

THE GARMENTS OF THE HIGH PRIEST

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Readings: *Exodus 28:1-43, Exodus 29:4-7, Exodus 39:1-31, Leviticus 8:6-9.*

The garments of the High Priest were **holy** garments to clothe him with **glory and beauty**, *Ex 28:2.*

Ephod - *Ex 28:4-30*

The outer garment was the **ephod** which was like a waistcoat. It was made of threads of gold, blue, purple, and scarlet, and fine woven linen artistically worked together.

Gold symbolises the character of God.

Blue is the heavenly colour and represents the Holy Spirit.

Purple is the colour of royalty and authority. It is a mixture of blue and scarlet.

Scarlet is the colour of sacrifice and redemption.

Linen represents the righteousness of saints, *Rev 19:8.*

The ephod was bound together by the **intricately woven band** of the ephod, *Ex 28:8*, made of the same threads, like a belt, to hold the ephod firmly to the High Priest.

On the front of the ephod was the **breastplate of judgment**, *Ex 28:15-30*, which was made of the same threads as the ephod. It carried twelve precious stones, set in gold settings on the front of the breastplate, in four rows, each stone engraved with the name of one of the tribes of Israel. The breastplate was held to the ephod with chains of gold, rings of gold, and cords of blue, *Ex 28:15-30.*

Inside the breastplate, which was made by doubling over a length of woven material to form a square, were placed the **Urim and Thummim**, *v30*. These signified “lights” and “perfections”, or “light” and “integrity”, and were “consulted” when it was necessary to discern the will of God, in cases where this was not clearly shown by the written word.

The Urim and the Thummin may have been two dissimilar stones, e.g. white and black, or simply just the presence of the anointing, which enabled the High Priest to discern God’s will. (Matthew Henry considers it to be the latter.)

The shoulder straps, *Ex 28:7-14*, of the ephod were special, in that they held two special stones, set in gold, on which were inscribed the names of the twelve tribes, six on each onyx stone.

The ephod pictures Christ’s ministry to us, as our High Priest, *Heb 3:1*. He bears our names over His heart in love and mercy before God and on His shoulders in security and authority, *Is 9:6*. He brings to us the knowledge of God’s will in all situations by His Word and His Holy Spirit. The gold, blue, purple and scarlet represent Christ’s divinity, anointing, rule and kingship, and His redeeming sacrifice for us on the Cross. He is our Prophet, Priest and King, seated at the Father’s right hand.

The Robe - *Ex 28:31-35.*

Beneath the ephod the High Priest wore a **robe all of blue**, which reached down below his knees. There was an opening for his head in the middle of it, bound all around so that it would not tear. There were no armholes and probably it was open down the sides. Around the bottom of the robe were, alternately, pomegranates of blue, purple and scarlet threads and golden bells. The pomegranate is a symbol of the fruits of the Spirit of which love is the primary fruit. Two parallel

references: *Song of Solomon 4:13,14*, and *Gal 5:23,24* list the fruit in order. The golden bells represent the nine gifts of the Spirit, *1Cor 12:7-11*.

The robe of blue symbolises the anointing of the Spirit. The alternate pomegranates and bells show the need to have a balance of the fruit of the Spirit and the gifts of the Spirit. “Christ” means the “Anointed One”, (Hebrew “Messiah”), and the robe of blue represents this, *Lk 4:18,19*. Jesus is the only One who had/has the Holy Spirit without measure, *Jn 3:34*, and He was/is ever showing to all the perfect balance of the fruit and the gifts of the Spirit, to meet every need we have.

The Tunic and the Sash - *Ex 28:39, 39:27,29, Lev 16:4*.

Under the robe, the High Priest wore a tunic of fine linen, which reached down to his feet, and to his wrists. The sash was made of woven linen, blue, purple and scarlet thread, *39:29*, and was used to gird the tunic, *Lev 8:7*. The fine linen of righteousness, *Rev 19:8*, was to cover all his flesh.

Linen Trousers - *Ex 28:42, Lev 16:4*.

The trousers reached from the waist to the thighs, to cover his nakedness, and were his inner garment.

Turban and Golden Plate - *Ex 28:36-39, 39:28,30,31*.

On the High Priest’s head he wore a turban of fine linen. Attached to the front of the turban, by a blue cord, was a golden plate inscribed with the words, “HOLINESS TO THE LORD.”

Aaron, the High Priest of Exodus, was an earthly representation of our High Priest, the Lord Jesus Christ. Each item of his garment picture an aspect of the High Priestly ministry of our Lord Jesus Christ towards us.

Now, He is in us as our life, our glory and beauty. The risen, ascended Christ, our Lord and Saviour, who is the fulfilment of all the High Priest represented, is living in us by His Spirit. *Col 1:27, Gal 2:20, 2Cor 13:5*. In Him, (for we are also in Him), *Jn 14:20, Eph 1:1,7*, He has made us kings and priests, a holy priesthood, a royal priesthood, *Rev 1:6, 1Pet 5,9*, to show forth the praises of Him who has called us out of darkness into His glorious light.

The Holy Spirit fulfils the ephod ministry of Christ, our High Priest in us, as we act in love to our brothers and sisters in Christ, and support and uphold them. We wear “the ephod” of His character, anointing, authority and love for all the saints.

The robe ministry in us is His full anointing, *Zech 4:6, Ac 10:38*, in abundance of the fruit and gifts of the Holy Spirit, flowing out to others around us.

The ministry of the tunic, sash, and trousers is the righteousness of Christ in us, *Phil 3:9*, from which the robe and ephod ministries flow.

The golden plate sums it all up as, “Holiness,” or “Set apart” to the Lord. That’s us.

Jesus’ High Priestly ministry in us and through us is our glory and beauty.

One last important point.

In *Ex 28:38* it says that “Aaron shall bear the golden plate of “Holiness to the Lord” on his forehead that he may bear the iniquity of the holy things” and that “they may be accepted before the Lord.” Here he was a type of Christ, the great Mediator between God and man. He bears our iniquities. Through Him, what is amiss in our services to God is pardoned. We do fall short in many things. We are conscious, at times, of iniquity clinging to us as we serve the Lord. Jesus, as our High priest, bears the difference between what we are, and what we should be, so that God has mercy on us and does not judge us. Also, through Him, what is good in us and in our services, are pleasing to God on account of Christ’s intercessions for us, and not otherwise. Please refer to Matthew Henry’s commentary on *Ex 28:38*.