgment you shall put the Urim and the Thummim, and they shall be on Aaron's heart, when he goes in before the Lord. Thus Aaron shall bear the judgment of the people of Israel on his heart before the Lord regularly.

31 “You shall make the robe of the ephod all of blue. 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. 33 On its hem you shall make pomegranates of blue and purple and scarlet yarns, around its hem, with bells of gold between them, 34 a golden bell and a pomegranate, a golden bell and a pomegranate, around the hem of the robe. 35 And it shall be on Aaron when he ministers, and its sound shall be heard when he goes into the Holy Place before the Lord, and when he comes out, so that he does not die.

36 “You shall make a plate of pure gold and engrave on it, like the engraving of a signet, ‘Holy to the Lord.’ 37 And you shall fasten it on the turban by a cord of blue. It shall be on the front of the turban. 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.

39 “You shall weave the coat in checker work of fine linen, and you shall make a turban of fine linen, and you shall make a sash embroidered with needlework.

40 “For Aaron's sons you shall make coats and sashes and caps. You shall make them for glory and beauty. 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. 42 You shall make for them linen undergarments to cover their naked flesh. They shall reach from the hips to the thighs; 43 and they shall be on Aaron and on his sons when they go into the tent of meeting or when they come near the altar to minister in the Holy Place, lest they bear guilt and die. This shall be a statute forever for him and for his offspring after him.

Execution of plan is seen in Exodus 39:1-31

Instructions given:

- The Priest & the High priest to be set apart: ***Set them apart from the rest of the people to minister to me & be my priests – Aaron & his sons Nadab, Abihu, Eleazar, Ithamar (Exodus 28:1).*** God has called us royal priesthood and a chosen generation. We are set apart for the purposes of God. We are priests and Jesus is our High Priest.
- It was called Sacred (Holy) garments – they are both for glory and beauty (dignity & honour). No other office in Bible has such details regarding their clothes. Very precious.
- Purpose : to distinguish him as a priest set apart for God’s service.
- Garments to be made for the priest (Exodus 28: 4)
 - A Chestpiece (also called breastpiece/ breastplate)

- An Ephod
- A robe
- A patterned tunic (woven tunic)
- A Turban (mitre)
- A Sash (girdle)
- Ordination of priests: wash, cloth, anoint (Exodus 40: 12-15; Leviticus 8:1-13)
- **Must be always worn when Aaron and sons enter the tabernacle or approach the altar in the Holy Place to perform their priestly duties. Then they will not incur guilt and die. This is a permanent law for Aaron and all his descendants after him. (Exo 28:43)**

Clothing is very significant in the Bible. Our filthy rags are taken away and the Lord has clothed us with a new robe of righteousness.

I will greatly rejoice in the Lord; my soul shall exult in my God, for he has clothed me with the garments of salvation; he has covered me with the robe of righteousness, as a bridegroom decks himself like a priest with a beautiful headdress, and as a bride adorns herself with her jewels. Isaiah 61:10

I put on righteousness, and it clothed me; my justice was like a robe and a turban. Job 29:14

Let your priests be clothed with righteousness and let your saints shout for joy. Psalm 132:9

It was granted her to clothe herself with fine linen, bright and pure”— for the fine linen is the righteous deeds of the saints. Revelation 19:8

But put on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make no provision for the flesh, to gratify its desires. Romans 13:14

Zechariah 3:1-5 Then the angel showed me Jeshua the high priest standing before the angel of the Lord. The Accuser, Satan, was there at the angel's right hand, making accusations against Jeshua. 2 And the Lord said to Satan, "I, the Lord, reject your accusations, Satan. Yes, the Lord, who has chosen Jerusalem, rebukes you. This man is like a burning stick that has been snatched from the fire."

3 Jeshua's clothing was filthy as he stood there before the angel. 4 So the angel said to the others standing there, "Take off his filthy clothes." And turning to Jeshua he said, "See, I have taken away your sins, and now I am giving you these fine new clothes."

5 Then I said, "They should also place a clean turban on his head." So they put a clean priestly turban on his head and dressed him in new clothes while the angel of the Lord stood by.

- Specialty of these garments:
 - These garments themselves possess a certain holiness; powerful enough to sanctify all those who merely come in contact with them, as we read in the prophets: "... so as not to hallow the people with their garments" (Ezekiel 44:19).
 - The Priest was never allowed to tear his garment. **"The priest who is chief among his brothers, on whose head the anointing oil is poured and who has been consecrated to wear the garments, shall not let the hair of his head hang loose nor tear his clothes. Leviticus 21:10**
 - The High Priest and Priests wore no shoes or sandals, meaning they would walk barefoot, which is the prerequisite for walking on holy ground.



The High Priest's Golden Garments

Shemot/Exodus 28



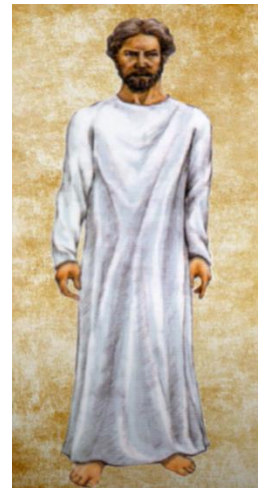
Priestly Garments worn by High Priest:

1. **A Patterned/ checkered tunic & linen undergarment/ breeches.** (Exo 28: 39, 42-43)
(undergarment - reaching from their hips to thighs, to be worn next to their bodies, to be always worn while performing priestly duties)

The first two articles of clothing worn by the High Priest were the linen breeches and the linen coat. Both were made of white linen, woven without a seam. White is the symbolic color of purity, of cleanliness. This is a type of Christ's righteousness and perfect holiness during his entire human life. His sinless life was perfectly knit together, it was woven without a seam. In Hebrews 7:26 we read of Christ, "For such a high priest became us, who is holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners..."



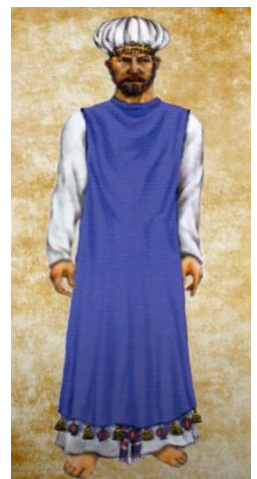
It is interesting to note that on the Day of Atonement, when the High Priest was to carry the blood into the Holy of Holies and sprinkle it on the mercy-seat, that he had to remove his outer garments and enter only wearing these white under garments. So, also Christ, when He presented His own blood, to pay the full price for the sins of His people, to His Father, had His clothes also taken from Him; but the purity, the whiteness of His sinless life was still seen by His Father.



2. **Robe of Ephod:** (Exodus 28: 31- 35)

The Robe, or Robe of the Ephod, was the third article of dress. It was woven out of blue yarn, made in one piece, without a seam. (Made out of single piece of blue cloth). It had slits in the side for arms, and a hole at the top for the head, which was reinforced so it would not fray or tear.

(Math 26:65) – Caiaphas, High priest tore his robe to express his anger to what Jesus claimed to be. The action of the high priest tearing his clothes is a direct violation of one of the requirements of his office. Mosaic law did not permit the high priest to tear his robe (Leviticus 10:6, 21:10), because his garments symbolized the perfection of God's character. To tear those robes would be to profane God's character, to mar its perfection. Thus, the irony was that Caiaphas was guilty of breaking the very law he defended. It made him unfit for his office, penalty of death. The great irony in all this was that Jesus, who had



done nothing wrong, was to be put to death at the instigation of the very priest who, through his actions, deserved death.

The symbolism of that rending was profound. This was the beginning of the end of the entire earthly sacrificial system and priesthood. A new and better one was soon to be inaugurated, with Christ as the new High Priest ministering in the sanctuary in heaven. He didn't realize perfect High Priest was now making the perfect sacrifice.

In either case, it is interesting that the robe of Jesus, the true high priest, is not torn.

John 19:24 When the soldiers had crucified Jesus, they divided his clothes among the four of them. They also took his robe, but it was seamless, woven in one piece from top to bottom. "Let us not tear it, but cast lots for it to see whose it shall be." This was to fulfill the Scripture which says, "They divided my garments among them, and for my clothing they cast lots."

Blue is the symbolic color of the heavens, and so we see this blue, seamless robe, the perfect heavenliness of Christ. This is the first time the word robe is used in the Bible. A robe speaks of authority; it is a kingly dress. Here the seamless blue robe directs us to the King of Kings, the one Heavenly King.

On the hem of this robe were attached golden bells and pomegranates, equal in number and placed in an alternating manner. Pomegranates were made of blue, purple, and scarlet yarn.

The sound of the bells could be heard when Aaron went into the Holy Place before the Lord, and the audience outside would know if he is still alive & has not been struck dead in God's presence, and their offering accepted.

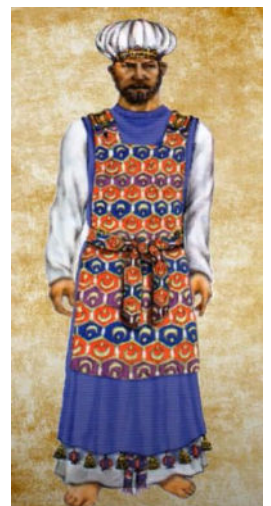
3. **Ephod**: Exodus 28:6-14

The fourth article of clothing was the ephod. The most important garment worn by the High Priest is the ephod. Its appearance - like an apron.

Made out of finely woven linen

Embroider with gold, blue, purple, scarlet thread

Consists of 2 pieces (front & back), joined at the shoulders by 2 onyx stones set in gold. Each of these onyx stones were engraved with names of 12 tribes of Israel. Six names in order of birth were carried on one shoulder and six on the other. This meant that every time the High Priest went into the Holy place he bore the names of the tribes before the Lord, representing them before the Lord.



These colours were all sewn together in a most intricate way in the ephod; the Bible says "with cunning work". So, also, in the life of Christ, His offices and natures are intricately connected; they are distinct without mixture and yet without division or separation, one person. Christ's human nature is not mixed with His divine nature, and yet His divine nature is not separated from His human nature. Both are woven into the one person, Jesus Christ. The ephod testified of this great mystery and beauty.

The gold, blue, purple, scarlet, and fine twined linen composing the ephod were threads of different colors; they signify the composition of Christ's divinity (gold), His heavenliness (blue), His kingliness (purple), His redemption (scarlet), and His fine humanity (linen) – all for the expression of His divine glory and human beauty.

The shoulders are the place of strength and security. The strength and security of God's people is not in themselves but rather that they are carried on the shoulders of that Great High Priest. All twelve tribes are engraved in the stones. None are forgotten. They are not just written, but engraved in stone. It is permanent. You are not forgotten. ***Christ, Himself, testified "...they shall never perish, neither shall any man pluck them out of my hand". (John 10:25)***

But this man, because he continueth ever, hath an unchangeable priesthood. Wherefore he is able also to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by him, seeing he ever liveth to make intercession for them. (Hebrews 7:24, 25)

Jesus carried the cross on his shoulders to atone for our sin.

4. **Sash/ girdle:** The fifth article of clothing, the Girdle, was made from the materials and in the same manner as the ephod.

Made of same material as Ephod – finely woven linen embroidered with gold and with blue, purple and scarlet thread. Ephod fastened around by sash/ girdle tied around the waist. For a priest to be girded with his sash meant for him to be fully arrayed in his garments, prepared and ready to serve.

The girdle was a long wrap-around belt. It spoke to the people of that time, ... of work; of being prepared for service. When a man had to work hard or run a great



distance he would gather up his long, flowing garments and bind them up with his girdle.

We read of this several times in the Bible with this expression "gird up your loins"; in other words, girding up your long garments to your loins so that they are not bothersome. 'Gird up your loins' refers to the act of rolling up one's tunic (the common clothing for men and women at the time) and tucking it under a belt or tying it in a knot. A person would do this to get the tunic out of the way and be able to have freedom of movement.

When? - getting ready to engage in battle, travel long distances, partake in strenuous running (as Elisha did in 1 Kings 18:46),

Therefore gird up the loins of your mind, be sober, and rest your hope fully upon the grace that is to be brought to you at the revelation of Jesus Christ; 1 Peter 1:13

Let your loins be girded about, and your lights burning; Luke 12:35

Stand therefore, having your loins girt about with truth (belt of truth), and having on the breastplate of righteousness; Ephesians 6:14

And thus shall ye eat it; with your loins girded, your shoes on your feet, and your staff in your hand; and ye shall eat it in haste: it is the LORD'S passover. Exodus 12:11

Then he said to Gehazi, Gird up thy loins, and take my staff in thine hand, and go thy way: if thou meet any man, salute him not; and if any salute thee, answer him not again. 2 Kings 4:29

5. The Breastplate/ chestpiece : (Exo 28: 15-30)

The sixth item was the Breastplate, which was mounted over the top of the ephod. It was made of the same material as the ephod, but doubled to form a pocket inside, one span across. On the breastplate were 12 different stones set in gold, arranged in four rows. The name of a tribe of Israel was engraved on each stone.

"Then, with great skill and care, make a chestpiece to be worn for seeking a decision from God. Make it to



match the ephod, using finely woven linen embroidered with gold and with blue, purple, and scarlet thread. 16 Make the chestpiece of a single piece of cloth folded to form a pouch nine inches square.

17 You shall set in it four rows of stones. A row of sardius, topaz, and carbuncle shall be the first row; 18 and the second row an emerald, a sapphire, and a diamond; 19 and the third row a jacinth, an agate, and an amethyst; 20 and the fourth row a beryl, an onyx, and a jasper. They shall be set in gold filigree.

We are engraved permanently: ***Isaiah 49:16 Behold, I have engraved you on the palms of my hands; your walls are continually before me.*** No one can snatch us away from His hand.

On each of the four corners was a ring of gold. The top two rings were attached to the shoulder pieces with small chains of wreathed gold. The lower two rings were attached to the ephod with blue laces (so it doesn't fall off when priest bends).



Three times we read in Exodus 28 that Aaron should bear the breastplate (***Breast piece of judgement***) upon his heart. The heart is the seat of affection. So Christ, bears His people not only on His shoulders for strength but also binds them upon His heart. Each tribe was there. Even though each stone was different; each stone was an expensive gem. To Christ each one of His children are most precious and He carries them on His heart.

For us believers – wearing the breastplate of righteousness (Spiritual armor – Ephesians 6:14). ***Stand firm then, with the belt of truth buckled around your waist, with the breastplate of righteousness in place.***

A typical armed soldier wore a breastplate made of bronze or chain mail. It covered the vital organs, namely, the heart, and was fitted with loops or buckles that attached it to a thick belt. If the belt was loosened, the breastplate slipped right off. The breastplate of righteousness refers to the righteousness purchased for us by Jesus at the cross. We depend on God's righteousness. To put on the breastplate of righteousness, we must first have the belt of truth firmly in place.

Inside the pocket of the breastplate, the Urim and the Thummim were placed. ***Exodus 28:30, "Also put the Urim and the Thummin in the breastpiece, so they may be over Aaron's heart whenever he enters the presence of the Lord. Thus Aaron will always bear the means of making decisions for the Israelites over his heart before the Lord."***

Urim & Thummim were stones used by the Lord to communicate His will to Israel. We read of seven different occasions that were used in the Old Testament; each time to receive guidance from the Lord concerning a national matter or decision.

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."

6. **The Mitre / Turban:** (Exo 28:36-38)

The last, or seventh article of the clothing of the High Priest was the mitre. The mitre was a hat of white fine linen. Attached to the front of the mitre was a gold plate with the words "Holiness Unto the Lord" engraved on it. This plate was held in place by a blue ribbon which was connected to it and ran from the front over the top of the mitre to the back.



V. 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.

Jesus wore the Crown of thorns for us (crown of suffering and shame), later wore the crown of glory & honor after His ascension. Hebrews 2:9