

Instructions for the Garments and the Consecration of the Priests

Exodus 28-29

Exodus 28 - *"Now take Aaron your brother, and his sons with him, from among the children of Israel, that he may minister to Me as priest, Aaron and Aaron's sons: Nadab, Abihu, Eleazar, and Ithamar. 2 And you shall make holy garments for Aaron your brother, for glory and for beauty. 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. 4 And these are the garments which they shall make: a breastplate, an ephod,[a] a robe, a skillfully woven tunic, a turban, and a sash. So they shall make holy garments for Aaron your brother and his sons, that he may minister to Me as priest.*

5 "They shall take the gold, blue, purple, and scarlet thread, and the fine linen, 6 and they shall make the ephod of gold, blue, purple, and scarlet thread, and fine woven linen, artistically worked. 7 It shall have two shoulder straps joined at its two edges, and so it shall be joined together. 8 And 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.

9 "Then you shall take two onyx stones and engrave on them the names of the sons of Israel: 10 six of their names on one stone and six names on the other stone, in order of their birth. 11 With 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. 12 And 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. 13 You shall also make settings of gold, 14 and you shall make two chains of pure gold like braided cords, and fasten the braided chains to the settings.

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. 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.

22 "You shall make chains for the breastplate at the end, like braided cords of pure gold. 23 And you shall make two rings of gold for the breastplate, and put the two rings on the two ends of the breastplate. 24 Then you shall put the two braided chains of gold in the two rings which are on the ends of the breastplate; 25 and 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.

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** And two other rings of gold you shall make, and put them on the two shoulder straps, underneath the ephod toward its front, right at the seam above the intricately woven band 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.

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,**[b]** 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.

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** 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 “You shall also make a plate of pure gold and engrave on it, like the engraving of a signet: HOLINESS TO THE LORD. **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 “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.

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.

Background Notes

Exodus 25-27 gave us God’s detailed instructions for the Tabernacle and its furnishings, including the courtyard with the bronze altar of sacrifice and the bronze laver for priestly washings. In chapters 28-29 we have God’s detailed instructions for the priests—their clothing in chapter 28, and

their consecration in chapter 29. The Tabernacle and its furnishings were filled with meaning, giving us types (spiritual pictures) of the person and work of Jesus Christ and the way of worship. The garments and the consecration of the priests were also filled with picture meaning. We'll consider that in our doctrinal teaching points.

Doctrinal Points

1. The clothing of the Priests was filled with meaning.

From the New Testament we learn that Aaron, the High Priest, was a type, or spiritual picture, of Christ, our High Priest. Hebrews 4:14 – “...we have a great High Priest who has passed into the heavens, Jesus the Son of God...” We also know from the New Testament that Aaron’s descendants, the Old Testament priests, were a spiritual picture of believers today. 1 Peter 2:5 says that Christians today are a holy priesthood, and we are to offer up spiritual sacrifices that are acceptable to God through Jesus Christ. In Exodus 28 we see that God’s design of the priestly clothing enhanced the spiritual pictures that are presented in the priests, especially the High Priest.

The first thing to notice about the priests’ garments is that they were for **glory** and for **beauty**: “And you shall make holy garments for Aaron your brother for glory and for beauty” (v2). The glory and beauty of the High Priest’s clothing certainly portrays the glory and beauty of our Lord in His High Priestly office. The glory and beauty of our priesthood comes from the fact that we’ve been clothed with the righteousness of our High Priest, the Lord Jesus Christ.

The High Priest’s garments consisted of a breastplate, an ephod, a robe, a tunic, a sash, and a turban (v4). The beautiful colors and gold threads in these garments certainly bring out the perfections of our Lord’s deity and humanity, as we noted in the curtains and veils and gold of the Tabernacle.

Verses 6-14 give us details about the ephod of the High Priest, a two-piece sleeveless garment that was joined at the shoulders by straps. Two onyx or emerald stones were placed on the shoulder straps. On these stones the names of the twelve tribes of Israel were engraved - six tribes on each shoulder. As the High Priest carried the names of God’s people on his shoulders, the place of strength, so the Lord carries His people today on His strong shoulders. Have you come to know and experience the rest and peace of being carried on God’s strong shoulders?

In verses 15-29 we have details about the breastplate that the High Priest wore over the ephod. On the breastplate were twelve precious stones arranged in four rows of three

stones each. The twelve stones also represented the twelve tribes of Israel, and on the breastplate they were worn over the heart of the High Priest. The heart represents the place of love. Just as the High Priest carried the people on his shoulders and over his heart, so the Lord carries His people today in His strength and in His love. That's your position, if you are a believer -- what a blessed place of security!

Verses 30-39 give us more details about the garments of the High Priest. What were the *Urim* and the *Thummim* (v30)? We don't know for sure. From the Old Testament Scriptures where the *Urim* and the *Thummim* are mentioned, it appears that they were used by the High Priest to receive answers from the Lord when decisions had to be made. Most likely they were precious stones that were kept in the fold or pouch of the breastplate (v30). Because *Urim* and *Thummim* mean *lights* and *perfections* in the Hebrew language, it could be that God controlled the appearance of these stones when the High Priest used them for making decisions. However -- don't get the idea that it was like the High Priest was throwing dice! No.

The High Priest wore a blue robe beneath the ephod and over a tunic of fine linen (v31-35). On the hem of the blue robe were alternating gold bells and golden pomegranates, that speak of the testimony of service and the fruit of service. When the High Priest was in the Holy of Holies, the tinkling of the bells indicated the continual service of the High Priest. What a vivid picture of our Lord's continual service as our High Priest! On the High Priest's turban was a plate of pure gold, with the words *HOLY TO THE LORD* engraved on it (v36-38).

The basic garment of the priests was the tunic of fine white linen. All the priests wore white linen tunics, sashes and caps (v40-43). The mandatory linen undergarments emphasized the dignity and modesty that should characterize priests, both in that day and today. **The clothing of the priests is filled with meaning.**

2. The consecration of the Priests was filled with meaning.

Exodus 29 - *"And this is what you shall do to them to hallow them for ministering to Me as priests: Take one young bull and two rams without blemish, 2 and unleavened bread, unleavened cakes mixed with oil, and unleavened wafers anointed with oil (you shall make them of wheat flour). 3 You shall put them in one basket and bring them in the basket, with the bull and the two rams.*

4 *"And Aaron and his sons you shall bring to the door of the tabernacle of meeting, and you shall wash them with water. 5 Then you shall take the garments, put the tunic on Aaron, and the robe of the ephod, the ephod, and the breastplate, and gird him with the intricately woven band of the ephod. 6 You shall put the turban on his head, and put the holy crown on the turban. 7 And you shall take the anointing oil, pour it on his head, and anoint him. 8 Then you shall bring his sons and put tunics on them. 9 And you shall gird them with sashes, Aaron and his sons, and put the hats on them. The priesthood shall be theirs for a perpetual statute. So you shall consecrate Aaron and his sons.*

10 “You shall also have the bull brought before the tabernacle of meeting, and Aaron and his sons shall put their hands on the head of the bull. **11** Then you shall kill the bull before the Lord, by the door of the tabernacle of meeting. **12** You shall take some of the blood of the bull and put it on the horns of the altar with your finger, and pour all the blood beside the base of the altar. **13** And you shall take all the fat that covers the entrails, the fatty lobe attached to the liver, and the two kidneys and the fat that is on them, and burn them on the altar. **14** But the flesh of the bull, with its skin and its offal, you shall burn with fire outside the camp. It is a sin offering.

15 “You shall also take one ram, and Aaron and his sons shall put their hands on the head of the ram; **16** and you shall kill the ram, and you shall take its blood and sprinkle it all around on the altar. **17** Then you shall cut the ram in pieces, wash its entrails and its legs, and put them with its pieces and with its head. **18** And you shall burn the whole ram on the altar. It is a burnt offering to the Lord; it is a sweet aroma, an offering made by fire to the Lord.

19 “You shall also take the other ram, and Aaron and his sons shall put their hands on the head of the ram. **20** Then you shall kill the ram, and take some of its blood and put it on the tip of the right ear of Aaron and on the tip of the right ear of his sons, on the thumb of their right hand and on the big toe of their right foot, and sprinkle the blood all around on the altar. **21** And you shall take some of the blood that is on the altar, and some of the anointing oil, and sprinkle it on Aaron and on his garments, on his sons and on the garments of his sons with him; and he and his garments shall be hallowed, and his sons and his sons’ garments with him.

22 “Also you shall take the fat of the ram, the fat tail, the fat that covers the entrails, the fatty lobe attached to the liver, the two kidneys and the fat on them, the right thigh (for it is a ram of consecration), **23** one loaf of bread, one cake made with oil, and one wafer from the basket of the unleavened bread that is before the Lord; **24** and you shall put all these in the hands of Aaron and in the hands of his sons, and you shall wave them as a wave offering before the Lord. **25** You shall receive them back from their hands and burn them on the altar as a burnt offering, as a sweet aroma before the Lord. It is an offering made by fire to the Lord.

26 “Then you shall take the breast of the ram of Aaron’s consecration and wave it as a wave offering before the Lord; and it shall be your portion. **27** And from the ram of the consecration you shall consecrate the breast of the wave offering which is waved, and the thigh of the heave offering which is raised, of that which is for Aaron and of that which is for his sons. **28** It shall be from the children of Israel for Aaron and his sons by a statute forever. For it is a heave offering; it shall be a heave offering from the children of Israel from the sacrifices of their peace offerings, that is, their heave offering to the Lord.

29 “And the holy garments of Aaron shall be his sons’ after him, to be anointed in them and to be consecrated in them. **30** That son who becomes priest in his place shall put them on for seven days, when he enters the tabernacle of meeting to minister in the holy place.

31 “And you shall take the ram of the consecration and boil its flesh in the holy place. **32** Then Aaron and his sons shall eat the flesh of the ram, and the bread that is in the basket, by the door of the tabernacle of meeting. **33** They shall eat those things with which the atonement was made, to consecrate and to sanctify them; but an outsider shall not eat them, because they are holy. **34** And if any of the flesh of the consecration offerings, or of the bread, remains until the morning, then you shall burn the remainder with fire. It shall not be eaten, because it is holy.

35 “Thus you shall do to Aaron and his sons, according to all that I have commanded you. Seven days you shall consecrate them. **36** And you shall offer a bull every day as a sin offering for atonement. You shall cleanse the altar when you make atonement for it, and you shall anoint it to sanctify it. **37** Seven days you shall make atonement for the altar and sanctify it. And the altar shall be most holy. Whatever touches the altar must be holy.[a]

The Daily Offerings

38 “Now this is what you shall offer on the altar: two lambs of the first year, day by day continually. **39** One lamb you shall offer in the morning, and the other lamb you shall offer at twilight. **40** With the one lamb shall be one-tenth of an ephah of flour mixed with one-fourth of a hin of pressed oil, and one-fourth of a hin of wine as a drink offering. **41** And the other lamb you shall offer at twilight; and you shall offer with it the grain offering and the drink offering, as in the morning, for a sweet aroma, an offering made by fire to the Lord. **42** This shall be a continual burnt offering throughout your generations at the door of the tabernacle of meeting before the Lord, where I will meet you to speak with you. **43** And there I will meet with the children of Israel, and the tabernacle shall be sanctified by My glory. **44** So I will consecrate the tabernacle of meeting and the altar. I will also consecrate both Aaron and his sons to minister to Me as priests. **45** I will dwell among the children of Israel and will be their God. **46** And they shall know that I am the Lord their God, who brought them up out of the land of Egypt, that I may dwell among them. I am the Lord their God.

Exodus 29 gives us instructions for the consecration of the priests, a process that lasted for seven days. These instructions were carried out in Leviticus 8. In the priestly consecration, the importance of **salvation** and **sanctification** is portrayed.

Aaron and his sons were first washed with water (v4), speaking of the washing of regeneration that is necessary for all believer-priests today. Titus 3:5 says, “Not by works of righteousness that we have done, but by His mercy He saved us, by the washing of regeneration and the renewing of the Holy Spirit.” In their consecration, the anointing of the priests with oil (v7, 20) portrayed the renewal of the Holy Spirit for the believer today. Oil is a picture of the Holy Spirit, as we’ve seen before.

In verses 10-21 the application of the sacrificial blood is emphasized. The blood sacrifices of the bull and the rams certainly emphasize that there is no salvation for us without the shedding of Christ’s blood when He die as our Substitute at the Cross. When the priests put their hands on the sacrifice, they identified with the sacrifice that would die as a substitute.

Sanctification of the priests continued with the application of the blood of the sacrifice to the right ear lobes, and right thumbs, and right big toes of the priests. I think it’s easy to see how this represents our responsibility as priests to live sanctified lives -- lives that are set apart for the Lord’s use. We should dedicate ourselves to

regulate what we hear, and what we do, and where we go, so that our lives and lifestyles are pleasing to the Lord.

In Verses 22-37 we read of “wave offerings” and “heave offerings” in the consecration of the priests. Wave offerings were gestured toward the altar and back again to the priest. Heave offerings were gestured toward God in heaven and back again to the priest. In other words, these offerings signified that as I give to the Lord, He gives back to me.

The priests could eat certain portions of some of these offerings. As believer-priests, we find that Christ is our spiritual sustenance as well as the sacrifice for our sins. **The consecration of the priests is filled with meaning.**

Practical Application

Don't forget the continual Burnt Offering.

Every morning and every evening a lamb was offered as a burnt offering on the Altar of Sacrifice. It was a **continual burnt offering** (v42). On this basis of this offering, the Lord said that He would meet and fellowship with His people.

Do you see the spiritual lesson and practical application for us? Every day, all day, morning and evening, the Lord and His sacrificial death for us should continually be before us as we worship Him, praise Him, study His Word and pray. Thus we will experience a deeper fellowship with the Lord.

Don't forget the continual Burnt Offering.