

# Exodus 28-29

Exodus 28:1

*“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.*

The Priesthood

Before completing the blueprints of the Tabernacle, Moses is instructed to prepare the priests for service. Their preparation will involve wearing the proper attire and going through the proper consecration.

## The Origins of the Priesthood

**Going back to Genesis we learn that the role of a priest was assumed by the head of the family;** Noah, Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, etc. This process continued as Israel settled in Egypt.

**The first Israelites to be formally identified as priests were Aaron and his sons** Nadab, Abihu, Eleazar, and Ithamar.

**The establishment of this priesthood would become the bedrock of the nation and their worship of YHWH**

Exodus 19:6

*And you shall be to Me a **kingdom of priests** and a holy nation.’ These are the words which you shall speak to the children of Israel.”*

**This priesthood was based upon birthright. Only those of the tribe of Levi and the family of Aaron could be priests.**

**From the priests one individual was selected to serve as high priest;** an office he would assume until his death or disqualification.

The high priest served as the supreme religious leader of the Israelites.

Aaron served as the first High Priest. (Exodus 40:12-13)

Aaron’s son, Eleazer, replaced him as High Priest when died (Num 20:26-28)

The position of high priests was reestablished after the Babylonian captivity and continued through the time of Christ

**The primary role of the priesthood** was that of a mediator between God and man. It was the job of the priest to represent God to the people and the people to God. This was accomplished through the daily sacrifices and the yearly celebration of the Day of Atonement.

The priests however, had a much broader role than offering the sacrifices; they were also to:

- **Maintain the services of the tabernacle.**
- **Take care of the altar , the lamps, and the showbread**
- **Teach the people.**

Leviticus 10:11

*and that you may **teach** the children of Israel all the **statutes** which the Lord has **spoken** to them by the hand of Moses."*

Deuteronomy 33:10

*They shall **teach** Jacob Your **judgments**, And Israel Your **law**. They shall put incense before You, And a whole burnt sacrifice on Your altar.*

- **Serve as judges to resolve controversy.** (Deut. 21:5)
- **Bless the people**

Numbers 6:22-27

And the Lord spoke to Moses, saying:

*"Speak to Aaron and his sons, saying, 'This is the way you shall bless the children of Israel. Say to them: "The Lord bless you and keep you; The Lord make His face shine upon you, And be gracious to you; The Lord lift up His countenance upon you, And give you peace." ' "So they shall put My name on the children of Israel, and I will bless them."*

- **They were to be involved in intercession for the people**

Joel 2:17

Let the priests, who minister to the Lord, weep between the porch and the altar; Let them say, "Spare Your people, O Lord, And do not give Your heritage to reproach, That the nations should rule over them. Why should they say among the peoples, 'Where is their God?' "

- **Assess impurity** (Leviticus 13-15)

When a person suffered a disease or physical sign of impurity, the purification rites were performed by a priest.

- Prepare the holy things for each days journey. (Num. 4:5-15)
- Blow the trumpets. (Numbers 10:1-10)
- **And give encouragement in times of war** (Deut. 20:2–4).

Deuteronomy 20:2-4

*So it shall be, when you are on the verge of battle, that the priest shall approach and speak to the people. And he shall say to them, 'Hear, O Israel: Today you are on the verge of battle with your enemies. Do not let your heart faint, do not be afraid, and do not tremble or be terrified because of them; for the Lord your God is He who goes with you, to fight for you against your enemies, to save you.'*

**Moses sums up the role of the priest his way:**

Exodus 28:1

*"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.*

Exodus 28:41

*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**.*

**Ultimately the role of the priest was to minister to the Lord by ministering to His people.** This was accomplished through the worship ministry around the Tabernacle.

**The same is true of the child of God.**

Acts 13:2

*As they **ministered** to the Lord and fasted, the Holy Spirit said, "Now separate to Me Barnabas and Saul for the work to which I have called them."*

Romans 12:1

*I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that you present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God, which is your reasonable **service**.*

Ministering to the Lord is done through sacrificial **service**. This word is used to describe the worship service that took place around the Tabernacle. All ministry is to be performed as an offering of self to God

**To assist the Priests in their roles God selected the entire tribe of Levi to serve in a role similar to that of the New Testament Deacon.**

The Levites may have been chosen for their involvement in the incident with the golden calf

Exodus 32:25-29

Because of the actions of the tribe of Levi the remainder of the congregation was spared.

Some have suggested that it was their use of the sword (A picture of the Word of God) that equipped them for their role in ministry

**From this point forward the firstborn son of every tribe would be redeemed with 5 Sheckels. And the Levites would take their place in ministering to the Lord and the Tabernacle**

The Levites were divided into 3 smaller groups

- Gershon - serving and carrying the Tabernacle court
- Kohath - carrying the holy things
- Merari - Carrying the Tabernacle itself.

Later carts would be provided to assist those carrying the heavier objects but the holy things were never to be carried on carts. David violated this process and it cost Ussiah

**As years passed the Levites continued to serve in important roles around the Temple.**

1 Chronicles 23:25-32

*For David said, "The Lord God of Israel has given rest to His people, that they may dwell in Jerusalem forever";*

*and also to the **Levites**, "They shall no longer carry the tabernacle, or any of the articles for its service."*

*they should attend to the needs of the tabernacle of meeting, the needs of the holy place, and the needs of the sons of Aaron their brethren in the work of the house of the Lord.*

**Some of the Levites served in the capacity of worship leader around the Temple**

1 Chronicles 15:16

*Then David spoke to the leaders of the Levites to appoint their brethren to be the singers accompanied by instruments of music, stringed instruments, harps, and cymbals, by raising the voice with resounding joy.*

This passage is particularly relevant to us for two primary reasons.

**First**, Jesus is our High Priest

Christ offered Himself as the supreme sacrifice for the sins of humankind and continually intercedes on their behalf.

As priest, He did not take the blood of a representative animal into the Holy of Holies but instead entered “the greater and more perfect tabernacle” and shed His own blood to obtain “eternal redemption” (Heb. 9:11–12)

We will take the time to make the comparison between the High Priest and Jesus when we get to the day of atonement in Leviticus 16

**Secondly**, because all of us are called priests and given ministry on behalf of the Lord. That ministry. Like the priesthood is to represent God to people and people to God.

1 Peter 2:5

*You also, as living stones, are being built up a spiritual house, a **holy priesthood**, to offer up spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ.*

In the New Testament It is worth noting that the term “priest” is never used in the NT as an office in the church.

The only one who sits in an official office as priest over the church is Christ Himself who has been appointed high priest by God himself (Heb 5:4–6) and is sympathetic to the needs of sinful people (4:15; 7:26) Who, instead of offering animal sacrifices to take away sin, offers himself, as the sinless Lamb, to take away sin.

## Exodus 28

### The Garments of the Priests

Exodus 28:2

*And you shall make holy **garments** for Aaron your brother, for glory and for beauty.*

The purpose of the garments are

Glory - kabod, splendor, majesty, honor

Beauty - beautiful garments

The idea seems to be that these garments are designed to reflect the beauty of God and His glory

They are called "Holy Garments" - apartness, sacredness, holiness it speaks of them being set apart. These garments were designed for use in worship and service of God alone.

Exodus 28:3

*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.*

This phrase - filled with the Spirit is used 3 times in Exodus

Here

Exodus 31:3

*And I have **filled him with the Spirit** of God, in wisdom, in understanding, in knowledge, and in all manner of workmanship,*

Exodus 35:31

and He has **filled him with the Spirit** of God, in wisdom and understanding, in knowledge and all manner of workmanship,

In addition to being skilled those involved in the work of the Lord needed to be filled with the Spirit of the Lord

The same is true today. Next biblical use of the phrase is found in Luke used of John and Jesus

Luke 1:15

*For he will be great in the sight of the Lord, and shall drink neither wine nor strong drink. He will also be filled with the Holy Spirit, even from his mother's womb.*

Luke 4:1

*Then Jesus, being filled with the Holy Spirit, returned from the Jordan and was led by the Spirit into the wilderness,*

Exodus 28:4

*And these are the garments which they shall make: a **breastplate**, an **ephod**, 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.*

Those who minister must be dressed appropriately.

The articles of particular interest are:

**Ephod** - linen apron

This ephod had shoulderpads made of onyx stone

Exodus 28:9-10

*“Then you shall take two onyx stones and engrave on them the names of the sons of Israel:*

*six of their names on one stone and six names on the other stone, in order of their birth.*

The purpose of these stones was to symbolize the need of the priest to carry the burden of the people into the presence of the Lord.

This is accomplished today through the ministry of intercession

Breastplate -

Breastplate was a square span that was worn over the neck of the High Priest and supported by a golden chain.

The Breastplate was filled with birthstones for each of the tribes so the Priest always bore the people near his heart.

Exodus 28:29

*“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.*

Urim and Thummim

Exodus 28:30

*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.*

Literally the Lights and the Perfections (compare Leviticus 8:8)

This was used as a means of consulting the mind of the Lord

We see it in use, however it is not clearly explained. It was clearly a means of detecting the mind of God, but we are not given detail regarding how it operated

Proverbs 16:33

*The lot is cast into the lap,*

*But its every decision is from the Lord.*

Since Israel believed the hand of God would guide the die, the Urim and Thummim may have been a type of die or even two colored stones.

It is used in 3 cases within scripture

When selecting Joshua as leader

Numbers 27:21

*He shall stand before Eleazar the priest, who shall inquire before the Lord for him by the judgment of the Urim. At his word they shall go out, and at his word they shall come in, he and all the children of Israel with him—all the congregation.”*

When Saul faced the eminent threat of the Philistines

1 Samuel 28:6

And when Saul inquired of the Lord, the Lord did not answer him, either by dreams or by Urim or by the prophets.

When the Zionists returned to Jerusalem and some claimed to be of the tribe of Levi but had no documentation.

Ezra 2:63



And the governor said to them that they should not eat of the most holy things till a priest could consult with the Urim and Thummim.

Nehemiah 7:65

And the governor said to them that they should not eat of the most holy things till a priest could consult with the Urim and Thummim..

There are other cases when it's use is implied but not specifically referred to.

It may have been the use of Urim and Thummim that persuaded the Apostles to cast lots for Judas' replacement

#### **Tunic -**

The tunic had bells and pomegranates sown into its hem. These were designed so a person could hear the priest's movements inside the Tabernacle

Exodus 28:35

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.

some have suggested that a rope was tied to the priest in case he died in e Tabernacle and needed to be retrieved. There is no biblical data regarding this, a rope was not part of the priestly wardrobe and no reference is made in extra biblical writings until the 13th century AD

#### **Turban -**

Exodus 28:36

“You shall also make a plate of pure gold and engrave on it, like the engraving of a signet:

HOLINESS TO THE LORD.

By way of application we might ask, what is the proper attire for the New Testament minister?

#### **1. Garments of Salvation**

Isaiah 61:10

*I will greatly rejoice in the Lord,  
My soul shall be joyful in my God;  
For He has clothed me with the garments of salvation,  
He has covered me with the robe of righteousness,  
As a bridegroom decks himself with ornaments,  
And as a bride adorns herself with her jewels.*

## 2. Lay aside burial clothes

Once Lazarus had come to life Jesus commanded

John 11:44

*And he who had died came out bound hand and foot with graveclothes, and his face was wrapped with a cloth. Jesus said to them, "Loose him, and let him go."*

Those clothes smell of death and are not appropriate for the living

In the same way Paul exhorts that there are behaviors that are no longer fitting for the child of God

Ephesians 4:22-23

*that you put off, concerning your former conduct, the old man which grows corrupt according to the deceitful lusts, and be renewed in the spirit of your mind,*

## 3. Put on Armor of righteousness on the right hand and the left

Ephesians 6:13

*Therefore take up the whole armor of God, that you may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand.*

## 4. Endued with power

Luke 24:49

*Behold, I send the Promise of My Father upon you; but tarry in the city of Jerusalem until you are endued with power from on high."*

The priest wore his garments for tabernacle ministry, May we wear ours to enter the battle and further the kingdom through prayer and Christian service

Exodus 29

The Consecration of the Priests

Exodus 29:1

*“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,*

Once the priests had been chosen and their wardrobe was set they needed to be hallowed or sanctified for ministry.

This was a 6 step process

1. Ceremonial bathing

Exodus 29:4

*“And Aaron and his sons you shall bring to the door of the tabernacle of meeting, and you shall wash them with water.*

Required a realization that we are not clean by ourselves

2. Ceremonial dressing

Exodus 29:5-6

*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.*

*You shall put the turban on his head, and put the holy crown on the turban.*

3. Ceremonial anointing

Exodus 29:7

*And you shall take the anointing oil, pour it on his head, and anoint him.*

Oil always serves as a picture of the work of the Spirit.

All the preparation without the outpouring of the Spirit of God makes ministry fruitless

The Holy Spirit is available to all who ask

#### 4. Ceremonial sacrifice

Exodus 29:10-11

*“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.*

*Then you shall kill the bull before the Lord, by the door of the tabernacle of meeting.*

The priest would put his hand on the animal to show he is identifying with its death. The blood of the bull was placed on the altar.

The same process was done for two Rams. The blood of the second ram was placed on the right ear, right thumb and right big toe of the priest.

This same process was done for a leper who had been cleansed. It is the only other time this particular consecration is performed

Finally some of the blood was mixed with the anointing oil and splashed onto the priest in his glorious and beautiful attire.

It is clear that above all else God wanted the people to understand that without the blood there was no access to God

The same is true under the New Covenant. Without the shed blood of Christ we have no access to God

#### 5. Ceremonial meal

The final step to their consecration was to eat together

Exodus 29:32

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.

Exodus 29:35

“Thus you shall do to Aaron and his sons, according to all that I have commanded you. Seven days you shall consecrate them.

All of this was done to provide a means of fellowship between man and God

What do our bylaws say about use of campus

Does it say anything about membership