

~URIM AND THUMMIM (481)

- Their Use
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 - Greater High Priest Consults Yehowah
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- Objects used to ascertain the divine will when questions of national importance needed an answer from Yehowah.
 - As recorded at;
 - Next he placed the breastpiece upon him and put in the breastpiece the **Urim** and the **Thummim**. (**Leviticus 8:8**)
 - Moses, after placing the breastpiece upon Aaron, put the **Urim** and the **Thummim** in the breastpiece. While the **Hebrew** preposition here translated, **in** can be rendered, **upon**, the same word is used at;
 - And you must place **in** the Ark the testimony that I shall give you. (**Exodus 25:16**)
 - In speaking of placing the two stone tablets **in** the ark of the covenant.
 - Now as soon as he had finished speaking with him on Mount Sinai he proceeded to give Moses two tablets of the Testimony, tablets of stone written on by God's finger. (**Exodus 31:18**)
 - Some have proposed the suggestion that the **Urim** and the **Thummim** were the 12 stones affixed to the breastpiece. That this was not the case is shown by the fact that, in the priestly inauguration ceremony, the completed breastpiece with the 12 stones sewn on it, was put upon Aaron, and **then** the **Urim** and **Thummim** were put in it. Also, a comparison of;
 - And you must take two onyx stones and engrave upon them the names of the sons of Israel. (**Exodus 28:9**)
 - 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 put the **Urim** and the **Thummim** into the breastpiece of judgment, and they must prove to be over Aaron's heart when he comes in before Yehowah, and Aaron must carry the judgments of the sons of Israel over his heart before Yehowah constantly. (**Exodus 28:30**)
 - Refutes the theory that they consisted of the two onyx stones on the shoulder pieces of the High Priest's ephod.
 - 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**)
 - They evidently were separate objects.

•• Their Use

- It is notable that the **Urim** and the **Thummim** were to be over Aaron's heart when he went in before Yehowah, doubtless referring to Aaron's standing in the Holy before the curtain to the Most Holy compartment when inquiring of Yehowah.

- Their location, **over Aaron's heart**, would appear to indicate that the **Urim** and the **Thummim** were placed in the fold, or pouch, formed by the doubled construction of the breastpiece.
- They were for **the judgments of the sons of Israel** and were used when a question of importance to the national leaders and consequently to the nation itself needed an answer from Yehowah. Yehowah, Israel's Lawgiver, would give an answer to the High Priest as to the right course to pursue on any matter.
- And you must put the **Urim** and the **Thummim** into the breastpiece of judgment, and they must prove to be over Aaron's heart when he comes in before Yehowah, and Aaron must carry the judgments of the sons of Israel over his heart before Yehowah constantly. (**Exodus 28:30**)
- David called upon Abiathar to employ the **Urim** and the **Thummim** when Abiathar, after escaping the slaughter of the priests of Nob in which his father died, came to David with the ephod. Apparently this was **the** ephod of the High Priest.
- 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**)
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- 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**)
- Then Abiathar told David; Saul has killed the priests of Yehowah. (**1 Samuel 22:21**)
- At this David said to Abiathar; I well knew on that day, because Doeg the Edomite was there, that he would without fail tell Saul. I personally have wronged every soul of the house of your father. (**1 Samuel 22:22**)

- Just dwell with me. Do not be afraid, for whoever looks for my soul looks for your soul, for you are one needing protection with me. (**1 Samuel 22:23**)
- In time they came reporting to David, saying; Here the Philistines are warring against Keilah, and they are pillaging the threshing floors. (**1 Samuel 23:1**)
- And David proceeded to inquire of Yehowah, saying; Shall I go, and must I strike down these Philistines? In turn Yehowah said to David; Go, and you must strike down the Philistines and save Keilah. (**1 Samuel 23:2**)
- At this the men of David said to him; Look! We are afraid while here in Judah, and how much more so in case we should go to Keilah against the battle lines of the Philistines! (**1 Samuel 23:3**)
- So David inquired yet again of Yehowah. Yehowah now answered him and said; Rise up, go down to Keilah, because I am giving the Philistines into your hand. (**1 Samuel 23:4**)

•• May Have Been Lot's

- From the instances recorded in the Scriptures in which Yehowah was consulted by **Urim** and **Thummim**, it appears that the question was so framed that a **yes** or **no** answer, or at least a very brief and direct reply, could be given. In one instance
- 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**)
- The **Urim** is mentioned alone, evidently with the **Thummim** also understood to be included.
- A number of Bible commentators believe that the **Urim** and the **Thummim** were lots. They are called, **the sacred lots** in James Moffatt's translation of,
- And you must put the **Urim** and the **Thummim** into the breastpiece of judgment, and they must prove to be over Aaron's heart when he comes in before Yehowah, and Aaron must carry the judgments of the sons of Israel over his heart before

Yehowah constantly. ([Exodus 28:30](#))

- Some suppose that they consisted of three pieces, one inscribed with the word, **yes**, one with **no**, and the other blank. These would be drawn, giving the answer to the question propounded, unless the blank piece was drawn, in which case no answer was forthcoming. Others think that they may have been two flat stones, white on one side and black on the other. When thrown down, two white sides up would mean, **yes**, two black sides **no**, and a black and a white would mean no answer.
- On one occasion, when Saul had inquired through the priest as to whether to resume an attack on the Philistines, he received no answer. Feeling that someone among his men had sinned, he petitioned; O God of Israel, do give **Thummim**!
- Saul and Jonathan were taken from among those present, after that, lots were cast to decide between the two. In this account the appeal; Do give **Thummim**. Seems to be separate from the lot casting, though it may give indication that there was some connection between the two.
- Later Saul said; Let us go down after the Philistines by night and plunder them until the morning lightens up, and let us not leave a single one among them. To this they said; Anything that is good in your eyes do. Then the priest said; Let us approach here to the true God. ([1 Samuel 14:36](#))
- And Saul began to inquire of God; Shall I go down after the Philistines? Will you give them into the hand of Israel? And he did not answer him on that day. ([1 Samuel 14:37](#))
- So Saul said; Come near here, all you keymen of the people, and ascertain and see in what way this sin has come to be today. ([1 Samuel 14:38](#))
- For as Yehowah, who is the Deliverer of Israel, is alive, even if it is in Jonathan my son, yet he will positively die. But there was no one answering him out of all the people. ([1 Samuel 14:39](#))
- And he went on to say to all Israel; You yourselves will come to be on the one side, and I and Jonathan my son, we will come to be on the other side. At this the people said to Saul; What is good in your eyes do. ([1 Samuel 14:40](#))

- And Saul proceeded to say to Yehowah; O God of Israel, do give Thummim! Then Jonathan and Saul were taken, and the people themselves went out. (**1 Samuel 14:41**)
- Saul now said; Cast lots to decide between me and Jonathan my son. And Jonathan got to be taken. (**1 Samuel 14:42**)

· Served To Link Kingdom With Priesthood

- The Aaronic priesthood is referred to at;
- And as to Levi he said; Your **Thummim** and your **Urim** belong to the man loyal to you, whom you put to the test at Massah. You began to contend with him by the waters of Meribah. (**Deuteronomy 33:8**)
- The man who said to his father and his mother, I have not seen him. Even his brothers he did not acknowledge, and his sons he did not know. For they kept your saying, and your covenant they continued to observe. (**Deuteronomy 33:9**)
- Let them instruct Jacob in your judicial decisions and Israel in your law. Let them render up incense before your nostrils and a whole offering on your altar. (**Deuteronomy 33:10**)
- Which says; Your **Thummim** and your **Urim** belong to the man loyal to you. The reference to these as belonging to the man loyal to you Yehowah, perhaps alludes to the loyalty of the tribe of Levi, from which the Aaronic priesthood came, that was demonstrated in connection with the incident of the golden calf.
- And Moses got to see that the people went unrestrained, because Aaron had let them go unrestrained for a disgrace among their opposers. (**Exodus 32:25**)
- Then Moses took his stand in the gate of the camp and said; Who is on Yehowah's side? To me! And all the sons of Levi began gathering themselves to him. (**Exodus 32:26**)
- He now said to them; This is what Yehowah the God of Israel has said; Put each one of you his sword on his side. Pass through and return from gate to gate in the camp and kill each one his brother and each one his fellow and each one his intimate

acquaintance. (**Exodus 32:27**)

- And the sons of Levi proceeded to do as Moses had said, so that there fell of the people on that day about three thousand men. (**Exodus 32:28**)
- And Moses went on to say; Fill your hand today with power for Yehowah, because each one of you is against his own son and his own brother, and that he may confer a blessing upon you today. (**Exodus 32:29**)
- Yehowah wisely provided the **Urim** and the **Thummim** and placed them in the hands of the High Priest. This made the king dependent to a great extent on the priesthood, avoiding the concentration of too much power in the hands of the king. It brought about the necessity of cooperation between the kingship and the priesthood.
- So Yehowah said to Moses; Take for yourself Joshua the son of Nun, a man in whom there is spirit, and you must lay your hand upon him. (**Numbers 27:18**)
- And you must stand him before Eleazar the priest and before all the assembly, and you must commission him before their eyes. (**Numbers 27:19**)
- And you must put some of your dignity upon him, in order, that all the assembly of the sons of Israel may listen to him. (**Numbers 27:20**)
- 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**)
- Yehowah made known his will to Israel by his written Word, also by prophets and by dreams. But it seems that prophets and dreams were used for special occasions, whereas the High Priest with the **Urim** and the **Thummim** was always present with the people.

·· **Use Ceased In 607 B.C.E.**

- According to Jewish tradition, use of the **Urim** and the **Thummim** ceased when Jerusalem was desolated and her temple destroyed in

607 B.C.E. by the Babylonian armies under King Nebuchadnezzar.
[Babylonian Talmud, Sotah 48b]

- This view is supported by what we read regarding these objects in the books of Ezra and Nehemiah. There, certain men who were claimants to priestly descent, but who could not find their names in the public register, were told that they could not eat from the most holy things provided for the priesthood until a priest stood up with Urim and **Thummim**.

- But there is no record of their use at that time, and thereafter the Bible makes no further reference to these sacred objects.

- And of the sons of the priests, the sons of Habaiah, the sons of Hakkoz, the sons of Barzillai, who took a wife from the daughters of Barzillai the Gileadite and came to be called by their name. (Ezra 2:61)

- These were the ones that looked for their register to establish their genealogy publicly, and they did not find themselves, so that they were barred as polluted from the priesthood. (Ezra 2:62)

- 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)

- And of the priests, the sons of Habaiah, the sons of Hakkoz, the sons of Barzillai, who took a wife from the daughters of Barzillai the Gileadite and came to be called by their name. (Nehemiah 7:63)

- These were the ones that looked for their register, to establish their genealogy publicly, and it was not found, so that they were barred as polluted from the priesthood. (Nehemiah 7:64)

- Consequently the Tirshatha said to them that they should not eat from the most holy things until the priest with **Urim** and **Thummim** stood up. (Nehemiah 7:65)

•• Greater High Priest Consults Yehowah

- Jesus Christ is described in Paul's letter to the Hebrews as the great King-Priest according to the manner of Melchizedek.

- **This hope we have as an anchor for the soul, both sure and firm, and it enters in within the curtain. (Hebrews 6:19)**
- **Where a forerunner has entered in our behalf, Jesus, who has become a High Priest according to the manner of Melchizedek forever. (Hebrews 6:20)**
- **For this Melchizedek, king of Salem, priest of the Most High God, who met Abraham returning from the slaughter of the kings and blessed him. (Hebrews 7:1)**
- **And to whom Abraham apportioned a tenth from all things, is first of all, by translation, **King of Righteousness**, and is then also king of Salem, that is, **King of Peace**. (Hebrews 7:2)**
- **In being fatherless, motherless, without genealogy, having neither a beginning of days nor an end of life, but having been made like the Son of God, he remains a priest perpetually. (Hebrews 7:3)**
- **In him kingship and priesthood are combined. His priestly work was foreshadowed by that of the High Priest of ancient Israel.**
- **For every High Priest is appointed to offer both gifts and sacrifices, wherefore it was necessary for this one also to have something to offer. (Hebrews 8:3)**
- **If, now, he were upon earth, he would not be a priest, there being men who offer the gifts according to the Law. (Hebrews 8:4)**
- **But which men are rendering sacred service in a typical representation and a shadow of the heavenly things, just as Moses, when about to make the tent in completion, was given the divine command; For says he; See that you make all things after their pattern that was shown to you in the mountain. (Hebrews 8:5)**
- **After these things had been constructed this way, the priests enter the first tent compartment at all times to perform the sacred services. (Hebrews 9:6)**
- **But into the second compartment the High Priest alone enters**

- once a year, not without blood, which he offers for himself and for the sins of ignorance of the people. (**Hebrews 9:7**)
- **Thus the Holy Spirit makes it plain that the way into the holy place had not yet been made manifest while the first tent was standing. (**Hebrews 9:8**)**
 - **This very tent is an illustration for the appointed time that is now here, and in keeping with it both gifts and sacrifices are offered. However, these are not able to make the man doing sacred service perfect as respects his conscience. (**Hebrews 9:9**)**
 - **But have to do only with foods and drinks and various baptisms. They were legal requirements pertaining to the flesh and were imposed until the appointed time to set things straight. (**Hebrews 9:10**)**
 - **However, when Christ came as a High Priest of the good things that have come to pass, through the greater and more perfect tent not made with hands, that is, not of this creation. (**Hebrews 9:11**)**
 - **He entered, no, not with the blood of goats and of young bulls, but with his own blood, once for all time into the holy place and obtained an everlasting deliverance for us. (**Hebrews 9:12**)**
 - **All judgment of mankind is committed into his hands as such a High Priest.**
 - **For the Father judges no one at all, but he has committed all the judging to the Son. (**John 5:22**)**
 - **Nevertheless, when on earth Jesus declared;**
 - **Do you not believe that I am in union with the Father and the Father is in union with me? The things I say to you men I do not speak of my own originality, but the Father who remains in union with me is doing his works. (**John 14:10**)**
 - **And, I do nothing of my own initiative, but just as the Father taught me I speak these things.**
 - **Therefore Jesus said; When once you have lifted up the Son of man, then you will know that I am he, and that I do nothing of**

- my own initiative, but just as the Father taught me I speak these things. ([John 8:28](#))
- **Also, he said;**
 - **And yet if I do judge, my judgment is truthful, because I am not alone, but the Father who sent me is with me. ([John 8:16](#))**
 - **Certainly in his exalted heavenly position, perfected as High Priest forever, he continues in this course of subjection to his Father, looking to him for guidance in judgment.**
 - **For the Law appoints men High Priests having weakness, but the word of the sworn oath that came after the Law appoints a Son, who is perfected forever. ([Hebrews 7:28](#))**
 - **But I want you to know that the head of every man is the Christ. In turn the head of a woman is the man. In turn the head of the Christ is God. ([1 Corinthians 11:3](#))**
 - **For God subjected all things under his feet. But when he says that all things have been subjected, it is evident that it is with the exception of the one who subjected all things to him. ([1 Corinthians 15:27](#))**
 - **But when all things will have been subjected to him, then the Son himself will also subject himself to the One who subjected all things to him, that God may be all things to everyone. ([1 Corinthians 15:28](#))**