

~EPHOD, I (362)

(eph'od)

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.. A Priestly Vestment

The special **ephod** to be worn by the High Priest is described in detail in God's instructions to Moses. It was apparently **an apron-like garment, made of gold, blue thread and wool dyed reddish purple, coccus scarlet material and fine twisted linen, the work of an embroiderer.**

- It consisted of front and back parts, these being joined together. A girdle of the same material was upon it, perhaps fastened to the **ephod**, holding it close around the waist. In gold settings on the shoulder pieces were two onyx stones, each engraved with the names of six of the sons of Israel.

- From the gold settings of these stones hung the breastpiece, by chains of gold having the workmanship of a rope. From the bottom corners of the breastpiece blue string ran through gold rings that were fastened to the lower extremity of the shoulder pieces of the ephod just above the girdle. The **ephod** apparently reached a little below the waist, perhaps not down to the knees.

- And they must make the **ephod** of gold, blue thread and wool dyed reddish purple, coccus scarlet material and fine twisted linen, the work of an embroiderer. (**Exodus 28:6**)

- And it is to have two shoulder pieces to be joined at its two extremities, and it must be joined. (**Exodus 28:7**)

- And the girdle, which is upon it for tying it close, according to its workmanship should be of its materials, of gold, blue thread and wool dyed reddish purple and coccus scarlet material and fine twisted linen. (**Exodus 28:8**)

- And you must take two onyx stones and engrave upon them the names of the sons of Israel. (**Exodus 28:9**)

- Six of their names upon the one stone and the names of the six remaining ones upon the other stone in the order of their births. (Exodus 28:10)
- With the work of a craftsman in stones, with the engravings of a seal, you are to engrave the two stones with the names of the sons of Israel. Set in settings of gold is how you will make them. (Exodus 28:11)
- And you must put the two stones upon the shoulder pieces of the ephod as memorial stones for the sons of Israel, and Aaron must carry their names before Yehowah upon his two shoulder pieces as a memorial. (Exodus 28:12)
- And you must make settings of gold. (Exodus 28:13)
- And two chains of pure gold. As cords you will make them, with the workmanship of a rope, and you must attach the ropelike chains to the settings. (Exodus 28:14)
- And you must make upon the breastpiece wreathed chains, in ropework, of pure gold. (Exodus 28:22)
- And you must make upon the breastpiece two rings of gold, and you must put the two rings upon the two extremities of the breastpiece. (Exodus 28:23)
- And you must put the two ropes of gold through the two rings at the extremities of the breastpiece. (Exodus 28:24)
- And you will put the two ends of the two ropes through the two settings, and you must put them upon the shoulder pieces of the **ephod**, at the forefront of it. (Exodus 28:25)
- And you must make two rings of gold and set them at the two extremities of the breastpiece upon its edge that is on the side toward the ephod inward. (Exodus 28:26)
- And you must make two rings of gold and put them upon the two shoulder pieces of the **ephod** from below, on its forefront, near its place of joining, above the girdle of the ephod. (Exodus 28:27)
- And they will bind the breastpiece by its rings to the rings of the ephod with a blue string, that it may continue above the girdle of

the **ephod** and the breastpiece may not get displaced from on top of the **ephod**. (**Exodus 28:28**)

- The **ephod** was worn by the High Priest over the blue sleeveless coat, called the coat of the **ephod**, which, in turn, was atop the linen robe.
- Then you must take the garments and clothe Aaron with the robe and the sleeveless coat of the **ephod** and with the ephod and the breastpiece, and you must tie it closely to him with the girdle of the **ephod**. (**Exodus 29:5**)
- This **ephod** was not worn on all occasions. When it was necessary to inquire of Yehowah about a matter of importance to the nation, the High Priest wore the **ephod** and the breastpiece containing the Urim and the Thummim.
- And it is before Eleazar the priest that he will stand, and he must inquire in his behalf by the judgment of the Urim before Yehowah. At his order they will go out and at his order they will come in, he and all the sons of Israel with him and all the assembly. (**Numbers 27:21**)
- Although Saul would inquire of Yehowah, Yehowah never answered him, either by dreams or by the Urim or by the prophets. (**1 Samuel 28:6**)
- Consequently the Tirshatha said to them that they could not eat from the most holy things until a priest stood up with Urim and Thummim. (**Ezra 2:63**)
- On the annual Day of Atonement, after presenting the sin offerings, the High Priest would wash and change garments, taking off the pure white garments and apparently putting on his beautiful garments, including the **ephod**, before offering up the burnt offerings.
- And Aaron must come into the tent of meeting and strip off the linen garments that he put on when he went into the holy place, and he must lay them down there. (**Leviticus 16:23**)
- And he must bathe his flesh in water in a holy place and put on his garments and come out and render up his burnt offering and the peoples burnt offering and make atonement in his own behalf and in behalf of the people. (**Leviticus 16:24**)

- He will make the fat of the sin offering smoke upon the altar. (Leviticus 16:25)
- The **ephod** that Abiathar the priest carried from the sanctuary at Nob to David's camp was likely the **ephod** of the High Priest, since Doeg had killed Abiathar's father, High Priest Ahimelech, and the underpriests with him.
- But the king said; You will positively die, Ahimelech, you with all the house of your father. (1 Samuel 22:16)
- With that the king said to the runners stationed about him; Turn and put to death the priests of Yehowah, because their hand also is with David and because they knew that he was a runaway and they did not disclose it to my ear! And the servants of the king did not want to thrust out their hand to assault the priests of Yehowah. (1 Samuel 22:17)
- Finally the king said to Doeg; You turn and assault the priests! Immediately Doeg the Edomite turned and himself assaulted the priests and put to death on that day eighty-five men bearing an **ephod** of linen. (1 Samuel 22:18)
- Even Nob the city of the priests he struck with the edge of the sword, man as well as woman, child as well as suckling and bull and ass and sheep with the edge of the sword. (1 Samuel 22:19)
- However, one son of Ahimelech the son of Ahitub, whose name was Abiathar, made his escape and went running away to follow David. (1 Samuel 22:20)
- Now it came about that when Abiathar the son of Ahimelech ran away to David at Keilah, there was an **ephod** that went down in his hand. (1 Samuel 23:6)
- David had Abiathar bring the **ephod** near so that he could inquire of Yehowah as to what course of action to take.
- And David got to know that Saul was fabricating mischief against him. Hence he said to Abiathar the priest; Do bring the ephod near. (1 Samuel 23:9)
- And David went on to say; O Yehowah the God of Israel, your

servant has definitely heard that Saul is seeking to come to Keilah to lay the city in ruin on my account. (**1 Samuel 23:10**)

- Will the landowners of Keilah surrender me into his hand? Will Saul come down just as your servant has heard? O Yehowah the God of Israel, tell your servant, please. To this Yehowah said; He will come down. (**1 Samuel 23:11**)
- And David went on to say; Will the landowners of Keilah surrender me and my men into Saul's hand? In turn Yehowah said; They will do the surrendering. (**1 Samuel 23:12**)
- Hence David said to Abiathar the priest, the son of Ahimelech; Do, please, bring the ephod near to me. And Abiathar came bringing the **ephod** near to David. (**1 Samuel 30:7**)
- And David began to inquire of Yehowah, saying; Shall I chase after this marauder band? Shall I overtake them? At this he said to him, Go in chase, for you will without fail overtake them, and you will without fail make a deliverance. (**1 Samuel 30:8**)

·· Ephods Of The Underpriests

- The underpriests also wore **ephods**, although the High Priests **ephod** is the only one specifically mentioned and described in Yehowah's instructions for making the priestly garments. Only robes, sashes, headgears, and drawers were specified for Aaron's sons, who served as underpriests under Aaron.
- And for Aaron's sons you will make robes, and you must make sashes for them, and you will make headgears for them for glory and beauty. (**Exodus 28:40**)
- And with them you must clothe Aaron your brother and his sons with him, and you must anoint them and fill their hand with power and sanctify them, and they must act as priests to me. (**Exodus 28:41**)
- And make drawers of linen for them to cover the naked flesh. From the hips and to the thighs they are to extend. (**Exodus 28:42**)
- And they must be upon Aaron and his sons when they come into the tent of meeting or when they go near to the altar to minister

in the holy place, that they may not incur error and certainly die. It is a statute to time indefinite for him and his offspring after him. (**Exodus 28:43**)

- The wearing of an **ephod** by underpriests seems to have been a later practice. Samuel, though not an underpriest, wore an **ephod** when he as a young boy ministered to Yehowah at the sanctuary
- And Samuel was ministering before Yehowah, as a boy, having a linen **ephod** girded on. (**1 Samuel 2:18**)
- As did the 85 priests slain by Doeg at King Saul's command.
- Finally the king said to Doeg; You turn and assault the priests! Immediately Doeg the Edomite turned and himself assaulted the priests and put to death on that day eighty-five men bearing an **ephod** of linen. (**1 Samuel 22:18**)
- These **ephods** may have denoted the priestly position of the wearers instead of being something prescribed by the Law to be used when performing their official duties. The underpriests **ephod** was probably like the High Priests in shape but was made of plain white cloth, not embroidered, and the linen of which it was made may not have been of the quality of the High Priests **ephod**.
- The **Hebrew** word for linen used in describing the ephod worn by young Samuel and the 85 priests is *badh*, while *shesh*, fine linen, is the word used for the High Priests **ephod**.
- And they must make the **ephod** of gold, blue thread and wool dyed reddish purple, coccus scarlet material and fine twisted linen, the work of an embroiderer. (**Exodus 28:6**)
- And Samuel was ministering before Yehowah, as a boy, having a linen **ephod** girded on. (**1 Samuel 2:18**)
- Finally the king said to Doeg; You turn and assault the priests! Immediately Doeg the Edomite turned and himself assaulted the priests and put to death on that day eighty-five men bearing an **ephod** of linen. (**1 Samuel 22:18**)
- When the ark of the covenant was being brought up to Jerusalem to be placed on Mount Zion near his own house, David, dressed in a

sleeveless coat of fine fabric, wore over this garment an **ephod of linen as he danced before Yehowah celebrating this joyous event.**

- **And David was dancing around before Yehowah with all his power, all the while David being girded with an **ephod** of linen. (2 Samuel 6:14)**
- **And David was dressed in a sleeveless coat of fine fabric, and also all the Levites carrying the Ark and the singers and Chenaniah the chief of the carrying by the singers, but upon David there was an **ephod** of linen. (1 Chronicles 15:27)**

.. The Ephod Made By Gideon

- **After Gideon's defeat of the Midianites he used gold taken as booty to make an **ephod**.**
- **And the weight of the nose rings of gold that he had requested amounted to one thousand seven hundred gold shekels, besides the moon-shaped ornaments and the eardrops and the garments of wool dyed reddish purple that were upon the kings of Midian and besides the necklaces that were on the necks of the camels. (Judges 8:26)**
- **And Gideon proceeded to make it into an ephod and to exhibit it in his city Ophrah, and all Israel began to have immoral intercourse with it there, so that it served as a snare to Gideon and to his household. (Judges 8:27)**
- **Some have objected to this statement on the ground that the 1,700 shekels (19.4 kilograms)(52 pounds troy) of gold would be far more than required for an **ephod**. An attempted explanation has been offered, that Gideon also made a golden image.**
- **But the word **ephod** does not signify an image. Gideon was a man of faith in God. He would not do what Jeroboam later did when he led the ten tribes into the worship of calf images.**
- **Gideon had shown his disposition toward Yehowah's worship when he was given opportunity to set up a ruling dynasty over Israel. He turned the offer down, saying; Yehowah is the one who will rule over you.**
- **Later the men of Israel said to Gideon; Rule over us, you and**

your son and your grandson as well, for you have saved us out of the hand of Midian. (**Judges 8:22**)

- But Gideon said to them; I myself shall not rule over you, nor will my son rule over you. Yehowah is the one who will rule over you. (**Judges 8:23**)
- It may well be that much of the gold was used to **pay** for the jewels, and so forth, that possibly were used in the ephod. As to the cost of Gideon's **ephod**, it may well have been of the value stated, \$218,365 at modern rates, especially if precious gems were used to decorate it.
- In spite of Gideon's good intentions to commemorate the victory Yehowah had given Israel and to honor God, the ephod served as a snare to Gideon and to his household, because the Israelites committed spiritual immorality by worshiping it.
- And Gideon proceeded to make it into an ephod and to exhibit it in his city Ophrah, and all Israel began to have immoral intercourse with it there, so that it served as a snare to Gideon and to his household. (**Judges 8:27**)
- However, the Bible does not say that Gideon himself worshiped it, on the contrary, he is specifically named by the apostle Paul as one of the great cloud of faithful pre-Christian witnesses of Yehowah.
- And what more shall I say? For the time will fail me if I go on to relate about Gideon, Barak, Samson, Jephthah, David as well as Samuel and the other prophets. (**Hebrews 11:32**)
- So, then, because we have so great a cloud of witnesses surrounding us, let us also put off every weight and the sin that easily entangles us, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us. (**Hebrews 12:1**)

•• Idolatrous Use

- An instance of the use of an ephod in idolatrous worship is found at (**Judges Chapters 17,18**) The **ephod**, made by an Ephraimite, was first used by one of his own sons acting as priest before a carved image, then by a Levite descendant of Moses who, though not of the priestly family of Aaron, acted as priest.

- **Eventually the ephod and image fell into the hands of men of the tribe of Dan, among whom the Levite and his sons after him continued in this idolatrous capacity in the city of Dan all the days that the house of God was located at Shiloh.**