

PRIESTLY GARMENTS

Lesson 3

I. The Introduction of the Priestly Garments

A. The beginning of the covenant between the Israelites and God began in the desert when they were freed from slavery in Egypt..

Deuteronomy 7:6-9 - ⁶ *For you are a holy people to the LORD your God; the LORD your God has chosen you to be a people for Himself, a special treasure above all the peoples on the face of the earth.* ⁷ *The LORD did not set His love on you nor choose you because you were more in number than any other people, for you were the least of all peoples;* ⁸ *but because the LORD loves you, and because He would keep the oath which He swore to your fathers, the LORD has brought you out with a mighty hand, and redeemed you from the house of bondage, from the hand of Pharaoh king of Egypt.* ⁹ *Therefore know that the LORD your God, He is God, the faithful God who keeps covenant and mercy for a thousand generations with those who love Him and keep His commandments;”*

B. Until this time we have no record of any structured method of worship.

1. In Exodus chapter 24 Moses went up on Mount Sinai for the second time to receive new stone tablets containing the ten commandments (which were to replace the ones Moses broke when he saw the people worshipping the golden calf), and to receive detailed instructions on building a “sanctuary” for the Lord so that God could dwell among His people.
2. The details of how to build this sanctuary are given in Exodus 25-27.
 - a. The Ark of the Covenant was placed inside the Most Holy Place behind the veil. Its cover is called the “mercy seat” above which God would speak His commandments to Moses or the High Priest.
 - b. The Table of Showbread – sits in front of the veil in the Holy Place. On it were placed 12 loaves of bread each Sabbath. On the Sabbath the Priests would eat the bread in the Holy Place and then place fresh bread there before the Lord. (**Leviticus 24:5-9**) This was to symbolize the fellowship between God and His chosen people, just as we fellowship with each other by sharing means. In **John 6:35** Jesus said, *“I am the bread of life. He who comes to Me shall never hunger, and he who believes in Me shall never thirst.”* The showbread was a shadow of that living bread we now have access to as Christians.
 - c. The Lamp Stand (menorah) – a candelabra with three branches on each side of the center post which allows it to hold seven lights fueled by special olive oil. It burns continually and the priests refills the fuel each morning and evening. It is the only light in the Tabernacle and provides the light for the priests to perform their duties.

- d. The tent of Meeting (Tabernacle) itself was designed by God and is very intricately made to be portable so when God instructed the Israelites to move they could disassemble the tent and easily move it to the next location. Only the Levites were responsible for setting it up, taking it down and carrying it from place to place.
3. The final things that God instructed Moses to make were the garments for the High Priests (Aaron and his sons).
 - a. The High Priests were to be descendants of Aaron who were required to avoid anything that would cause them to be defiled:
Leviticus 21:6 – *"They shall be holy to their God and not profane the name of their God, for they offer the offerings of the LORD made by fire, and the bread of their God; therefore they shall be holy."*
 - b. Any of the descendants of Aaron who had a defect (blind, lame, sickness, scarring, etc.) were not permitted to offer sacrifices.
Leviticus 21
 - c. Aaron and his sons were consecrated and sanctified specifically for service to God in the Tabernacle and in the burnt offerings.
 - d. Anything that touched the altar for burnt offerings must be holy (**Exodus 29:37b**) and the garments of the high priest proclaimed him to be holy.
 - e. The garments Aaron wore not only symbolized holiness before God, but had the power to sanctify those who came near them when they were dressed in these garments. (**Ezekiel 44:19**)
 - f. The garments of the priests were made so elaborately they represented "royalty".
 - g. The garments were so essential that sacrifices made without the garments would have no validity.
 - h. The priestly garments served as identification for the one performing service to the Lord in the Tabernacle or Temple. Without the garments, even the High Priest would be received by God as a stranger, an unknown person.
 - i. **See the attached documents for scriptures concerning the parts of the priest's garments.**
4. The work of the priests was extremely important:
 - a. Priests were to teach the people the difference between the holy and the common and show them how to distinguish between the unclean and the clean. (**Ezekiel 44:23**)
 - b. Priests were to serve as judges in any dispute and to decide it according to God's ordinances (using Urim and Thummin) **Ezekiel 44:24**
 - c. Priests were to keep the laws and decrees for all appointed feasts and Sabbaths.
 - d. The bulk of their work was in making atonement for the sins of the people of Israel, as well as for himself.

II. The Priests Of Israel Were A Shadow Of The Final High Priest Who Would Be Able To Atonement For The Sins Of The World.

- A. In the Law of Moses, the High Priest was a mediator between the people of Israel and God for the atonement of sins through a sacrificial system.
1. The people of Israel did not have open access to God themselves.
 2. Prophets were also messengers of God who spread the message of God to the people.
 3. Only those consecrated and sanctified as holy could approach God in the Most Holy Place.
 4. Almost all things were purified with blood by the High Priest for "*without shedding of blood there is no remission.*" (**Hebrews 9:22**)
 5. However, it was not possible that the blood of bulls and goats could take away sin. (**Hebrews 10:4**)
- B. In the New Covenant (Christianity), Jesus is the fulfillment of the Law of Moses and the only High Priest.
1. Jesus fulfilled the Law in that He was able to keep every law perfectly, which no Jew had ever been able to do.
Matthew 5:17 – "*Do not think that I came to destroy the Law or the Prophets. I did not come to destroy but to fulfill.*"
 2. The first covenant was imperfect and was replaced by a better covenant to be realized in the church which was purchased with the blood of Christ.
Matthew 5:17 – "*Do not think that I came to destroy the Law or the Prophets. I did not come to destroy but to fulfill.*"
 3. This new covenant is the Law of Christ. (**Galatians 6:2**)
 4. Jesus Christ is the High Priest of that new covenant:
 - a. **Hebrews 4:14-15** – "¹⁴*Seeing then that we have a great High Priest who has passed through the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold fast our confession. ¹⁵For we do not have a High Priest who cannot sympathize with our weaknesses, but was in all points tempted as we are, yet without sin.*"
 - b. **Hebrews 2:17** – "*Therefore, in all things He had to be made like His brethren, that He might be a merciful and faithful High Priest in things pertaining to God, to make propitiation for the sins of the people.*"
- C. Unlike the first covenant, where the people were born into a relationship with God through their heritage, Christians are adopted as sons into the family of God.
- Ephesians 1:3-5** – "³*Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places in Christ, ⁴just as He chose us in Him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before Him in love, ⁵having predestined us to adoption as sons by Jesus Christ to Himself, according to the good pleasure of His will,*"

1. The adoption process takes place when we obey in faith the gospel of Christ by:
 - a. Hearing the word of God (**Romans 10:17**)
 - b. Believing the word of God and that Jesus Christ is His Son (**John 20:31; John 3:16; Acts 8:37**)
 - c. Repenting of our sins – (**Acts 3:19; Acts 17:30**)
 - d. Confessing that we believe that Jesus is the Christ, the son of God before witnesses (**Romans 10:9**)
 - e. Being baptized (immersed) in water – (**Acts 2:38; Mark 16:15-16; Acts 19:48; Acts 22:16**)
 - f. Living faithfully until we die – (**Revelation 2:10**)
2. Not only are we adopted as children of God, but we are also a "royal priesthood".

I Peter 2:9 – *"But you are a chosen generation, a **royal priesthood**, a holy nation, His own special people, that you may proclaim the praises of Him who called you out of darkness into His marvelous light;"*
3. In the priesthood of Israel, there was ONE high priest and all other Levites were priests as well, who served the high priest.
 - a. However, the High Priest was the mediator between God and the people. His garments were very elaborate and made him holy in God's sight.
 - b. Only the High Priest could go into the Most Holy Place, which was the sanctuary of God.
 - c. The Levite priests were assistants to the high priest and took care of the physical work necessary in the Tabernacle or the Temple. Their garments were simpler yet required (linen tunic, sash, hat and short pants worn under the tunic).
4. In Christianity, there is ONE high priest. It is Jesus Christ who is now in the presence of God and now mediates between Christians and God.
5. We do not have to wear special garments in order to communicate with God.
 - a. It is still true that God can only communicate with those who are Holy.
 - b. When we are baptized, we are covered with the blood of Christ which makes us holy in God's sight.
 - c. Our special garment is Christ himself:

Galatians 3:27 – *"For as many of you as were baptized into Christ have **put on Christ.**"*

 - 1) When God sees us, He sees that we are clothed with Christ.
 - 2) This "clothing" grants us the benefits of being His children: we are able to speak directly to God, through Jesus Christ.
 - 3) In **Revelation 3:5** we are told that when we overcome temptation and remain faithful to God, we are "clothed in white garments".

"He who overcomes shall be clothed in white garments, and I will not blot out his name from the Book of Life; but I will confess his name before My Father and before His angels."

6. It is important that we work diligently to keep our "white garments" from becoming stained.
 - a. **2 Peter 3:13-15** – *"Therefore, beloved, looking forward to these things, be diligent to be found by Him in peace, **without spot** and blameless;"*
 - b. **James 1:27** – *"Pure and undefiled religion before God and the Father is this; to visit orphans and widows in their trouble, and to keep oneself **unspotted** from the world."*

III. CONCLUSIONS: It is helpful to understand the significance of the priestly garments in order for us to comprehend the importance of presenting ourselves as "Holy to the Lord".

A. We are called to be holy:

1. **I Peter 1:14-16** – *"¹⁴ as obedient children, not conforming yourselves to the former lusts, as in your ignorance; ¹⁵ but as He who called you is holy, you also be holy in all your conduct, ¹⁶ because it is written, "Be holy, for I am holy."*
2. **Romans 12:1b** – *"...present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God, which is your reasonable service."*
3. **I Corinthians 3:17** – *"For the temple of God is holy, which temple you are."*

B. We can never be holy by our own efforts.

1. We can only be holy when we are cleansed from sin. What does that?
 - a. **I John 1:7** – *"But if we walk in the light as He is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus Christ, His Son, cleanses us from all sin."*
 - b. **Hebrews 9:14** – *"...how much more shall the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered Himself without spot to God, cleanse your conscience from dead works to serve the living God?"*
 - c. **I Peter 1:18-19** – *"...knowing that you were not redeemed with corruptible things, like silver or gold, from your aimless conduct received by tradition from your fathers, but with the precious blood of Christ, as a lamb without blemish and without spot."*
2. How, then, do we get access to that soul cleansing blood?
 - a. **Acts 22:16** – *"And now why are you waiting? Arise and be baptized, and wash away your sins, calling on the name of the Lord."*
 - b. Forgiveness of sins cannot take place before baptism.
 - c. When Jesus spoke to Saul on the road to Damascus, Saul believed that it was Jesus speaking to him, yet he did not receive forgiveness

of his sins until he was baptized where his "sins were washed away".
(**Acts 22:17**)

3. Baptism gives us access to the blood of Christ.
4. Baptism allows us to "put on Christ". (**Galatians 3:27**)
5. We cannot be "Holy to the Lord" until we are washed from our sins.

C. It is our individual duty to make certain that we understand the word of God properly.

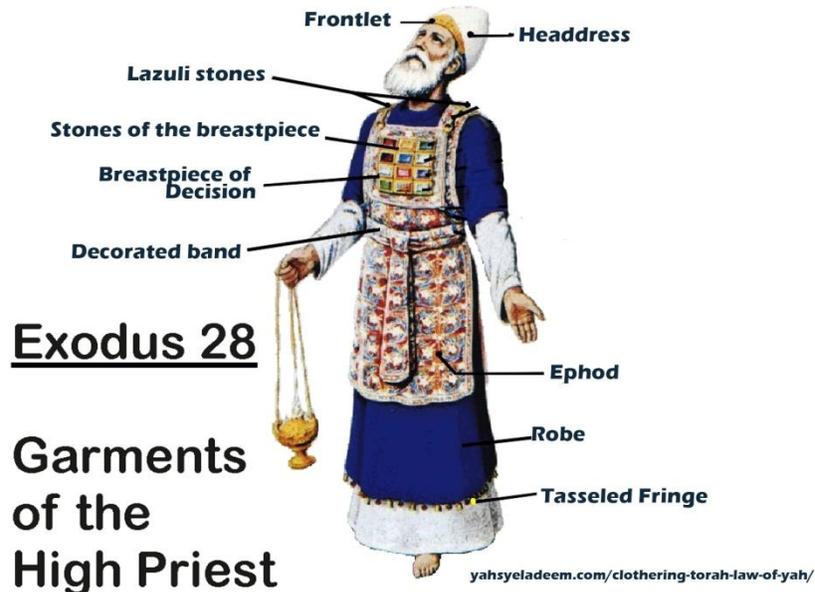
1. **Ephesians 5:6-10** – "⁶ Let no one deceive you with empty words, for because of these things the wrath of God comes upon the sons of disobedience. ⁷ Therefore do not be partakers with them. ⁸ For you were once darkness, but now you are light in the Lord. Walk as children of light ⁹ (for the fruit of the Spirit is in all goodness, righteousness, and truth), ¹⁰ finding out what is acceptable to the Lord.
2. **2 John 9-11** – "⁹ Whoever transgresses and does not abide in the doctrine of Christ does not have God. He who abides in the doctrine of Christ has both the Father and the Son. ¹⁰ If anyone comes to you and does not bring this doctrine, do not receive him into your house nor greet him; ¹¹ for he who greets him shares in his evil deeds."
3. **Galatian 1:6-9** – "⁶ I marvel that you are turning away so soon from Him who called you in the grace of Christ, to a different gospel, ⁷ which is not another; but there are some who trouble you and want to pervert the gospel of Christ. ⁸ But even if we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel to you than what we have preached to you, let him be accursed. ⁹ As we have said before, so now I say again, if anyone preaches any other gospel to you than what you have received, let him be accursed."
4. **Everything** depends upon our searching the scriptures to be **very sure** that we understand and practice only what was taught to the first century churches who were all taught the very same gospel as we read in the New Testament.
5. **I pray that we will never hold on to a doctrine simply because we love those who taught it to us.**
6. Polly Cline, a guest speaker at our Ladies Half-Day twice said: "We must love the truth enough to recognize error when it is taught by someone we love AND enough to recognize truth even if it is taught by an enemy,"
7. This is a real problem in every church, in that there are always some whose beliefs are more based upon what their parents believed than what they have learned from the Bible themselves.
8. You will truly be my beloved sisters if you question me if I ever seem to be teaching something other than the truth of God's word.

THE PRIESTLY GARMENTS

While such elaborate garments may seem odd today, God used these distinctive garments to set His spiritual leaders apart from the other Israelites. 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 **Exodus 28:43** – *"Aaron and his sons must wear (the garments) whenever they entered the tent of meeting or approach the altar to minister in the Holy Place, so that they will not incur guilt and die."*

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.

The turban was plain white, with a gold plate placed at the forehead. On the plate was 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.



- 8 - ⁸And the intricately woven band of the ephod, which is on it, shall be of the same workmanship, made of gold, blue, purple, and scarlet thread, and fine woven linen. "
- 6-7 - ⁶and they shall make the ephod of gold, blue, purple, and scarlet thread, and fine woven linen, artistically worked. ⁷It shall have two shoulder straps joined at its two edges, and so it shall be joined together. "
- 9-13 - ⁹ Then you shall take two onyx stones and engrave on them the names of the sons of Israel: ¹⁰six of their names on one stone and six names on the other stone, in order of their birth. ¹¹With the work of an engraver in stone, like the engravings of a signet, you shall engrave the two stones with the names of the sons of Israel. You shall set them in settings of gold. ¹²And you shall put the two stones on the shoulders of the ephod as memorial stones for the sons of Israel. So Aaron shall bear their names before the LORD on his two shoulders as a memorial. ¹³You shall also make settings of gold,"
- 14, 22-25 - ¹⁴and you shall make two chains of pure gold like braided cords, and fasten the braided chains to the settings."
²²You shall make chains for the breastplate at the end, like braided cords of pure gold. ²³And you shall make two rings of gold for the breastplate, and put the two rings on the two ends of the breastplate. ²⁴Then you shall put the two braided chains of gold in the two rings which are on the ends of the breastplate; ²⁵and the other two ends of the two braided chains you shall fasten to the two settings, and put them on the shoulder straps of the ephod in the front."

15-16 – ¹⁵ You shall make the breastplate of judgment. Artistically woven according to the workmanship of the ephod you shall make it: of gold, blue, purple, and scarlet *thread*, and fine woven linen, you shall make it. ¹⁶ It shall be doubled into a square: a span *shall be* its length, and a span *shall be* its width.”

29-30 - ²⁹ So Aaron shall bear the names of the sons of Israel on the breastplate of judgment over his heart, when he goes into the holy place, as a memorial before the LORD continually. ³⁰ And you shall put in the breastplate of judgment the Urim and the Thummim, and they shall be over Aaron’s heart when he goes in before the LORD. So Aaron shall bear the judgment of the children of Israel over his heart before the LORD continually.”

THE URIM and THUMMIM

The Urim (meaning “lights”) and Thummim (meaning “perfections”) were gemstones that were carried by the high priest of Israel on the ephod. They were used by the high priest to determine God’s will in some situations. Some proposed that God would cause the Urim and Thummim to light up in varying patterns to reveal His decision. According to Josephus, a first century historian, the Urim and Thummim were kept in a pouch and were engraved with symbols identifying yes/no and true/false.

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., Reference to the Urim and Thummim are rare in the Bible. They are first mentioned in the description of the breastplate of judgment (Ex. 28:30; Lev. 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 (Num. 27:21). The Urim and Thummim are next mentioned in Moses’ dying blessing upon Levi (Deut. 33:8). The following scriptures likely also speak of the Urim and Thummim: Joshua 7:14-18; I Sam. 14:37-45, and 2 Sam. 21:1.

- 17 - “And you shall put settings of stones in it, four rows of stones: The first row shall be a sardius, a topaz, and an emerald; this shall be the first row; ”
- 18 - “the second row *shall be* a turquoise, a sapphire, and a diamond;”
- 19 - “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 settings.”
- 21 - “And the stones shall have the names of the sons of Israel, twelve according to their names, *like* the engravings of a signet, each one with its own name; they shall be according to the twelve tribes.
- 26 - “You shall make two rings of gold, and put them on the two ends of the breastplate, on the edge of it, which is on the inner side of the ephod.”
- 27 - “You shall make two rings of gold, and put them on the two ends of the breastplate, on the edge of it, which is on the inner side of the ephod.”
- 28 - “They shall bind the breastplate by means of its rings to the rings of the ephod, using a blue cord, so that it is above the intricately woven band of the ephod, and so that the breastplate does not come loose from the ephod.”
- 31-32 ³¹ You shall make the robe of the ephod all of blue. ³² There shall be an opening for his head in the middle of it; it shall have a woven binding all around its opening, like the opening in a coat of mail, so that it does not tear.”
- 33-35 - ³³ And upon its hem you shall make pomegranates of blue, purple, and scarlet, all around its hem, and bells of gold between them all around: ³⁴ a golden bell and a pomegranate, a golden bell and a pomegranate, upon the hem of the robe all around. ³⁵ And it shall be upon Aaron when he ministers,

and its sound will be heard when he goes into the holy place before the LORD and when he comes out, that he may not die.”

- 36-38 ³⁶ You shall also make a plate of pure gold and engrave on it, like the engraving of a signet: ³⁷ And you shall put it on a blue cord, that it may be on the turban; it shall be on the front of the turban. 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.”
- 39 ³⁹ You shall skillfully weave the tunic of fine linen thread, you shall make the turban of fine linen, and you shall make the sash of woven work.”

PRIESTLY GARMENTS FOR AARON’S SONS

- 40-43 ⁴⁰ “For Aaron’s sons you shall make tunics, and you shall make sashes for them. And you shall make hats for them, for glory and beauty. 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. ⁴² And you shall make for them linen trousers to cover their nakedness; they shall reach from the waist to the thighs. ⁴³ They shall be on Aaron and on his sons when they come into the tabernacle of meeting, or when they come near the altar to minister in the holy *place*, **that they do not incur iniquity and die.** *It shall be* a statute forever to him and his descendants after him.