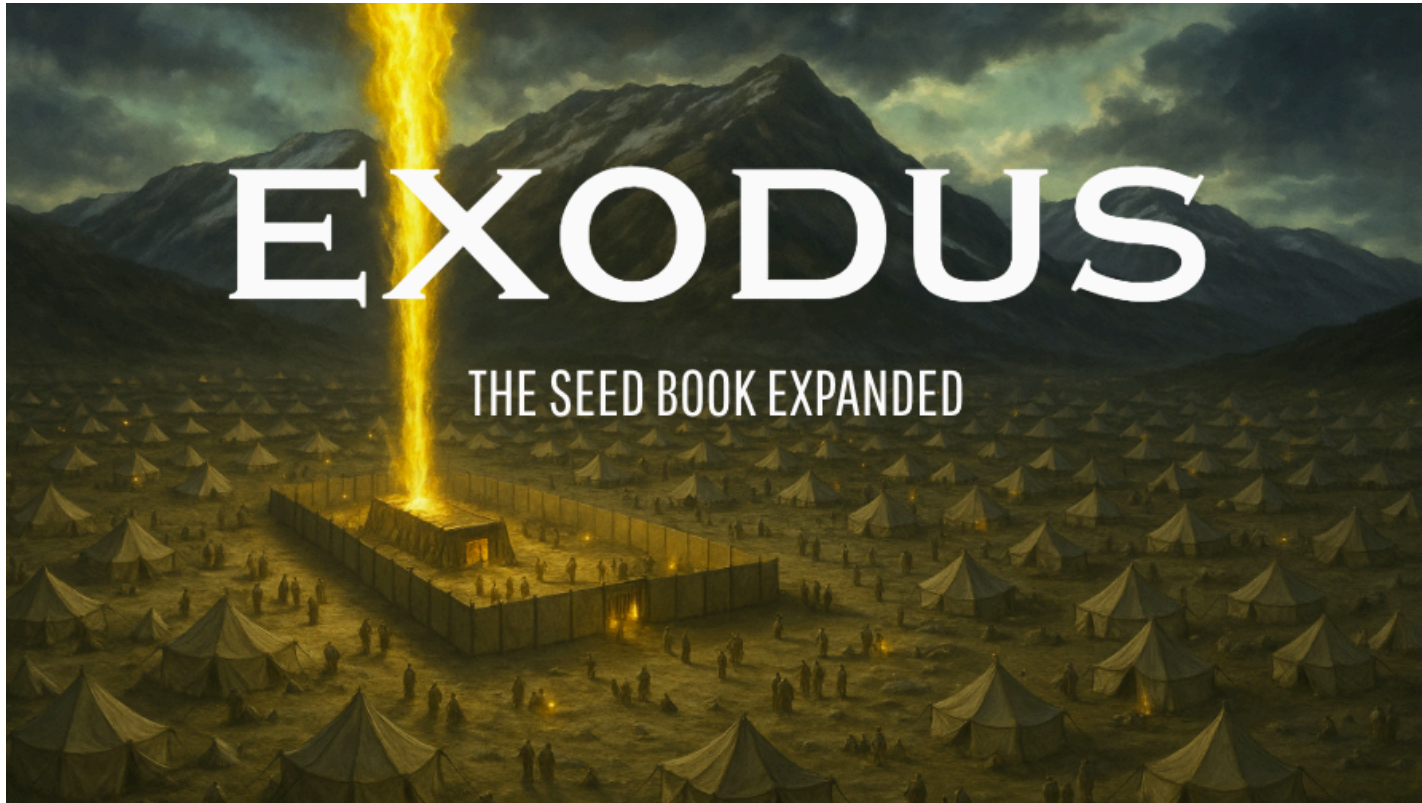


Exodus 28 (TAC)

Tuesday, January 27, 2026
2:47 PM



Good evening, TAC!

Last week, we began by situating Exodus 27 within the broader context of the Tabernacle's design, which originates from a heavenly pattern revealed to Israel through Moses. The Tabernacle is portrayed not merely as a physical structure but as a purposeful expression of God's desire to dwell with His people and that expression becomes a cyclical pattern that echoes all the way through the book of Revelation. Every element in the Tabernacle is intentional, representing divine design, wisdom and eternal truths, as confirmed by the book of Hebrews stating that God Himself built the Tabernacle that is in heaven.

~

- **Hebrews 9:11–12 (ESV)**

11 But when Christ appeared as a high priest of the good things that have come, then **through the greater and more perfect tent** (not made with hands, that is, not of this creation) 12 **he entered once for all into**

the holy places, not by means of the blood of goats and calves but by means of his own blood, thus securing an eternal redemption.

~

This affirms, in every way, that the structure on earth is a mirror of the heavenly original and communicates Adonai's heavenly intentions to the nation that he chose on earth. The nation of Israel is fundamental to this divine plan. Israel is appointed as ministers and agents bridging heaven and earth, called to be a kingdom of priests and a holy nation. Their success in fulfilling God's instructions is crucial for the dwelling of God with mankind. Those who are in Christ and have come to participate in Israel's calling are encouraged to deepen their understanding of the nation's purpose, recognizing that your own destiny is now intertwined with Israel's destiny. In order to properly understand the Tabernacle, it is vital to obtain the original recipients' view and perception of God's communication with them. In fact, this will lead you into a better understanding of the Newer Testament and the function of Christ as the "Greater Tabernacle".

~

We took the time to revisit previous studies on the Ark of the Covenant, the Table of Showbread, and the Menorah, emphasizing their design according to a heavenly pattern revealed to Israel.

(DO NOT READ)

The Ark of The Covenant

Ex. 25:10-22

- Made of Acacia wood v.10
- Overlaid with gold v.11 (had to be stripped of thorny exterior)
- Housed the testimony v.16
- Place of meeting to receive God's commands v.22



The Ark of the Covenant was made from acacia wood with a gold overlay, symbolizing Jesus Christ, who bore thorns and was raised in glory. The Ark housed God's testimony and was central to atonement rituals, foreshadowing Christ's eternal redemption through His blood.

~

(DO NOT READ)

The Table of Showbread

Ex. 25:23-30

- Overlaid with Gold v.24
- Contained “The Bread of The Presence” v.30
- Was to contain nourishing bread at “all times” v.30



The Table of Showbread was positioned in the Holy Place, supplied continually with bread symbolizing God's provision and presence, pointing forward to Jesus as the living bread who gives eternal life. He is the one the Spirit will illuminate to you as the Living Bread or Word of God.

(DO NOT READ)

The Menorah

Ex. 25:31-39

- 7 Branches with almond blossoms
- Stationed parallel with the Table of Showbread
- Served as the light within the Holy Place
- Made of one talent (75 pounds) of pure gold v.39



The Menorah is the continual light in the Holy Place, representing the Holy Spirit, essential for ministering priests, and parallels Jesus as the light of the world who brings illumination to darkness. Furthermore, the Menorah and the Holy Spirit are the manner in which the Table of Showbread or Jesus Christ becomes illuminated.

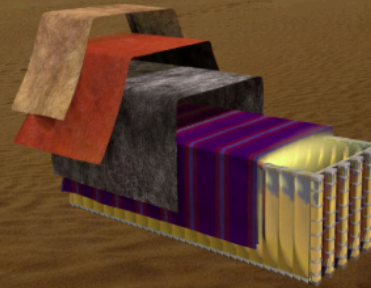
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The Tabernacle Coverings

Ex. 26

- Outer covering of UNKNOWN hides
- Ram skin dyed Red
- Goat Hair
- Fine Linen



The coverings of the Tabernacle were shown to be vivid examples of faith, sacrifice, dealing with sin, and righteousness, illustrated through the patriarchs Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, and Joseph. These original audience perceptions give meaning to these details and further illuminate the ministry of the "Greater Tabernacle," that is, Christ.

(DO NOT READ)

JOHN 1:1-18

From Creation to Incarnation

JOHN 1:1-2

In the beginning was the Word,
and the Word was with God,
and the Word was God.
He was in the beginning with God.

JOHN 1:14a

And the Word became flesh and
(tabernacled) among us

JOHN 1:1-13 GENESIS

● CREATION

👁 WITNESS

✝ CHOICE

JOHN 1:14-18 EXODUS

● INCARNATION

👁 WITNESS

✝ CHOICE

"No one has ever seen God; the one and only God,
who is at the Father's side, has made Him known."

John 1:18

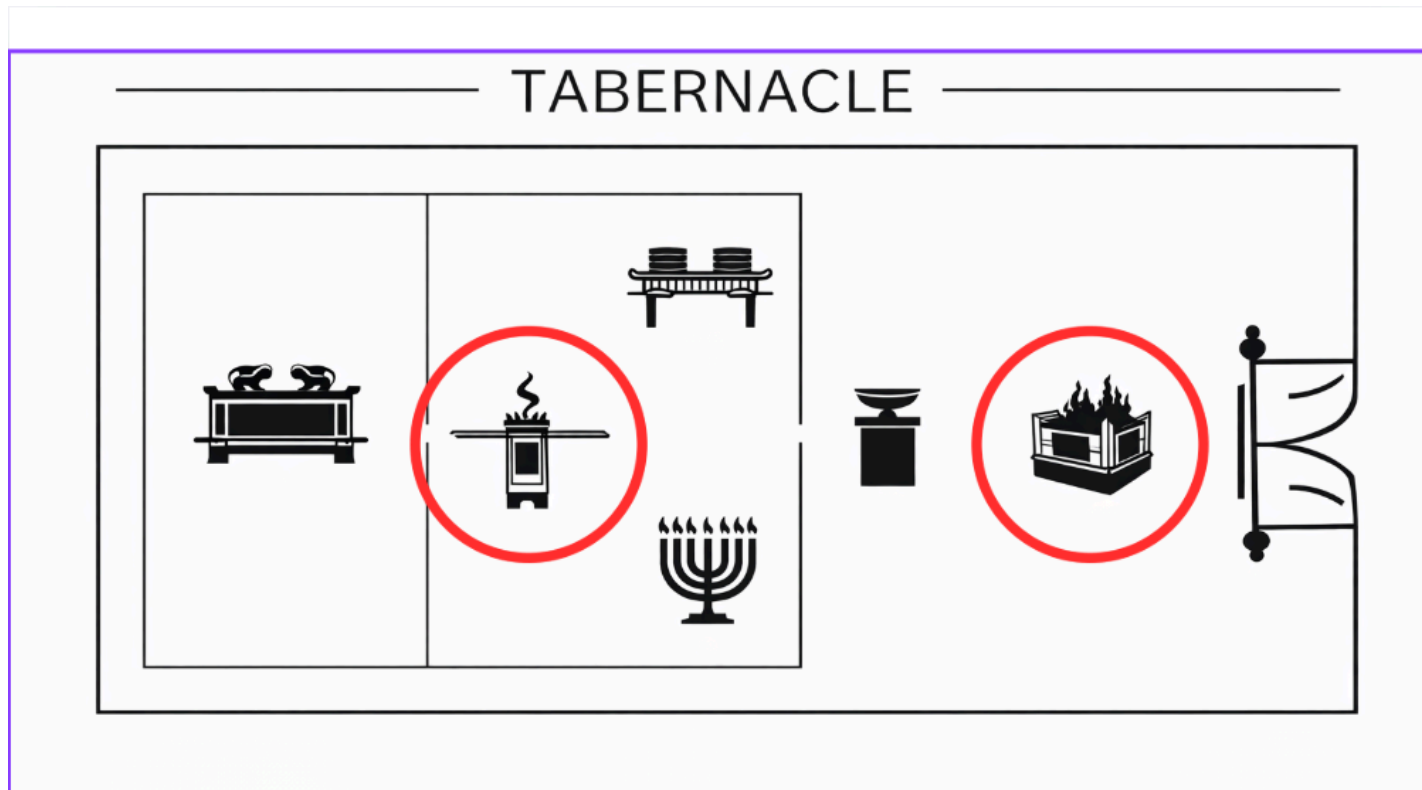
ESV

We took the time to highlight John's Gospel portrayal of Jesus as the Word who "tabernacled" among humanity, fulfilling God's original intention for dwelling with His people. Additionally, we discussed the relationship between the Tabernacle and Solomon's Temple, illustrating the transition from the temporary to the permanent, foreshadowing the resurrection and glorification of individuals and the nation of Israel.

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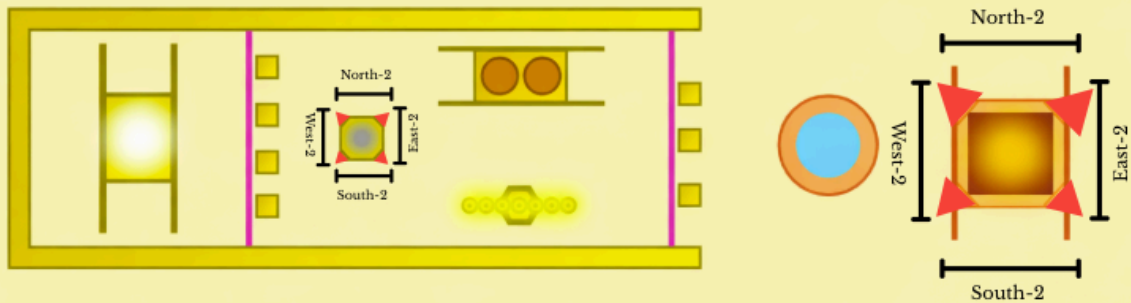
The text of Exodus 27 primarily focused on three items: The Bronze Altar, the Courtyard, and the Oil for the Lampstand. One of the first things we encountered was misconceptions about the Bronze Altar, and we learned to consider how the altar was viewed by its original recipients. In doing so, we first had to consider that there were two altars with similar features in the Tabernacle:

~



Both of the altars had horns on them. Since the Golden Altar of Incense never had animal sacrifices upon it, this caused us to view the horns on the Bronze Altar differently than we had previously. The Bronze Altar was constructed from acacia wood overlaid with bronze, measuring three cubits high and five cubits square. The number five, symbolizing grace, dominates its design, reflecting God's gracious provision for Israel to become holy and dwell with Him. The altar's horns, present on both the Bronze Altar and the Altar of Incense, are understood not as restraints **but as symbols of mercy and atonement**, visibly displaying the blood of sacrifice and offering refuge to those seeking mercy, as illustrated by biblical examples like Adonijah seeking protection by holding the altar's horns.

2 Witnesses At Both Altars In Every Direction

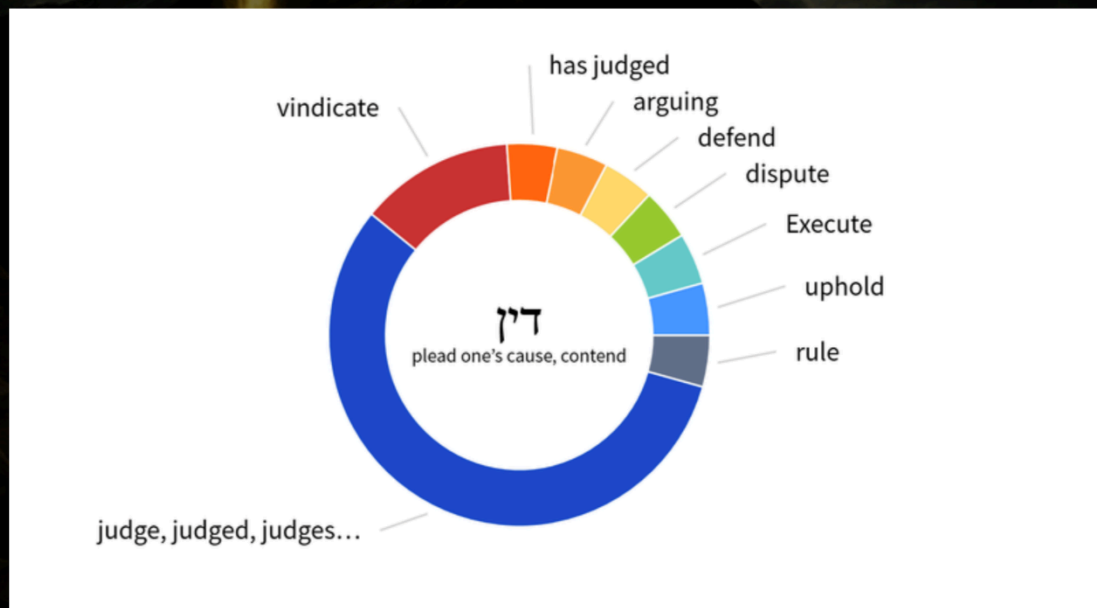


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This was a radical shift from the normative Christian view. Instead of thinking about restraining unwilling sacrifices, it became clear that the horns of the altars functioned **like billboards showcasing the mercy and atonement** of Adonai for Israel.

(DO NOT READ)

1777. דִּינײַן “diyn”



The altar's bronze material signifies judgment, which for the faithful is a positive vindication rather than condemnation. Leviticus 6 even indicated that the altar's fire was to be kept burning continually, communicating God's unceasing desire to forgive and dwell with His people. Moreover, the altar was also portable, demonstrating that God's mercy and holiness were not confined to a single place but moved with the people of Israel.

~

Understanding the perspective of the original audience allowed us to see the Newer Testament writers as portraying Jesus in the manner of a Greater Bronze Altar.

(READ SLIDE)



Tabernacle/Altar Takeaways

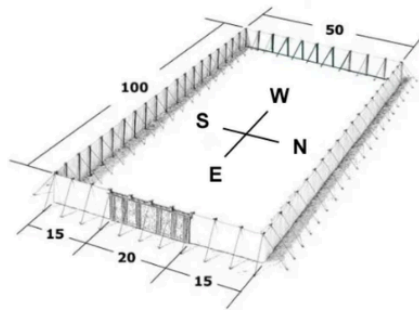
- Just as the Tabernacle was a sign of God's desire to dwell with Israel, Jesus' ministry is the ultimate expression of God's desire to dwell with Israel and the rest of humanity
- The Bronze Altar provided a way for Israel to be made holy and dwell with God; similarly, Jesus offers salvation and holiness to the Jew first and also to the gentiles, who trust in Him.
- The altar's design, especially its horns, symbolized mercy and atonement available to all directions of Israel. Jesus, as the "Greater Bronze Altar," was lifted up for all people, extending mercy universally.
- The altar's portability signified that God's presence and reconciliation were not limited to one place. In the same way, Jesus made reconciliation with God accessible everywhere, and through the Spirit, this presence continues with all believers.

~

After looking at the Bronze Altar, we moved to meticulously examine the Outer Courtyard of the Tabernacle complex. We covered every side of its construction and the elements used, as well as their arrangement. Here is a reminder of the Eastern Wall, but every one of the walls shared the same divine design features:

(DO NOT READ)

The Eastern Wall



(3) 5 cubit segments

20 cubit opening



(3) 5 cubit segments



Bands and hooks - silver (Redemption)

10 Bases made of bronze (Judgment)



The Tabernacle courtyard, enclosed by curtains of finely twisted linen, had precise measurements emphasizing the number five (grace), silver (redemption), and bronze (judgment). **The courtyard communicated multiplied grace grounded in God's just decisions.** The single entrance on the east side, guarded by the tribe of Judah, pointed to the exclusive and intentional way to approach God, fulfilled in Jesus as the only way to the Father. The courtyard's boundaries represent holiness and the costliness of grace, with distinctions maintained between Gentiles, Levites, priests, and the High Priest, foreshadowing the tearing down of barriers through Christ's priestly ministry. Consider how the writer of Hebrews refers to these things.

~

o Hebrews 4:14–16 (ESV)

14 Since then we have a great high priest **who has passed through the heavens**, Jesus, the Son of God, let us hold fast our confession. 15 For we do not have a high priest who is unable to sympathize with our weaknesses, but one who in every respect has been tempted as we are, yet without sin. 16 **Let us then with confidence draw near to the throne**

of grace, that we may receive mercy and find grace to help in time of need.

~

- o **Hebrews 9:11–12 (ESV)**

11 But when Christ appeared as a high priest of the good things that have come, then **through the greater and more perfect tent** (not made with hands, that is, not of this creation) 12 **he entered once for all into the holy places**, not by means of the blood of goats and calves but by means of his own blood, thus securing an eternal redemption.

~

One would hardly be able to appreciate the enormity of the achievements of the Messiah without first understanding the message of the Tabernacle. It is our sincerest hope that these studies are better acquainting you with the first audience perceptions and then the Newer Testaments portrayals that build upon that perspective. This is the best way for you to properly interpret the text and then to make applications to your own lives.

One of the last items we explored in Exodus 27 was the clear oil that was needed for the Lampstand of God within the Tabernacle.

~

FIRST CENTURY OLIVE PRESS



The oil used to fuel the Menorah had to be clear, pure oil from pressed olives, symbolizing endurance, renewal, and new life. The pressing process, which releases pure oil, parallels Israel's experiences of suffering and refinement, as well as Jesus' own pressing in Gethsemane before His crucifixion. This pressing produces oil that fuels the light of God's presence, illuminating the bread of His face and symbolizing the pure devotion required of God's people.

~

As we looked into Isaiah, the servant theme further elucidated how suffering and pressing are purposeful, leading to healing and multiplication rather than destruction, applying both to Israel as a nation and to the Messiah.

Jesus' threefold pressing in Gethsemane, exemplifies perfect obedience and devotion, producing the purest oil for God's service. Believers who have been given revelation into this process should feel compelled to endure their own pressings joyfully, knowing that God's light shines through their lives during refinement. From the very beginning, God's intention to unite heaven and earth has followed a consistent pattern. This message was first revealed through the design of the Tabernacle, serving as a tangible sign of God's desire to dwell among

humanity. Later, this foundational theme was further developed and fulfilled in the incarnation of Christ, who is portrayed as the “Greater Tabernacle.”

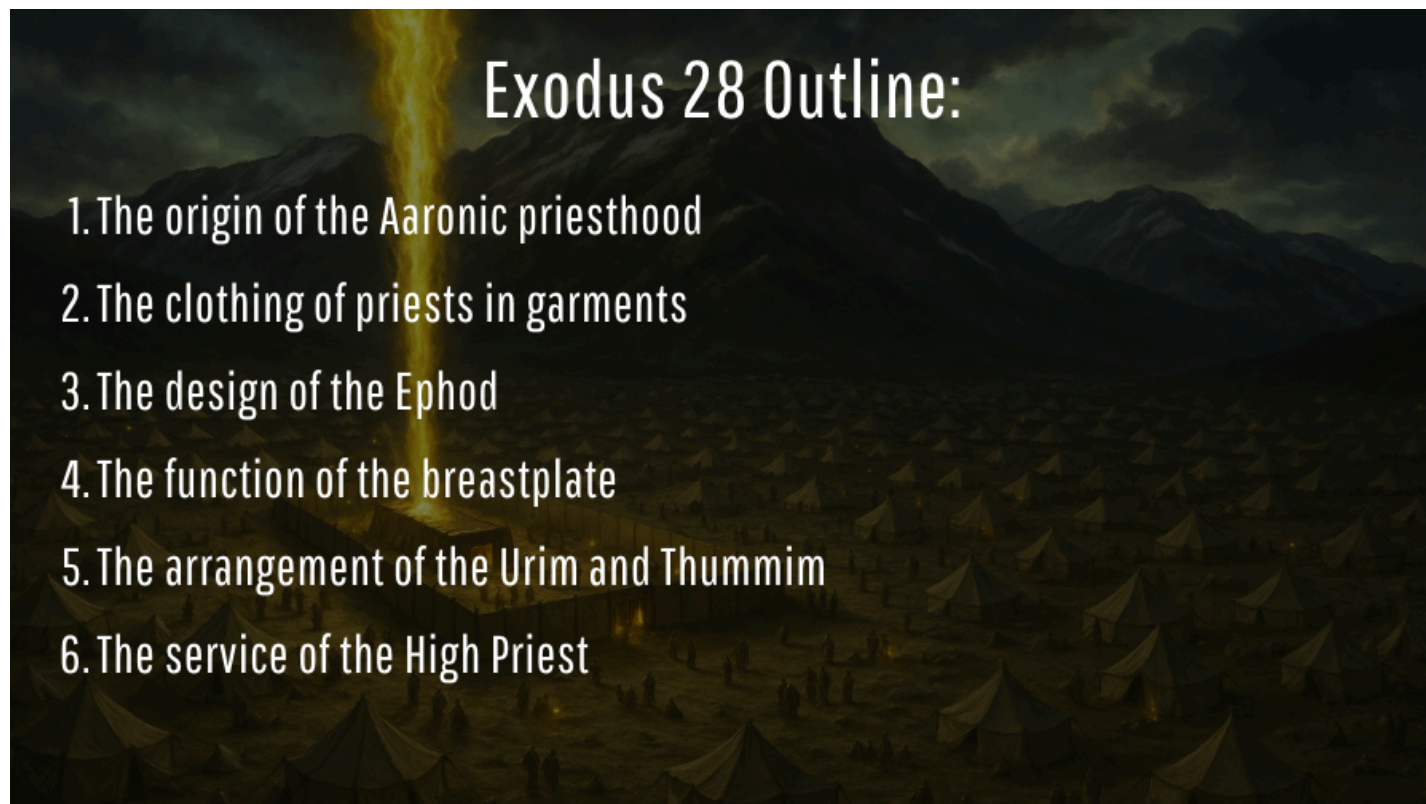
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As our evening came to a close last week, we concluded by emphasizing that Exodus 27 is not merely about ancient furniture but about identity, calling, and active participation in God's plan. The Bronze Altar symbolizes God's mercy and judgment, the Courtyard illustrates grace grounded in redemption, and the oil represents the community's role in sustaining God's light. You were exhorted to become living horns of the altar, proclaiming mercy; to honor the grace that redeemed you by living holy lives; and to bring your own oil, allowing life's pressings to purify you and keep the spiritual fire burning continually. The God who once dwelt in a tent now dwells within His people, who are called to be a holy, Spirit-filled light to the world.

We are about to embark on Exodus 28 and we will be gleaning insight from:

~

(READ SLIDE)



It is important to us that you get everything that Adonai desires for you to receive from us tonight. For that reason we want to take a minute to review what many of you learned in ministry training and also to explain our format for the evening.

(DO NOT READ)



When you interpret any biblical text it is necessary to consider what God actually said and who He said it to. The message conveyed to the original audience is an important filter to ensure that you are not reading into the text ideas, concerns, or perceptions that the original audience never had. Then it is possible to glean an understanding of the text that is consistent with the original message. This allows you to experience the text and convey your experiences to a new group of people.

~

Tonight we will make every effort to understand what the generation in the desert would have considered when they heard the divine design of the Tabernacle communicated. Then we will look at the way the message was developed through the Tanakh and into the Newer Testament. Lastly, we will make practical applications that are relevant to both your lives and our own.

Are you ready to read the text?

~

Pray and Read

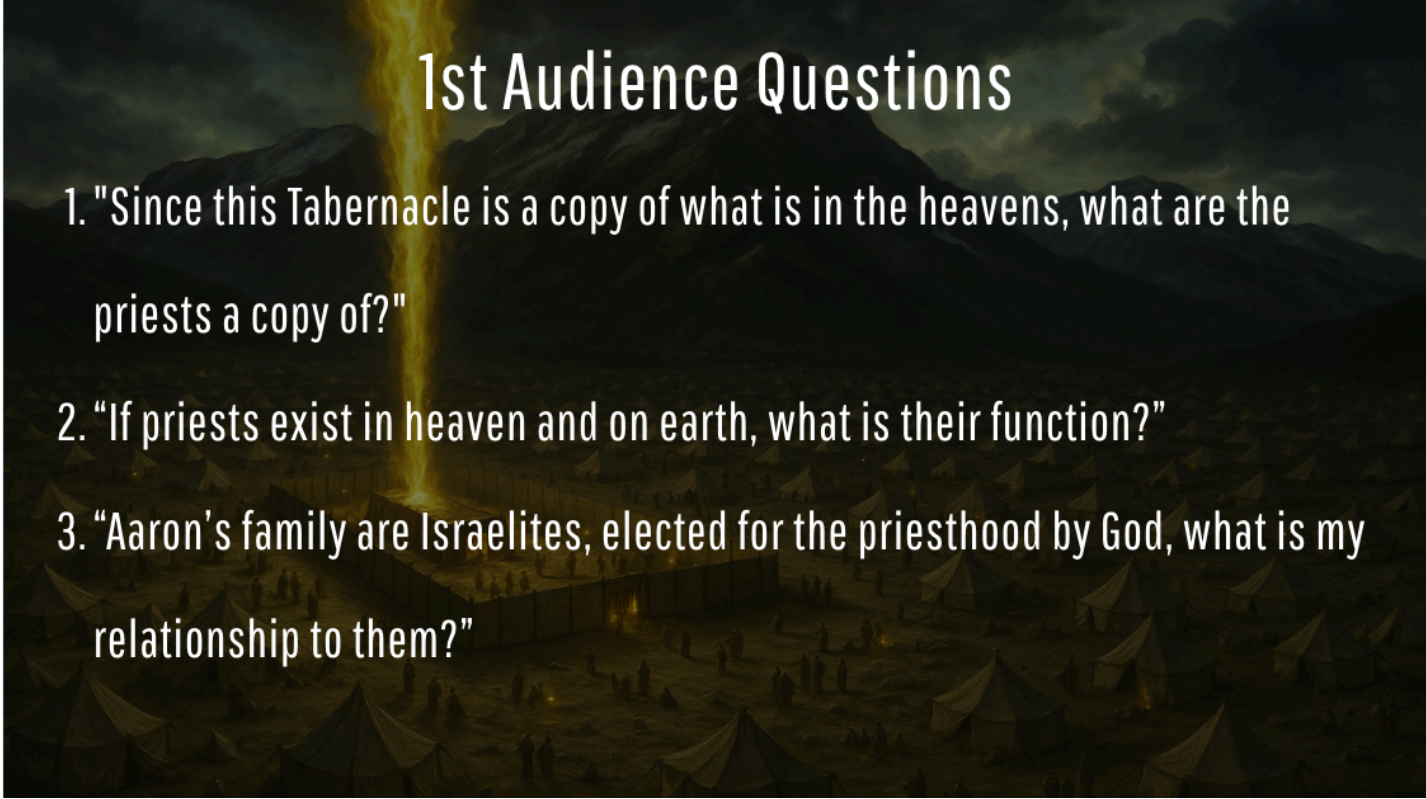
Exodus 28:1 (NIV84) "Have Aaron your brother brought to you from among the Israelites, along with his sons Nadab and Abihu, Eleazar and Ithamar, so they may serve me as priests."

Remember, our desire is to interact with this verse from the standpoint of how the original audience understood it. For example, it has become a fairly common mistake to see the priesthood as being chosen after the golden calf event when the tribe of Levi rallied to Moses, but is that true? Would that have ever entered the minds of the original audience? Of course, the answer is no! That event has not even happened yet. This verse illustrates the election of Aaron and his sons as priests before the events of Exodus 32 ever happened. Avoiding this kind of error is one of the reasons we are seeking to first encounter the perception of the original audience based on the biblical history that occurred in their past.

~

Last week we saw details being given to Moses that pertained to the furnishings of the Tabernacle that God ordered to be arranged. Now we are beginning to see details of a priesthood that God desired to work within the arranged Tabernacle. For the readers within the original audience, the inclusion of this particular detail must have engendered a host of questions:

(READ SLIDE)



1st Audience Questions

1. "Since this Tabernacle is a copy of what is in the heavens, what are the priests a copy of?"
2. "If priests exist in heaven and on earth, what is their function?"
3. "Aaron's family are Israelites, elected for the priesthood by God, what is my relationship to them?"

~

If you were an Israelite who heard this at the time of Moses, you would have to consult the history that had already occurred prior to this moment. In other words, the book of Genesis and the history within it.

- o **Genesis 14:18–20 (ESV)**

18 And Melchizedek **king** of Salem brought out bread and wine. (He was **priest** of God Most High.) 19 And he blessed him and said, "Blessed be Abram by God Most High, Possessor of heaven and earth;
20 and blessed be God Most High, who has delivered your enemies into your hand!" And Abram gave him a tenth of everything.

~

Genesis 14 introduces the Bible's first priest, raising the question: priest of what? At this point, no priesthood, tabernacle, or formal religious order exists on earth. Moreover, this priest's name is "Melchizedek", which in Hebrew means "King of Righteousness" and he is mentioned as being a King of "Salem" which means "Peace".

Not only is this figure a priest but he is also a king. In the text, he possesses the authority to bless Abram, who is the father of the Jewish Nation, which means

that he is being presented in the text as greater than Abram. The text even goes on to say that Abram pays a tithe to Melchizedek! Which begs the question, a tithe for what? There is no tabernacle or temple (at least on earth) for collecting the tithe. Moreover, the events surrounding Melchizedek's inclusion in the narrative also provoke further consideration.

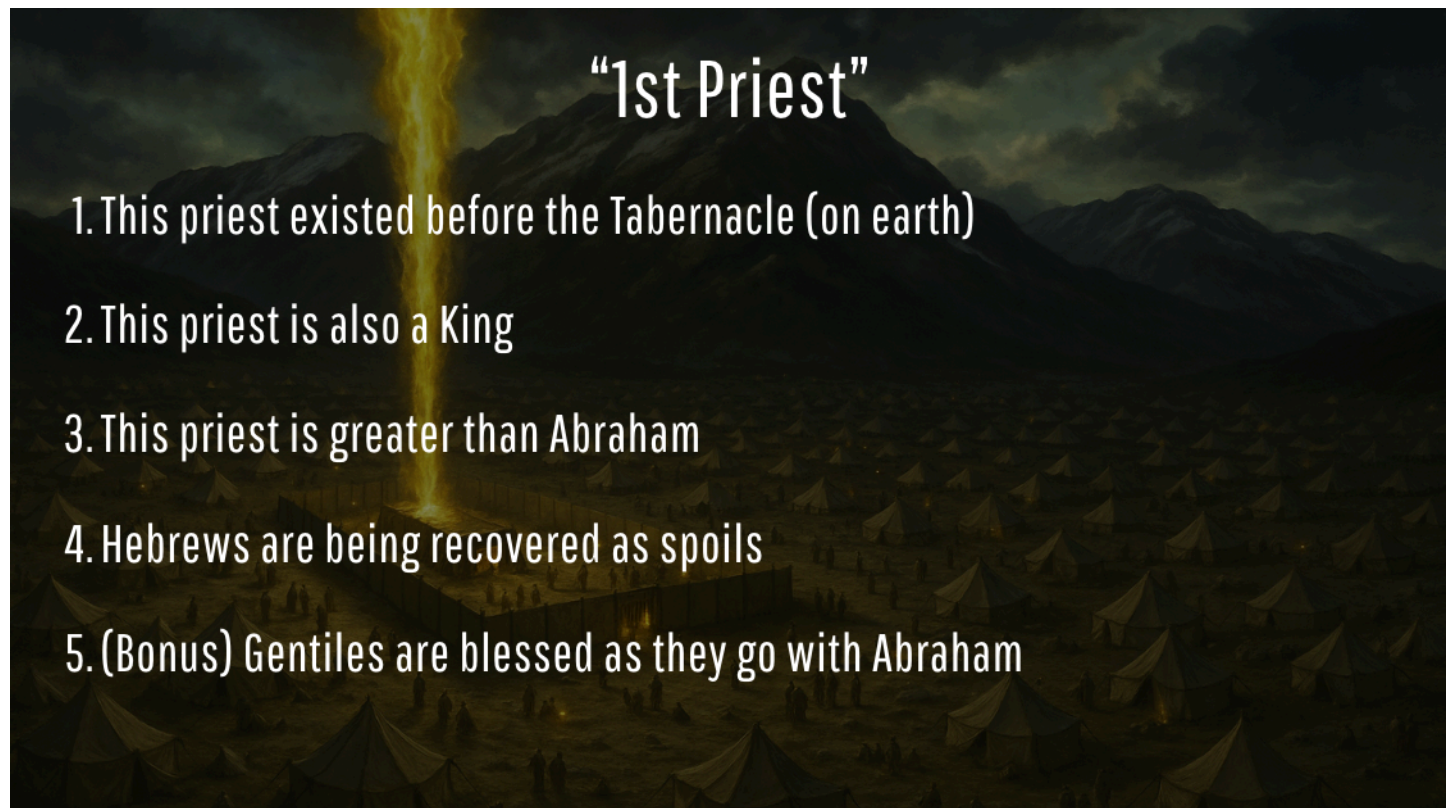
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The narrative describes Abraham's return following his successful recovery of his Hebrew relative. He is accompanied by several Gentile individuals who share a covenant relationship with him. After Abraham's victory in battle, the King of Sodom approached him, offering all the recovered spoils. Abraham, however, declined the offer for himself, insisting instead that his Gentile allies receive their rightful portions. For Abraham, the only treasure he sought was the safe return of his Hebrew relative; the rest of the plunder held no appeal to him.

~

In the first recorded instance of a priest in the Bible, we can note:

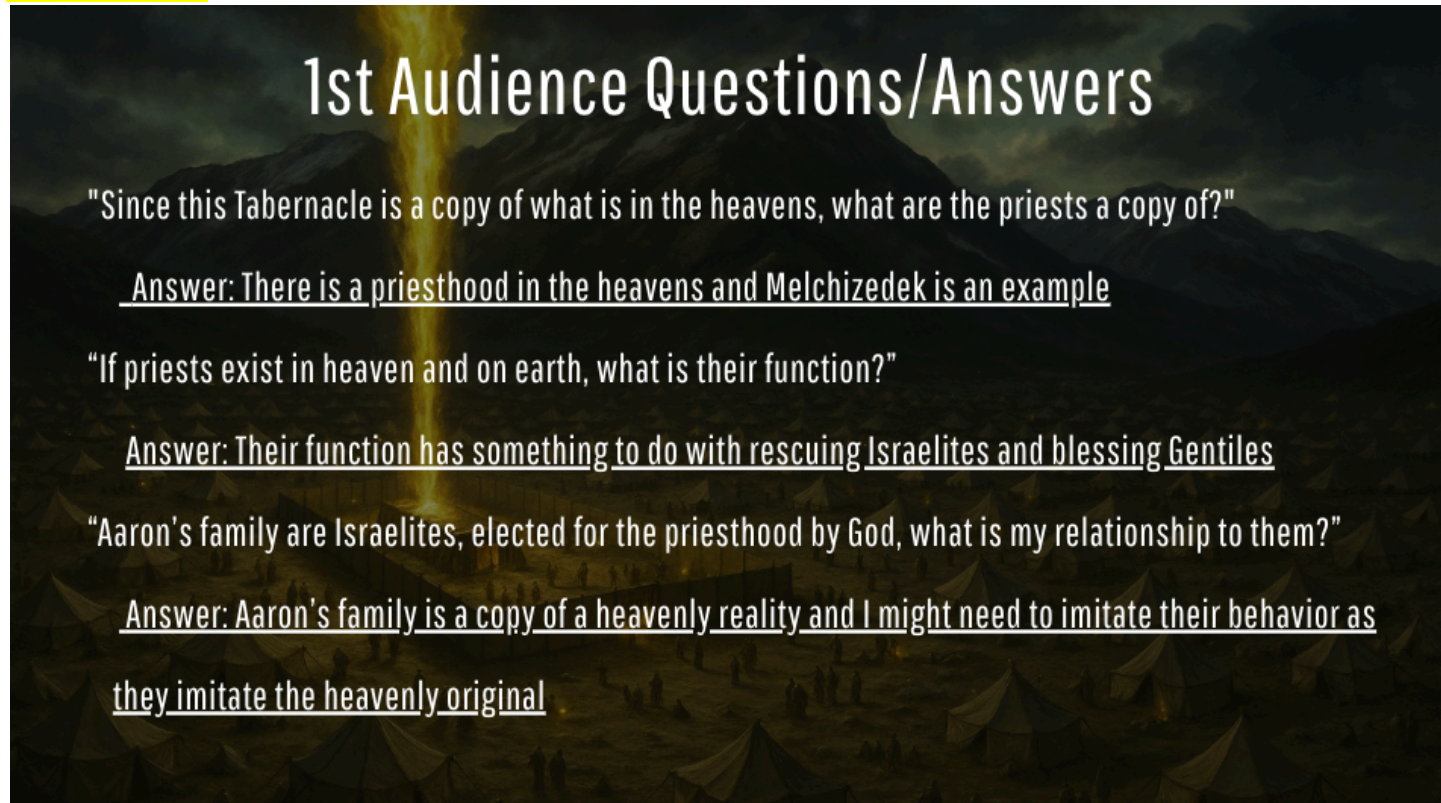
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So let us return to the original questions and begin to infer the potential answers that Genesis 14 may suggest:

~

(READ SLIDE)



~

As a member of the original audience you would be wondering what event in your history involved the next righteous example of a priest. This would naturally lead you to the example of Jethro.

Exodus 3:1 (ESV)

3 Now Moses was keeping the flock of his father-in-law, Jethro, the **priest** of Midian, and he led his flock to the west side of the wilderness and came to Horeb, the mountain of God.

Remember, Jethro received Moses into his family and provided a wife for Moses. This was Moses' home for forty years. Jethro is referred to as the Priest of Midian.

Exodus 4:18 (ESV)

¹⁸ Moses went back to Jethro his father-in-law and said to him, "Please let me go back to my brothers in Egypt to see whether they are still alive." And Jethro said to Moses, "Go in peace."

~

When Moses received his divine commission, Jethro sent him on his way in Shalom.

Exodus 18:1 (ESV)

18 Jethro, the **priest** of Midian, Moses' father-in-law, heard of all that God had done for Moses and for Israel his people, how the Lord had brought Israel out of Egypt.

We can't go through every detail of Exodus 18, but Jethro shows up in the text reuniting Moses' family. He brought Moses' wife and sons to him. Moreover, when Moses met Jethro, he bowed to the ground upon meeting him. Then the text records this response to verse 1:

Exodus 18:9 (ESV)

⁹And Jethro rejoiced for all the good that the Lord had done to Israel, in that he had delivered them out of the hand of the Egyptians.

~

Lastly, Jethro then goes on in the chapter to provide counsel and advice to Moses that helps to bring order to the divine administration that Moses had been commissioned to perform. Jethro, the priest of Midian helped Moses the prophet of Israel.

Like Melchizedek, this priest is also surrounded by much intrigue. However, a few similarities

between Jethro and Melchizedek can be identified:

(READ SLIDE)



“2nd Priest”

1. This priest existed before the Tabernacle in Exodus
2. This priest shows up later in Exodus 18 when the Hebrew nation has been recovered as spoils from Egypt
3. This priest shows up after a mixed multitude that includes Gentiles have been blessed to leave Egypt alongside Israel

~

Moreover, you should remember this slide from our previous studies.

(DO NOT READ)



MELCHIZEDEK AND JETHRO		
<u>Event</u>	<u>Melchizedek</u>	<u>Jethro</u>
1. Pre-Aaronic Priest	Genesis 14:18	Exodus 18:1
2. Have general revelation of Adonai	Genesis 14:19	Exodus 18:11
3. Give a blessing	Genesis 14:19	Exodus 18:17-23
4. Shown honor and submission	Genesis 14:20	Exodus 18:7
5. Share a meal	Genesis 14:18	Exodus 18:12
6. Show up after major victory	Genesis 14:17	Exodus 17:10-13
7. Precede great theophany	Genesis 15:1-5	Exodus 19

When the original audience encountered Exodus 28, the election of Aaron's family would have clarified questions that had already been forming. They would have recognized this priesthood as a divine gift to the nation, much like the priestly and mediatorial help Israel had previously received through figures such as Melchizedek and Jethro. Aaron's household was not elevated for its own sake, but appointed to serve Israel by mediating God's presence and order—men entrusted with the sacred task of helping the nation live as a people where heaven meets earth.

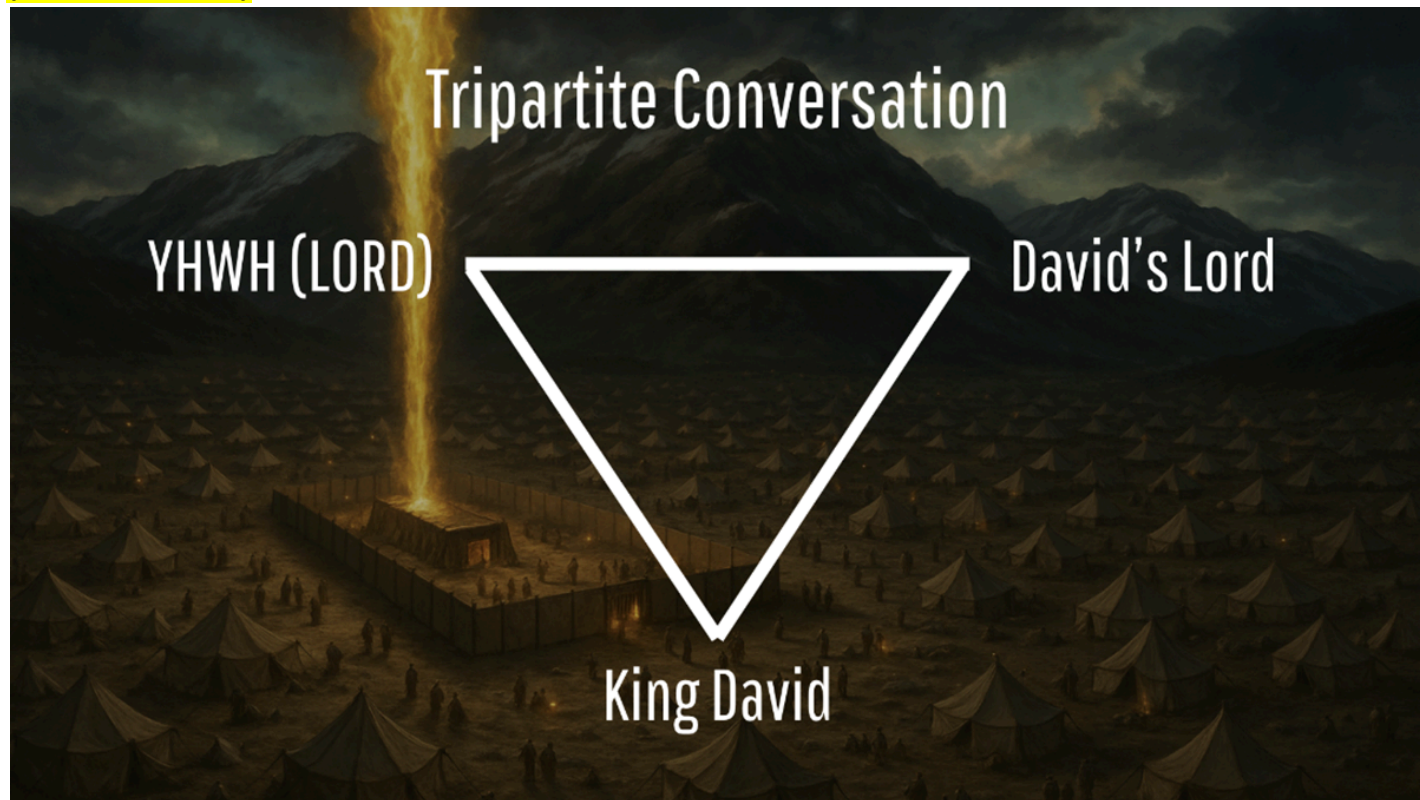
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Understanding the original audience helps clarify key aspects of the Aaronic priesthood's election. Like Melchizedek and Jethro, priests have their origins prior to the establishment of the Tabernacle. Melchizedek is associated with priesthood and kingship, while Jethro is associated with the rise of Israel's national leader. Melchizedek is considered greater than Abraham and Moses honors Jethro by bowing to him and then applying his counsel. Moreover, both instances of priests are closely tied to reclaiming Hebrews as war spoils. Furthermore, both appear in contexts where Gentiles are blessed through participation with Israel.

~

Next, we will examine how these ideas unfold beyond the history of the generation in the wilderness. Let's consider passages later in the Tanakh. One of the key passages is Psalm 110. As we encounter this text, we have a slide that will help you understand what you are encountering:

(DO NOT READ)

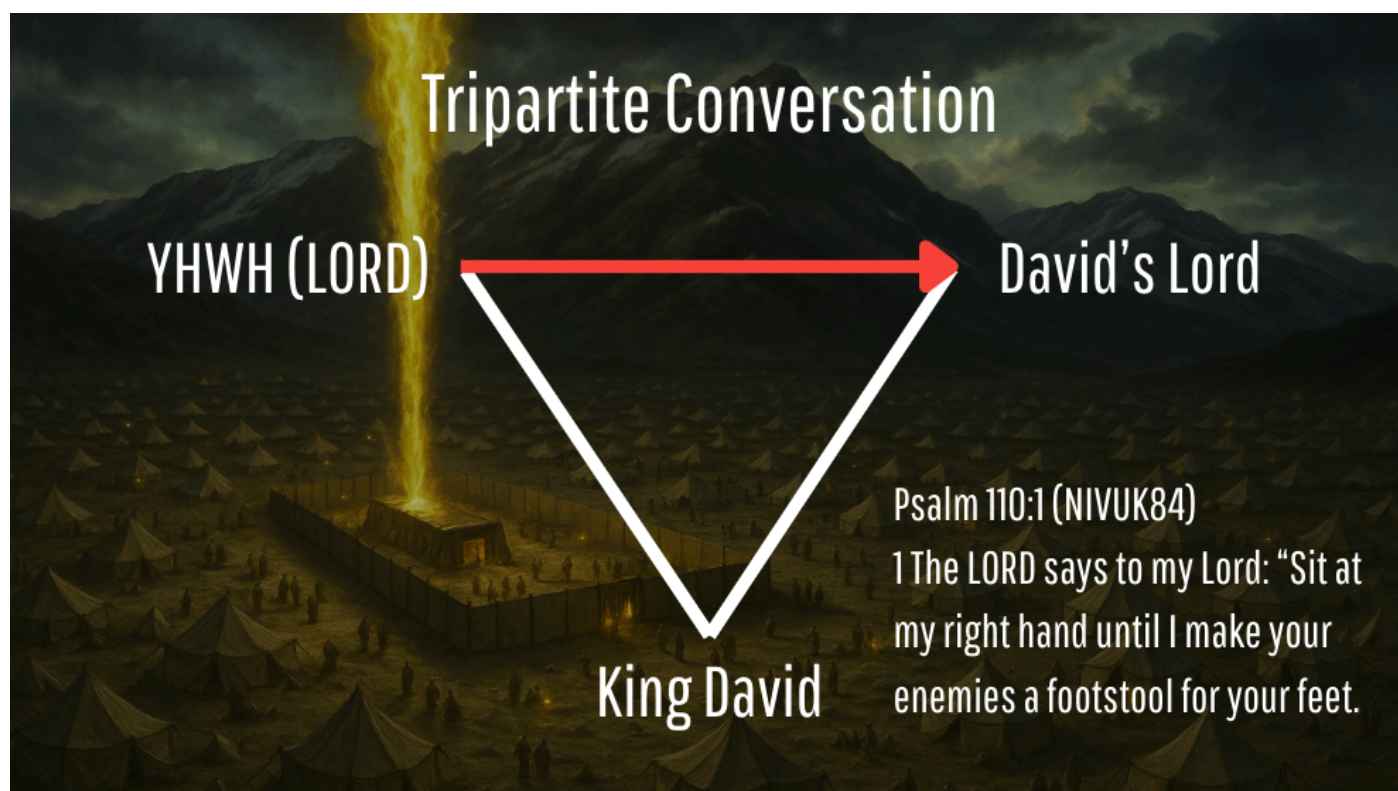


This Psalm could be described as a tripartite conversation. The conversation begins with YHWH and someone referred to as David's Lord. As you follow the conversation you will see that YHWH speaks to David's Lord, then David speaks to his Lord, and finally David speaks to YHWH about David's Lord.

~

Let's pick up with the portion of the Psalm that this slide references. These verses are going to feature YHWH speaking to David's Lord:

(READ Verse on slide)



It is first important to take notice that this is a Psalm of David. This is important because David is writing about something that he has experienced or heard. Within the psalm, a dialogue is already taking place between two parties, and David positions himself as a third participant—an eyewitness and interpreter of the exchange.

~

The two parties that are identified in verse 1 are: The LORD or Yahweh and "my Lord".

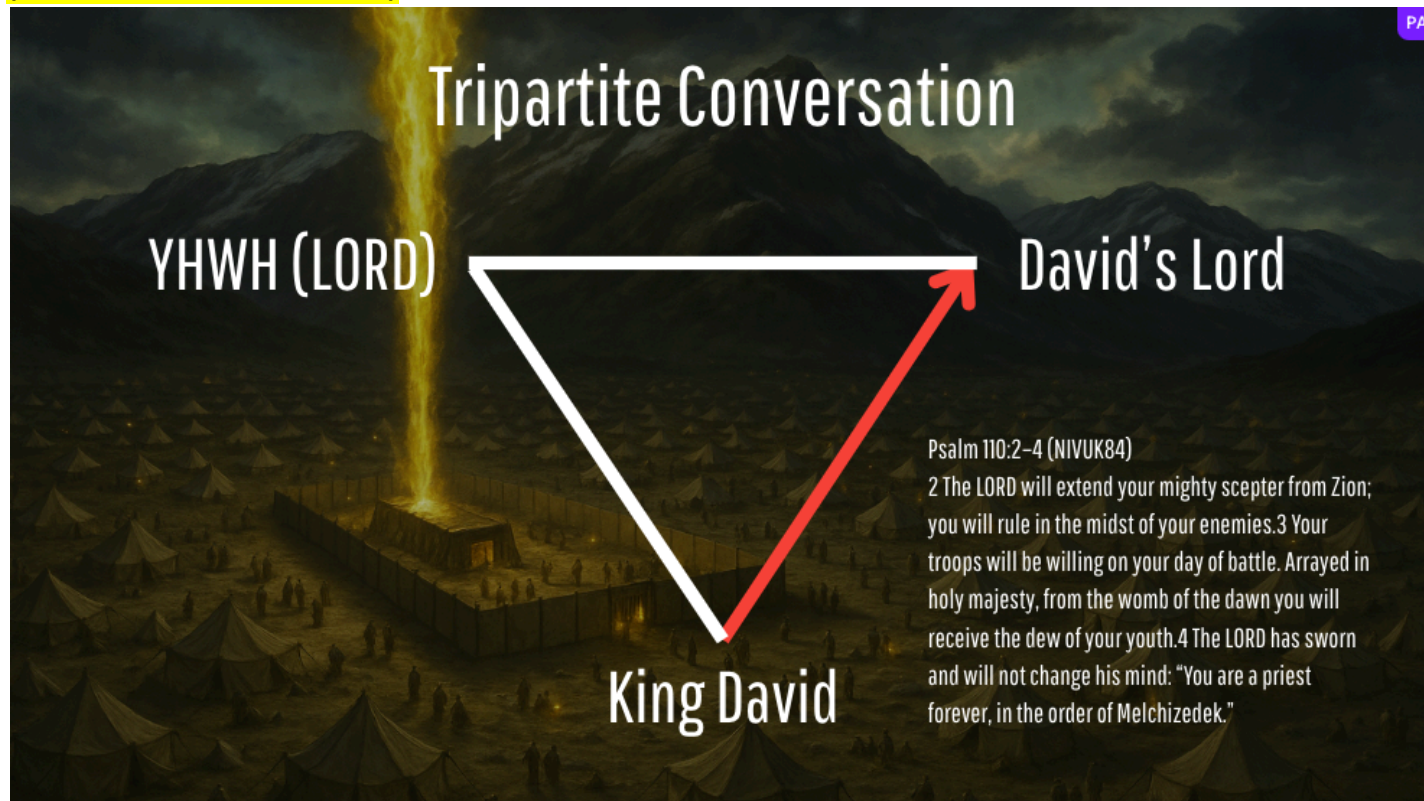
The second party in the discussion is the most intriguing figure because David calls him: "My Lord". Remember, David is the King of Israel and there is no one on the earth that he is subject to and now he is referring to this figure as his Lord, or his King!

This also helps us to see that this conversation is not happening on the earth but rather, David is receiving special insight into a conversation that is taking place in the heavens!

~

In the next verse, you are going to see that the conversation shifts from what is being said between Yahweh and "David's Lord", to David speaking to the second figure (His Lord), directly. This slide represents the shift:

(READ Verse on the slide)



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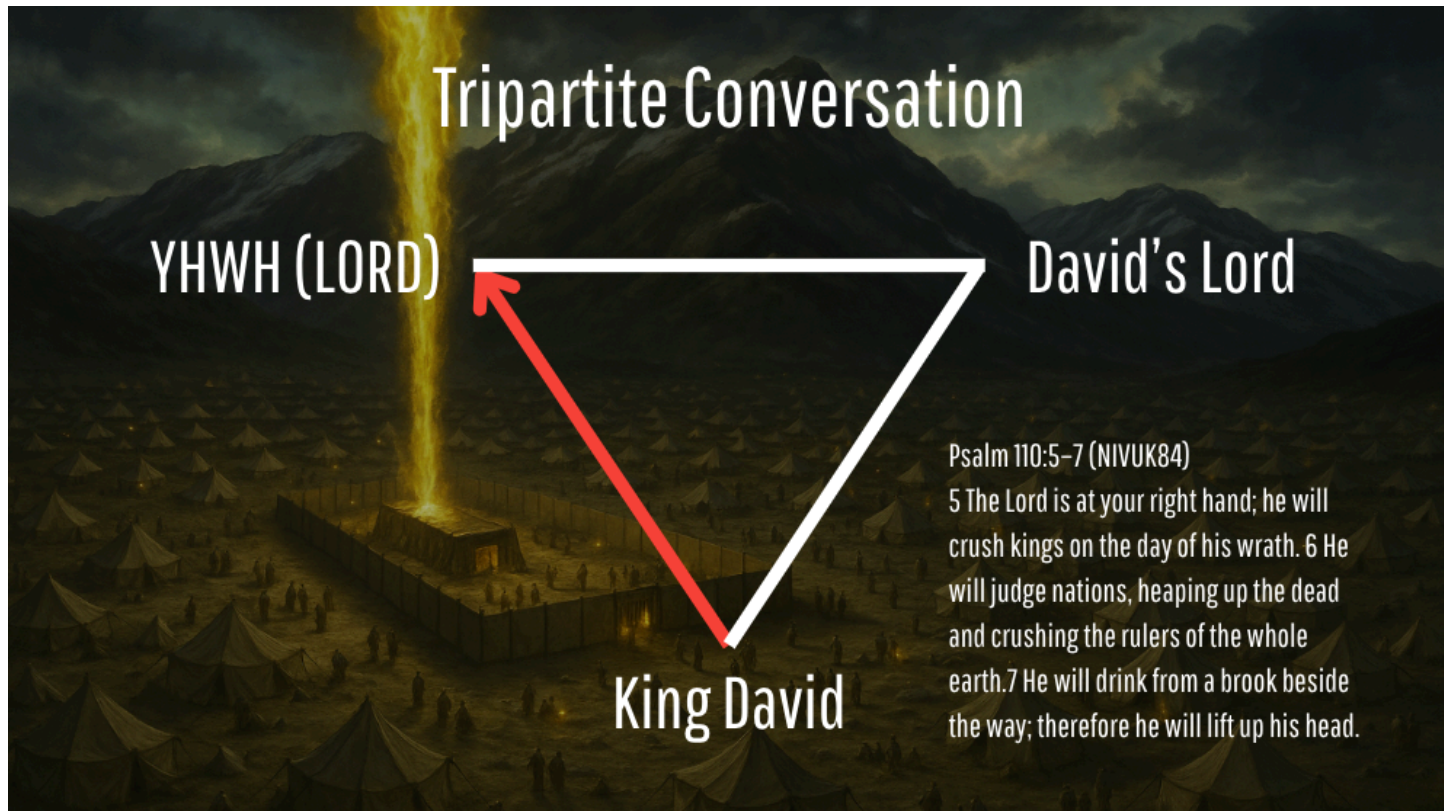
Now David is speaking directly to the second of the three parties, and he is saying that "his Lord" (the 2nd figure in the conversation) will reign from Zion. Remember, David currently reigns in Zion, but he is now testifying to the fact that another Heavenly King is going to reign from Zion **AND** he also mentioned that he is a priest in the eternal order of Melchizedek!

Because David says that his Lord will be a priest **forever** in the order of Melchizedek, we can ascertain that this priestly order existed before the Aaronic and it is what the Aaronic priesthood is based on. David is speaking to "his Lord" who is a priest like Melchizedek.

~

As we read the next verses, watch the conversation shift from David speaking to the figure denoted by the phrase "my Lord", to now speaking directly to Yahweh. The shift in conversation is represented on this slide:

(READ Verse on the slide)

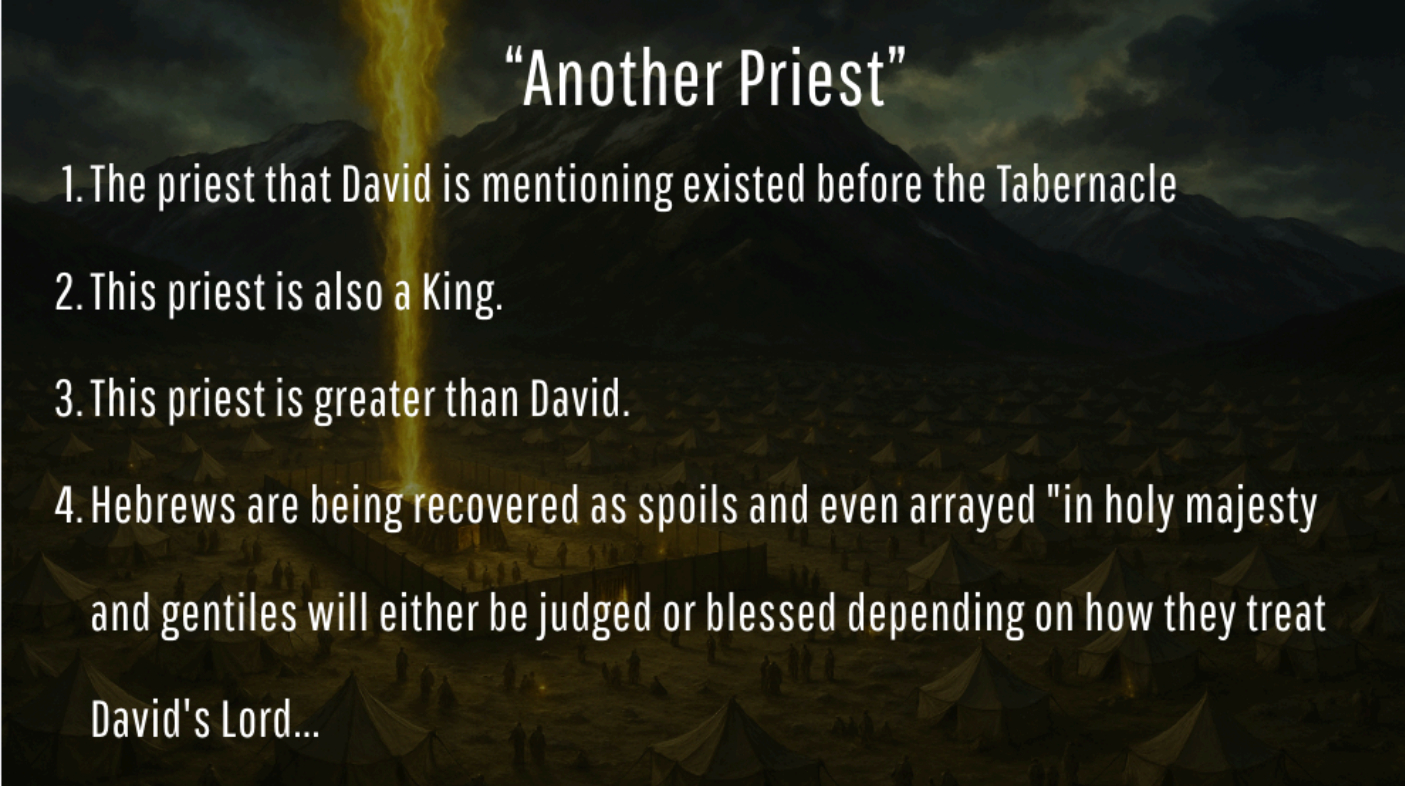


~

Just to make this painstakingly clear, David has just addressed YHWH about the figure called “David’s Lord” and said that he is at the right hand of YHWH. Moreover, that he will be victorious in battle, crushing the kings of the earth.

After reading psalm 110, we can begin to connect some building themes from our previous mentions of priests.

(READ SLIDE)



“Another Priest”

1. The priest that David is mentioning existed before the Tabernacle
2. This priest is also a King.
3. This priest is greater than David.
4. Hebrews are being recovered as spoils and even arrayed "in holy majesty and gentiles will either be judged or blessed depending on how they treat David's Lord..."

~

The authors of the Newer Testament drew inspiration from these images, recognizing that Melchizedek established a foundational pattern for subsequent priesthoods such as the Aaronic. They emphasized that the original priesthood existed in heaven, with Jesus as the High Priest whom all other earthly priesthoods reflect. Jesus is portrayed as the one who saves Israelites and blesses Gentiles, and is the priest whom everyone is encouraged to emulate.

~

- o **Hebrews 6:19–7:2 (NIVUK84)**

19 We have this hope as an anchor for the soul, firm and secure. It enters the inner sanctuary behind the curtain,
20 where Jesus, who went before us, has entered on our behalf. He has become a high priest forever, in the order of Melchizedek.
1 This Melchizedek was king of Salem and priest of God Most High. He met Abraham returning from the defeat of the kings and blessed him,
2 and Abraham gave him a tenth of everything. First, his name means “king of righteousness”; then also, “king of Salem” means “king of peace”.

~

Where Psalm 110 says "my Lord", Hebrews makes clear that the Lord that David refers to is actually his great, great, great 7x grandson. Jesus the Messiah. Jesus is the one who has become the high priest in the order of a heavenly priesthood, the priesthood of Melchizedek. He is the one who rightly fulfills the function of High Priest and King of Heaven. He is the one who is functioning to bring heaven to earth

- **Hebrews 7:3-7 (NIVUK84)**

3 Without father or mother, without genealogy, without beginning of days or end of life, **like the Son of God he remains a priest forever.**

4 Just think how great he was: Even the patriarch Abraham gave him a tenth of the plunder!

5 Now the law requires the descendants of Levi who become priests to collect a tenth from the people—that is, their brothers—even though their brothers are descended from Abraham.

6 This man, however, did not trace his descent from Levi, yet he collected a tenth from Abraham and blessed him who had the promises.

7 And without doubt the lesser person is blessed by the greater.

~

The writer of Hebrews notes that when Melchizedek appears, he has no father or mother, no genealogy. He is a forever priest. In the same way, Jesus is revealed to be a forever priest based off of a pattern in the heavens.

Moses sets up the earthly priesthood with Aaron and his sons by following a model that exists in heaven. This arrangement reflects not only a heavenly temple but also a priesthood in the heavens. Jesus is the King and High Priest of that priesthood.

~

So far our study traced the roots and meaning of the priesthood in the Hebrew Bible, highlighting that Aaron and his sons were appointed as priests prior to the golden calf incident. We connected this priesthood to its heavenly model, as seen in figures like the heavenly priest Melchizedek and the earthly priest Jethro, who served as priests before the Tabernacle and played important roles in blessing and delivering both Israelites and Gentiles. We also explored how Psalm 110 presents a priest-king greater than David, whom the New Testament identifies as Jesus. Jesus fulfills the everlasting priesthood of Melchizedek, making the Aaronic

priesthood a reflection of the heavenly priesthood, with Jesus as the ultimate High Priest who brings heaven to earth.

~

Now we would like to illustrate one more facet of this subject before moving on to verse 2.

(READ SLIDE)



~

A great deal of confusion and ignorance surrounds the subject of priests in the Christian community. The slide may serve as a reference to help you understand the various levels of priesthood in the Scripture. In some sense, every true believer is called to be a priest that follows the pattern of Yeshua, but understanding the priesthood of the Bible helps you to make application. It is perhaps best to consider who a person is a priest to. Aaron's family is a priest to every Levite and Israelite. The other Levites do not have that distinction. They are a gift to Aaron's family and serve as priests to the other tribes of Israel. The other tribes are not priests to each other but they do serve as priests to the rest of the world. Lastly, Gentile believers may not be Aaronic, Levitical, or even Israeli but they do serve in the priestly destiny and function to the rest of the world alongside Israel.

~

This raises an excellent practical application, let's consider this passage from Revelation:

- o **Revelation 1:5–6 (ESV)**

5 and from Jesus Christ the faithful witness, the firstborn of the dead, and the ruler of kings on earth.

To him who loves us and has freed us from our sins by his blood 6 and **made us a kingdom, priests** to his God and Father, to him be glory and dominion forever and ever. Amen.

You have been set free and are cherished, called to serve as a priest for God. As a priest, your role is to represent God to people and help bridge the gap between humanity and the divine. Consider: Whose life are you impacting in this way, and who are you helping draw nearer to God?

~

2 Make sacred garments for your brother Aaron, to give him dignity and honor. 3 Tell all the skilled men to whom I have given wisdom in such matters that they are to make garments for Aaron, for his consecration, so he may serve me as priest.

We want to start by informing you of the Hebrew words that are used to describe what these sacred garments are intended to convey to the people of God.

(DO NOT READ)

“Make sacred garments for your brother...to give him DIGNITY and HONOR” Ex.28:2

H3519 Kavod- Glory, honor,
splendor, wealth



H8597 Tiph'eret- Beauty, glory,
splendor, radiance



The Hebrew word for "dignity" is Kavod, and the Hebrew word for "honor" is tipheret. A more expanded translation would probably say something like "to give him weight, heaviness, importance, distinction AND to give him beauty, radiance, fame, and pride.

~

Moses and other skilled men are being instructed to make sacred garments to clothe their brother with honor and dignity.

How do you think this would have struck the people to see such a sight?

The Lord did not tell Aaron to make his own garments, but for his brothers to make garments to clothe him with. Here is where we want to encourage you to put yourself in the sandals of the first audience. What story might the people have had in mind about making special garments to clothe someone with?

~

o **Genesis 3:6–7 (BSB)**

6 When the woman saw that the tree was good for food and pleasing to the eyes, and that it was desirable for obtaining wisdom, she took the fruit and ate it. She also gave some to her husband who was with her, and he ate it.

7 And the eyes of both of them were opened, and **they knew that they were naked**; so they sewed together fig leaves and made coverings for themselves.

~

This is the context surrounding God clothing the man and the woman. By the time Moses is receiving these instructions, it has been about 2500 years since the garden where Adam and Eve disobeyed God, had their eyes open and were ashamed of their nakedness. Though much time has passed, surely, the people would be thinking of how the Lord clothed the first man and woman, but is it possible that their attention would have been drawn to another detail that was on display at the same time?

- **Genesis 3:20-21 (BSB)**

20 And Adam named his wife Eve, because she would be the mother of all the living.

21 And the LORD God made garments of skin for Adam and his wife, and He clothed them.

~

Most people remember the Lord making garments and clothing Adam and Eve, but just before the Lord does this, Adam names his wife Eve because she would be the mother of all the living. After the sin that has just occurred, Adam speaks of hope for the future and makes a prophetic declaration over his wife, and then they both are covered physically with clothing. If you were an Israelite standing there as this command is given by Yahweh, is it possible you were thinking not only of the physical clothing that was being given but also the righteous acts associated with being clothed?

~

The story the Israelites already knew from the Garden of Eden would naturally have brought to mind the connection between redemption, hope-filled righteous speech and conduct, and being clothed from on high.

In light of this, they are now going to see the expansion of this event between brothers who are leaders in their nation. Now consider what else would have been on their minds from text we have already covered.

~

- **Exodus 19:5–6 (NIVUK84)**

5 Now if you obey me fully and keep my covenant, then out of all nations you will be my treasured possession. Although the whole earth is mine, 6 you will be for me a **kingdom of priests and a holy nation.**’ These are the words you are to speak to the Israelites.”

Aaron is the high priest of the nation, but he is also an example to be followed. The Lord has already revealed to the nation that their destiny is to be a kingdom of priests. The people of Israel have the high honor of representing Adonai as priests to the other nations of the earth.

~

Tonight, we are watching Moses and the wise and skilled brothers exemplify God not just in making physical garments that will cover the body, but clothing their brother with glory, splendor, honor, and weight. Moses and the men, covering their brother, was obedience to the command of God. This was righteous behavior!

Can you see how God was teaching His people to associate righteous behavior with being clothed?

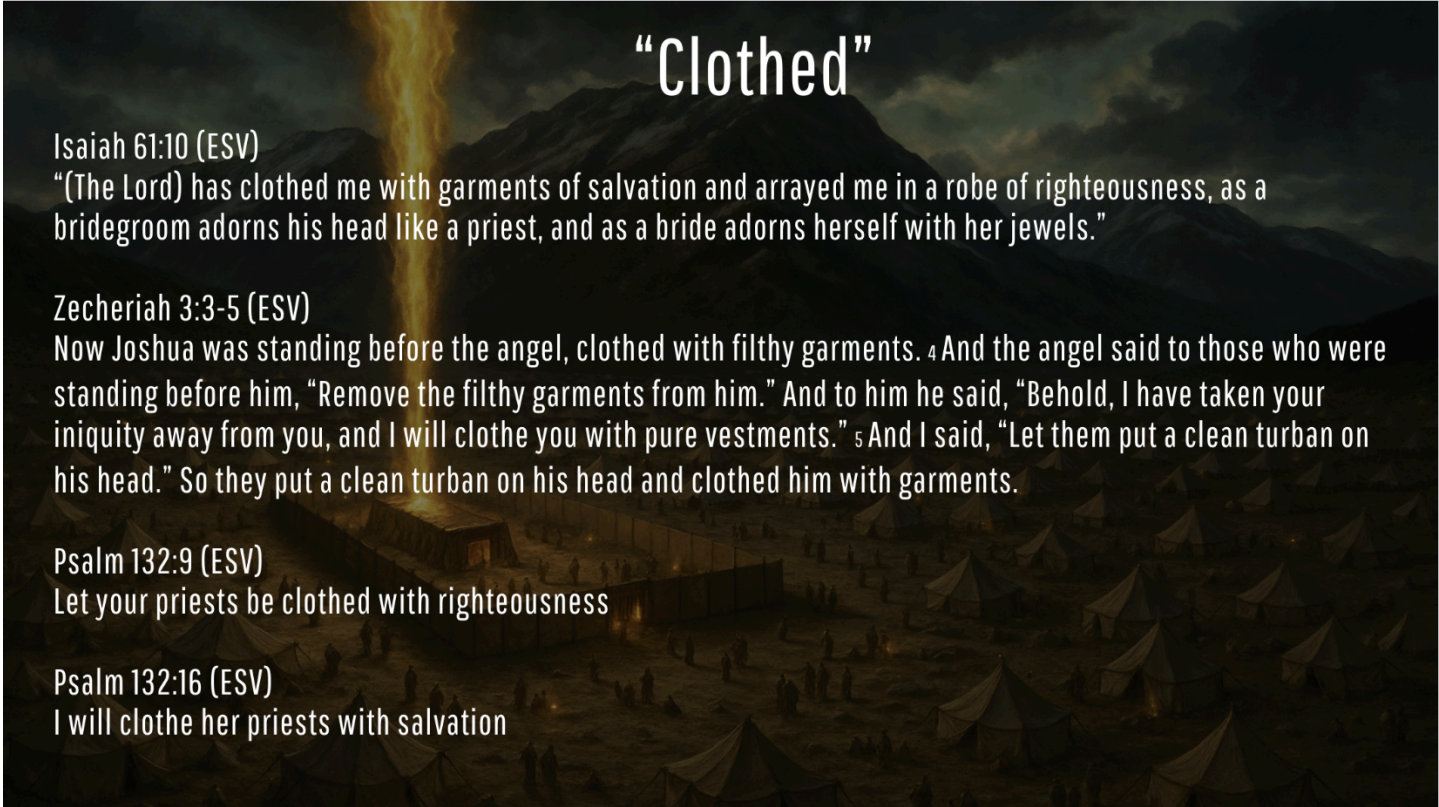
~

God’s intention was for the nation of Israel to function as priests on behalf of the rest of the world. What God had done for Adam and Eve, Moses and his brothers did for Aaron; what was done for Aaron, Aaron would do for the priests; what the priests did for Israel, Israel was meant to do for the nations, and what Gentiles grafted in to the destiny of Israel would do for their fellow man.

Now that you have a clearer picture of the context for the first audience, let's take a look at how this concept develops through Scripture.

~

(DO NOT READ)



“Clothed”

Isaiah 61:10 (ESV)

“(The Lord) has clothed me with garments of salvation and arrayed me in a robe of righteousness, as a bridegroom adorns his head like a priest, and as a bride adorns herself with her jewels.”

Zechariah 3:3-5 (ESV)

Now Joshua was standing before the angel, clothed with filthy garments. ⁴And the angel said to those who were standing before him, “Remove the filthy garments from him.” And to him he said, “Behold, I have taken your iniquity away from you, and I will clothe you with pure vestments.” ⁵And I said, “Let them put a clean turban on his head.” So they put a clean turban on his head and clothed him with garments.

Psalms 132:9 (ESV)

Let your priests be clothed with righteousness

Psalms 132:16 (ESV)

I will clothe her priests with salvation

In Isaiah 61:6, the prophet recognizes that even in the midst of Israel’s national shame and nakedness, Adonai is declaring that Israel will remain a priestly nation. Then, in verse 10, Isaiah makes a striking personal connection: although he does not belong to a priestly lineage, his obedience has resulted in God clothing him with spiritual garments in the same way a priest would be clothed.

The other thing that is fascinating is the wedding language that is employed here— Isaiah is saying that he is being clothed the same way that a couple would be clothed on their wedding day and that these wedding garments are likened to priestly garments!

~

This is faithful expansion of the promise made in Exodus 19 to the nation. Without taking anything away from the Levites, God is clothing Isaiah like a priest, like a bridegroom, and adorning him similar to a bride. Righteous behavior, resulting in being clothed like a priest and like what you would see in a wedding. Let's read the passage from Zechariah:

- o **Zechariah 3:3-5 (ESV)**

3 Now Joshua was standing before the angel, clothed with filthy garments. 4 And the angel said to those who were standing before him, “Remove the filthy garments from him.” And to him he said, “Behold, I have taken your iniquity away from you, and I will clothe you with pure vestments.” 5 And I said, “Let **them** put a clean turban on his head.” So **they** put a clean turban on his head and clothed him with garments. And the angel of the Lord was standing by.

~

In Zechariah’s prophetic vision, we are given a heavenly picture of another high priest—Joshua—standing before the Lord in filthy garments that must be removed. The Angel of the LORD declares, “I have taken away your iniquity, and I will clothe you with pure vestments,” and then commands those standing nearby to place a clean turban on his head and clothe him.

By now, this pattern should feel familiar. God clothed Adam and Eve, then instructed Moses and his brothers to clothe Aaron, and here we see the Angel of the LORD instructing Joshua’s fellow servants to remove his filthy garments and replace them with clean ones. This heavenly vision helps us read our text in Exodus more clearly: the Lord is clothing Aaron, and He is doing so through his brothers. As we continue through Scripture, this divinely ordered process of removing unclean garments and being clothed in proper clothing becomes increasingly clear.

~

To make sure we hit Law Prophets and Writings, Psalm 132 speaks of God clothing His priests multiple times in righteousness (right or Godly behavior) and in salvation.

(DO NOT READ)



“Clothed” cont..

Matthew 22:1-14 (ESV)

(The man with no wedding clothes is bound hand and foot and thrown out into darkness)

Luke 12:35-40 (ESV)

“Stay dressed for action and keep your lamps burning...”

Luke 24:49 (ESV)

“Stay in the city until you have been clothed with power from on high”

Acts 1:8 (ESV)

But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you, and you will be my witnesses

Romans 13:12 (ESV)

...let us cast off the works of darkness and put on the armor of light.

Galatians 3:27 (ESV)

for all of you who were baptised into Christ have clothed yourselves with Christ

Ephesians 4:24 (ESV)

put on the new self, created after the likeness of God in true righteousness and holiness.

Colossians 3:12 (ESV)

Therefore, as God's chosen people, holy and dearly loved, clothe yourselves with compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience.

Moving on to the gospels, in Matthew, Jesus tells a parable of a wedding where a man without proper clothes is thrown out of the wedding into utter darkness. The Lord continues to connect clothing—whether priestly or wedding— with righteous behavior and deeds.

~

In Luke 24, Jesus tells His disciples to wait to be clothed with power from on high. While this may seem like something new to most readers, we are hoping by now you see that this is anything but a new concept, Jesus was speaking about clothing them with the honor, glory and splendor that they would need to fulfill their priestly tasks here on the earth while also preparing for the wedding that would one day come. And in the book of Acts, Adonai clothes His Bride with The Spirit of the Groom, power from on high, enabling them to fulfill their function in the nations.

~

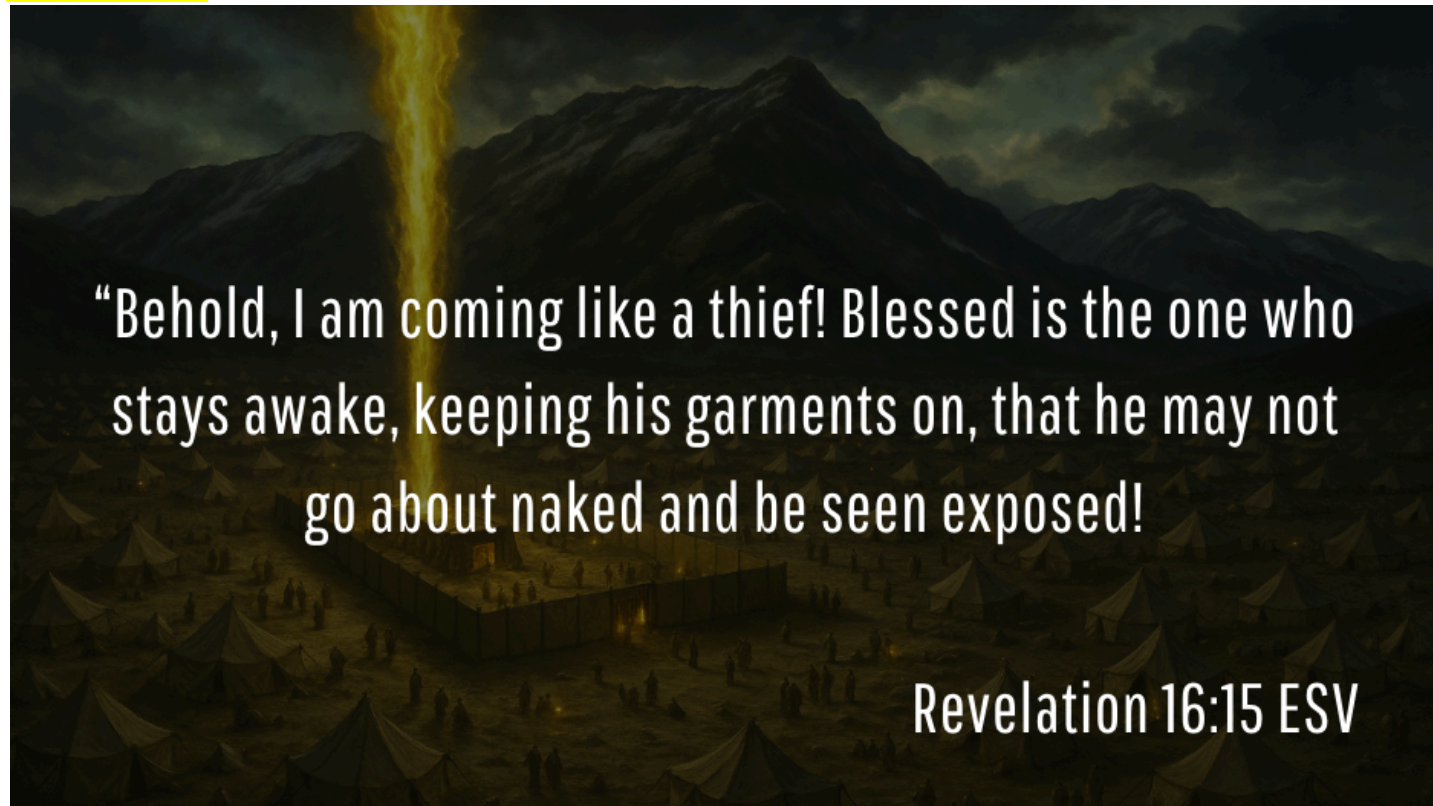
In his letters to the churches, Paul repeatedly emphasizes the responsibility of each believer to put off former ways of life and to be clothed with Christ. In Ephesians 4:24, he makes clear that the conduct we are to put on is patterned after the very likeness of God. This focus on individual responsibility does not

negate the communal responsibility to clothe one another, but properly orders it—each believer must actively embody the character of the heavenly Father.

In the end, He will hold you accountable for wearing the right clothes!

~

(READ SLIDE)



Godly brothers and sisters are given to us to help train and remind us how to put on righteous behavior, and we should expect the empowerment from on high to lead us into ever-increasing faithfulness—continually putting off the old self and putting on Christ. And each man is held responsible to ensure he is properly clothed. Also, in line with our text tonight, if you see an opportunity to clothe a brother with honor and dignity, do not look away—be a wise man, be a priest and cover him. Let’s keep moving.

~

4 These are the garments they are to make: a breastpiece, an ephod, a robe, a woven tunic, a turban and a sash. They are to make these sacred garments for your brother Aaron and his sons, so they may serve me as priests. 5 Have them use gold, and blue, purple and scarlet yarn, and fine linen.

6 "Make the ephod of gold, and of blue, purple and scarlet yarn, and of finely twisted linen — the work of a skilled craftsman. 7 It is to have two shoulder pieces attached to two of its corners, so it can be fastened. 8 Its skillfully woven waistband is to be like it — of one piece with the ephod and made with gold, and with blue, purple and scarlet yarn, and with finely twisted linen.

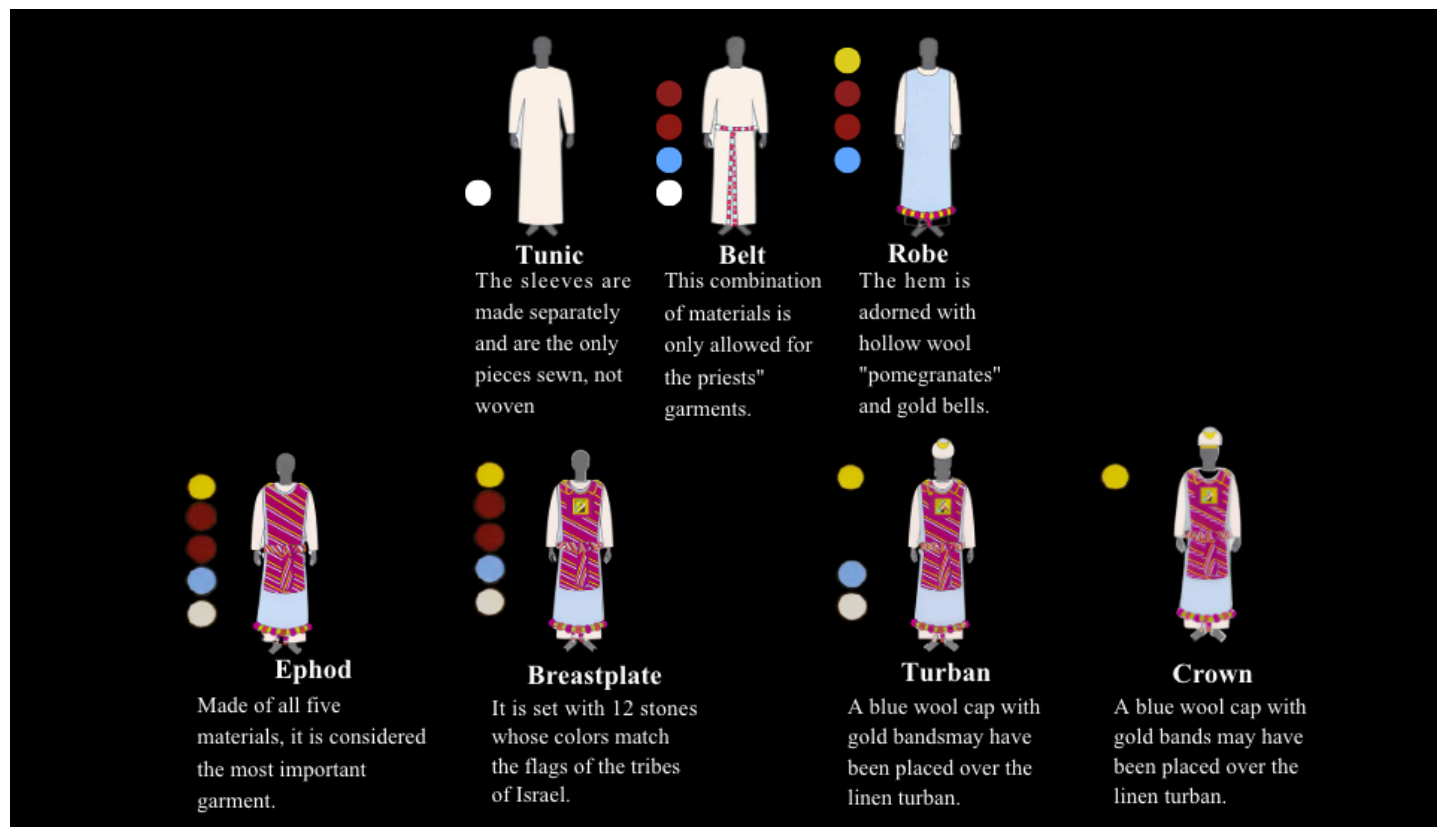
9 "Take two onyx stones and engrave on them the names of the sons of Israel 10 in the order of their birth — six names on one stone and the remaining six on the other. 11 Engrave the names of the sons of Israel on the two stones the way a gem cutter engraves a seal. Then mount the stones in gold filigree settings 12 and fasten them on the shoulder pieces of the ephod as memorial stones for the sons of Israel. Aaron is to bear the names on his shoulders as a memorial before the Lord. 13 Make gold filigree settings 14 and two braided chains of pure gold, like a rope, and attach the chains to the settings.

~

Previously, we discussed the way that the community clothed the priest and now we are going to discuss what that clothing looked like.

The first thing we want to address in this section of text is the fact that there are 6 items of the priestly garment named in this section;

(DO NOT READ)



1. Tunic
2. Belt
3. Robe
4. Ephod
5. Breastplate
6. Turban

Later in our text, we will see a 'plate' or 'crown' of gold that goes on top of the turban making a total of 7 distinct visible items the priests would wear as they minister.

~

As you know, the number 7 can be seen as representing perfection. This would draw the original audience's attention to the fact the priests were called to be clothed in perfection. Further, they would have in their minds the idea that they were called to be a kingdom of priests and thus they would feel the weight that each Israelite is called to be clothed in perfection.

- o **Exodus 19:6 (ESV)**

6 and you shall be to me a kingdom of priests and a holy nation.’ These are the words that you shall speak to the people of Israel.”

~

As we progress through the chapter, you will notice that we begin with the outer most garment, the ephod and work our way to the garment that is closest to the body of the priest, the tunic. The ordering of this is actually the reverse of the way the text opens up talking about the Tabernacle, which begins with the Ark of the Covenant and moves outward. In addition, the Tabernacle starts with a plain outer covering and gets more ornate as you move inward, whereas the priestly garments begin with the most ornate on the outside and become more plain as you get closer to the body.

When examining the ephod you see that it is made out of 7 distinct materials.

~

(DO NOT READ)



This would not be lost on the Israelites. You might be surprised to find there are many ephods in many cultures, this one is different because it was crafted according a Heavenly Pattern—designed by God.

Let's survey a few commentators on this topic.

(READ SLIDE)



Ancient Near East Ephod

As a religious garment in other ancient Near Eastern cultures, an ephod may have been a garment or covering for religious images; however, since the Mosaic law typically forbids religious images, God's extravagant ephod was placed upon the high priest,

Ronald D. Roberts, "Ephod," in *The Lexham Bible Dictionary*, ed. John D. Barry et al. (Bellingham, WA: Lexham Press, 2016).

Old Assyrian cuneiform tablets of the nineteenth century B.C. and the Ugaritic texts of the fifteenth show that an ephod (epadu), such as is mentioned in the OT as an important part of the holy attire of the Levitical priesthood, was formerly an ordinary garment, worn especially, it would seem, by women. Only after many centuries did the epadu come to be restricted to religious and subsequently to priestly use.

Merrill F. Unger, "Ephod," in *The New Unger's Bible Dictionary*, ed. R.K. Harrison (Chicago: Moody Press, 1988).

~

Rather than getting bogged down in the details of how other cultures viewed the ephod, we wanted to highlight the fact that this would be a familiar object to the original audience. Their familiarity with ephods, would beg the question, what makes this ephod different? If this one is made according to the pattern given in the heavenlies, what is particularly heavenly about this garment?

The ephod in our chapter tonight is far from simple and made with materials that are identical to what was used in the construction of the tabernacle...gold, blue, purple, scarlet yarn and finely twisted linen. This would clearly link the priest to the Tabernacle in the people's mind. The ephod mirrors the dwelling place of God, reinforcing the truth that the High Priest stands as a living extension of the Tabernacle.

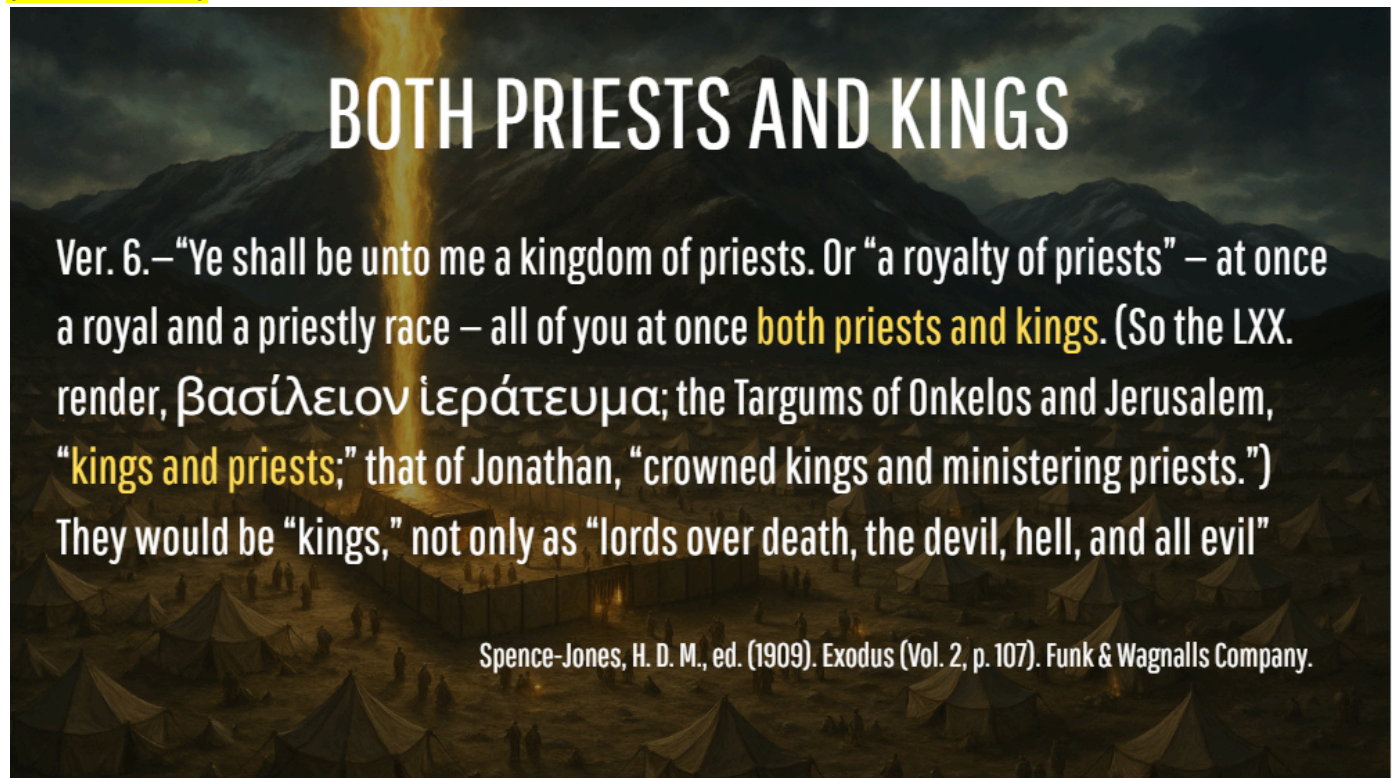
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Notice also that the ephod has gold which represents divinity, blue and purple which represent divine authority and royalty, scarlet which represents atonement,

and fine linen which represents righteous deeds! This would remind the hearer that these are not ordinary priests, rather they are to be clothed in divine authority and royalty. These colors may be a hint in the mind of the original audience that they were called to be Royal priests, a concept they had heard about in Exodus 19 as quoted above. You will remember this slide.

~

(READ SLIDE)



In Exodus 28, the make-up of the high-priests clothing isn't random, rather it is showing that the priest is supposed to be a forerunner for the entire nation. He must be a priest who is clothed in divine royalty and can then reflect that to the rest of God's people. This was true of the priest and it was promised to be true of the entire nation as well.

~

Considerable attention is paid to the construction of the shoulder pieces on the ephod. Let's refresh our minds what the text says about them in verses 7-9.

*It is to have **two shoulder pieces** attached to two of its corners, so that it can be fastened. 8 Its skillfully woven waistband is to be like it—of one piece with the **ephod** and made with gold, and with blue, purple and scarlet*

*yarn, and with finely twisted linen. 9 “Take two onyx stones and engrave on them the names of the sons of Israel 10 in the order of their birth—six names on one stone and the remaining six on the other. 11 Engrave the names of the sons of Israel on the two stones the way a gem cutter engraves a seal. Then mount the stones in gold filigree settings 12 and fasten them on the **shoulder pieces** of the ephod as **memorial stones** for the sons of Israel. Aaron is to **bear the names on his shoulders** as a **memorial** before the LORD.*

~

Each shoulder piece bears an onyx stone engraved with the names of the sons of Israel—six names on one stone and six on the other. Earlier in the evening we discussed the way that priests represent God to men. This imagery would suggest that God had appointed a man that would mediate for Israel by carrying the names of the tribes upon his shoulders. This is not insignificant, because onyx stones are not light and they are a memorial before the people and the Lord. This was a weighty and glorious responsibility. The ESV translated this phrase as 'stones of remembrance'.

~

- **Exodus 28:12 (ESV)**

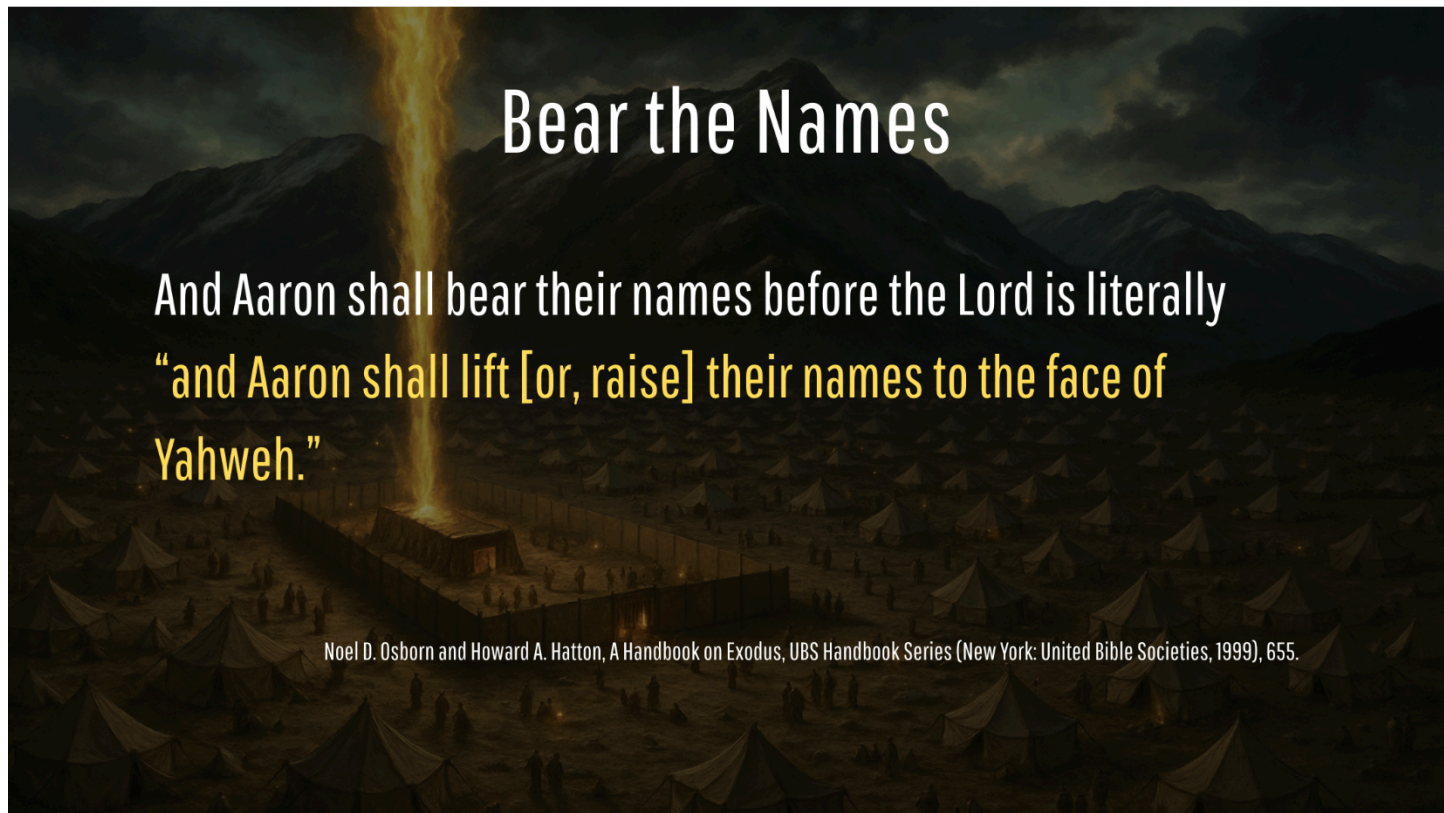
12 And you shall set the two stones on the shoulder pieces of the ephod, as **stones of remembrance for the sons of Israel**. And Aaron shall bear their names before the LORD on his two shoulders for remembrance.

This would be incredibly encouraging to the tribes of Israel, as they are hearing about the construction of the Tabernacle they would have understood that God is coming to dwell with them, that there is an altar where they can be made right with God, and now that there is a mediator who will help them to be right with God and bring them to remembrance before the LORD. Truly every aspect of the Tabernacle would have been immensely life giving to the original audience, and should be for us as well.

The Hebrew phrasing intensifies this image.

~

(READ SLIDE)



Bear the Names

And Aaron shall bear their names before the Lord is literally
“and Aaron shall lift [or, raise] their names to the face of
Yahweh.”

Noel D. Osborn and Howard A. Hatton, A Handbook on Exodus, UBS Handbook Series (New York: United Bible Societies, 1999), 655.

The wording of this passage implies that Israel is elevated and upheld before God on the shoulders of the High Priest.

The shoulder pieces show us that the priests have the awesome responsibility of bearing the glorious weight of acting as a representative of God and his people. This reflects the desire of Adonai to provide a priest that bears the tribes of Israel upon his person. The ephod, secured tightly by its waistband shows that this is a responsibility that cannot be easily removed or shaken, it is bound to him.

~

Having explored the perspective of the Israelites regarding the ephod and its shoulder pieces, we can now turn our attention to how these items are referenced throughout the rest of the TaNaKh. After examining these Scriptural connections, we will conclude with practical insights drawn from the experiences of David.

Take a look at this slide on shoulder symbolism:

(READ highlights)

Shoulder Symbolism

Deuteronomy 33:12 (ESV)	Of Benjamin he said, "The beloved of the LORD dwells in safety. The High God surrounds him all day long, and dwells between his shoulders. "
Isaiah 9:6 (ESV)	For to us a child is born, to us a son is given; and the government shall be upon his shoulder , and his name shall be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.
Isaiah 22:22 (ESV)	And I will place on his shoulder the key of the house of David. He shall open, and none shall shut; and he shall shut, and none shall open.
Isaiah 49:22 (ESV)	Thus says the Lord GOD: "Behold, I will lift up my hand to the nations, and raise my signal to the peoples; and they shall bring your sons in their arms, and your daughters shall be carried on their shoulders
Isaiah 11:14 (ESV)	But they shall swoop down on the shoulder of the Philistines in the west, and together they shall plunder the people of the east. They shall put out their hand against Edom and Moab, and the Ammonites shall obey them.

~

These passages are just a few that we could have chosen from. As you can see, shoulders in the Bible symbolize: Being in God's will, God's government, His authority, service, and unity in the family of God.

In light of the shoulder pieces, let's take a closer look at one of the Isaiah references and then move into the Newer Testament.

- o **Isaiah 9:6 (NIVUK84)**

6 For to us a child is born, to us a son is given, and the government will be on his shoulders. And he will be called Wonderful Counsellor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.

~

The priests carried on their shoulders the names of the 12 sons of Israel representing God's government. So too, the Messiah is said to carry the government on his shoulders foreshadowing that Messiah would be the perfect High Priest that these garments were pointing towards. The writer of Hebrews makes this point repetitively, likening the appearance of Messiah to the heavenly order of Melchizedek that Jesus is the High Priest of:

- **Hebrews 7:15-16 (ESV)**

15 This becomes even more evident when another priest arises in the likeness of Melchizedek, 16 who has become a priest, not on the basis of a legal requirement concerning bodily descent, **but by the power of an indestructible life.**

~

This means that the kingly and priestly attributes associated with Melchizedek are found in even greater measure within Jesus, the High Priest of the order. Moreover, the limitations of the Aaronic priesthood are addressed in Jesus because He is not subject to death.

As we have discussed, Aaron the priest wore clothes made with royal colors representing a royal priest. Melchizedek was a priest and he was also a king. Jesus is both our eternal priest and king that will bear the government of Israel on his shoulders forever.

Remember that it was in the Law of Moses that Melchizedek was introduced. It was King David who expounded on Melchizedek in the writings (Psalm 110) and it is Jesus who is the living and breathing Law Prophets and Writings and he is both a Priest and King and He is the Son of David!

~

The other purpose of the stones on the shoulder was to bring the tribes of Israel to remembrance before the LORD. Notice what Hebrews 7:25 says he is doing for all Israel.

- **Hebrews 7:25 (ESV)**

25 Consequently, he is able to save to the uttermost those who draw near to God through him, since he always lives to make intercession for them.

Just as the priests bore remembrance of the tribes of Israel before the LORD always, so too the author of Hebrews informs us that Jesus brings the Hebrews to remembrance before the LORD always through intercession.

We found this interesting in light of Isaiah 62:6:

- o **Isaiah 62:6 (ESV)**

6 On your walls, O Jerusalem,
I have set watchmen;
all the day and all the night
they shall never be silent.
You who put the LORD in remembrance,
take no rest,

~

Just as the priests carry the names of Israel's tribes on their shoulders, presenting them before the LORD, and as Jesus—the ultimate High Priest—unceasingly intercedes for his people, so too those who are grafted in as gentiles to the priestly calling are invited to be vigilant watchmen. We are called to continually pray for the peace of Israel, faithfully bringing the nation before God in prayer, day and night.

David fully grasped the purpose of the ephod and fully believed in God's desire for all sons of Abraham to be priests and kings.

~

- o **1 Samuel 23:6–11 (NIVUK84)**

6 (Now Abiathar son of Ahimelech had brought the ephod down with him when he fled to David at Keilah.) 7 Saul was told that David had gone to Keilah, and he said, “God has handed him over to me, for David has imprisoned himself by entering a town with gates and bars.” 8 And Saul called up all his forces for battle, to go down to Keilah to besiege David and his men. 9 When David learned that Saul was plotting against him, he said to Abiathar the priest, “**Bring the ephod.**” 10 David said, “O LORD, God of Israel, your servant has heard definitely that Saul plans to come to Keilah and destroy the town on account of me. 11 Will the citizens of Keilah surrender me to him? Will Saul come down, as your servant has heard? O LORD, God of Israel, tell your servant.” And the LORD said, “He will.”

~

In chapter 27, we highlighted the cultural understanding of the horns of the altar as a symbol of mercy as evidenced by men like Adonijah grabbing hold of them when caught in wrong doing. We understand more about the way the ephod was viewed by David calling for it here. David calling for the ephod was to be understood as David beginning the process of seeking the Lord for wisdom in

making a decision on how to lead his men. Which means that in this story, Saul observes events unfolding, assumes God's approval and calls for an army. Contrast this with David who learns of Saul's actions, seeks the Lord and calls for the ephod.

Now think about this: you're getting ready to go into what you know is an ambush—Are you going to ask for a gun? A weapon? A better plan?

~

David understood that the ephod was made to look like a walking tabernacle, the dwelling with God, and he knew that only through proper communion with God could he win this fight.

David grasped the importance of taking on heavens prerogatives to be able to make the most consequential decisions of his life and the nations destiny.

- o **1 Samuel 30:5–8 (ESV)**

5 David's two wives also had been taken captive, Ahinoam of Jezreel and Abigail the widow of Nabal of Carmel. 6 And David was greatly distressed, for the people spoke of stoning him, because all the people were bitter in soul, each for his sons and daughters. But David strengthened himself in the LORD his God.

7 And David said to Abiathar the priest, the son of Ahimelech, **"Bring me the ephod."** So Abiathar brought the ephod to David. 8 And David inquired of the LORD, "Shall I pursue after this band? Shall I overtake them?" He answered him, "Pursue, for you shall surely overtake and shall surely rescue."

~

Again, when David's wife and children had been taken captive, he didn't make a rash decision, rather he seeks to take on heavens prerogatives stylizing himself as a priest recognizing that he would rather seek the Lord and represents heavens decisions than to resort to any other means.

Is this your first reaction to situations? Are you seeking the will of the LORD at all times like David calling for the ephod?

As we will see in a little bit, the ephod was worn by the priest so that decisions can be made based on the will of Adonai. David is inquiring before the Lord before the battle instead of assuming what God would do based on his perception.

~

- o **Romans 12:1–2 (NIVUK84)**

1 Therefore, I urge you, brothers, in view of God's mercy, to offer your bodies as living sacrifices, holy and pleasing to God—this is your spiritual act of worship. 2 Do not conform any longer to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God's will is—his good, pleasing and perfect will.

Submitting your body to Christ and resisting this world will enable you to discern what His will is. Are you have trouble discerning his will? Call for the Ephod and clothe yourself in the priorities of Heaven, God will respond and direct you! He intends for you to thrive in your God given role as a priest and king in this world.

~

Before we move on we wanted to bring up one more sod concerning this passage. The stones on the two shoulders of the priest with the names of 6 tribes on each stone is mirrored in the geography of Israel.



This is an image of the city of Shechem which is located between Mount Gerizim on the left and Mount Ebal on the right. The word Shechem means "shoulder" and is likely named that because the mountains on either side of this city look like shoulder blades. Deuteronomy 27 makes it clear that the twelve tribes of Israel stood on these two mountains, six on one mountain and six on the other. Let's look at a passage from Joshua that also describes the event:

~

- o **Joshua 8:33 (ESV)**

33 And all Israel, sojourner as well as native born, with their elders and officers and their judges, stood on opposite sides of the ark before the Levitical priests who carried the ark of the covenant of the LORD, half of them in front of Mount Gerizim and half of them in front of Mount Ebal, just as Moses the servant of the LORD had commanded at the first, to bless the people of Israel.

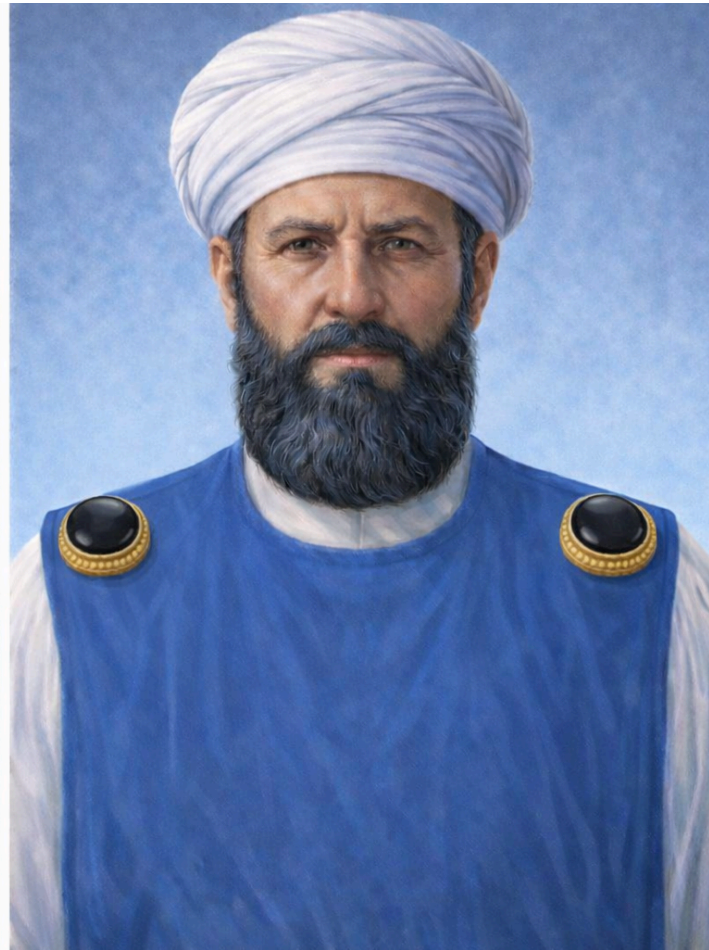
~

Why did God command the people to go to these two specific mountains to hear the blessings and the curses? What is the significance of this moment in the broader biblical text? We are glad you asked. Just like the high priest was commanded to carry the 12 tribes on his shoulders as he went before the LORD, so too the land itself would carry the 12 tribes on its shoulders as it came before the LORD. It is as though the land itself is considered as a priest to God.



Mt. Gerizim

Mt. Ebal



As you can see on the slide the mountains on either side of Shechem, or shoulder, each held 6 tribes directly paralleling the stones on either shoulder of the High Priest. This is consistent with other scriptures that describe other portions of Israel as though they are parts of a priest.

~

- o **Psalm 133:title-3 (ESV)**
A SONG OF ASCENTS. OF DAVID.
Behold, how good and pleasant it is

when brothers dwell in unity!
It is like the precious oil on the head,
running down on the beard,
on the **beard of Aaron**,
running down on the collar of his robes!
It is like the dew of Hermon,
which falls on the mountains of Zion!
For there the LORD has commanded the blessing,
life forevermore.

In this Psalm Aaron's beard running with anointing oil is being compared to the dew and snow that runs off mount Hermon. If Hermon is likened to the head of the High Priest then Shechem could easily be viewed as his shoulders. Putting these two locations on a map would look something like this:

~

(SLIDE)



Observe how Mount Hermon sits at the northernmost point of Israel, resembling the head or hair, while Shechem lies just below, much like a pair of shoulders. The geography and symbolism embedded in the land of Israel are profoundly layered, though we won't explore all those details here. Still, it's important to note that just as the High Priest serves as a reflection of heavenly realities, the land itself also embodies these same spiritual principles.

15 "Fashion a breastpiece for making decisions — the work of a skilled craftsman. Make it like the ephod: of gold, and of blue, purple and scarlet yarn, and of finely twisted linen. 16 It is to be square — a span long and a span wide — and folded double. 17 Then mount four rows of precious stones on it. In the first row there shall be a ruby, a topaz and a beryl; 18 in the second row a turquoise, a sapphire and an emerald; 19 in the third row a jacinth, an agate and an amethyst; 20 in the fourth row a chrysolite, an onyx and a jasper. Mount them in gold filigree settings. 21 There are to be twelve stones, one for each of the names of the sons of Israel, each engraved like a seal with the name of one of the twelve tribes.

~

What you should immediately notice is that the twelve tribes are represented not only on the shoulders but also on the breast piece. Here, they are characterized by 12 precious stones, one for each tribe of Israel.

(DO NOT READ)



Before you immediately begin to think of any connecting passages in the New Testament concerning Precious or Living Stones—let's consider what this would have meant to the original audience. What would these words and this imagery call to mind in the craftsmen creating this piece? What would the people have thought as they looked upon the priest and saw the stones? Why is he wearing them?

~

Let's start with the why. Luckily, the text informs us of the purpose of the breast piece, which is: making decisions. This is not the first time the need for wise decision making is laid out in the government of Israel. You should remember the events of Exodus 18 and the Priest of Midian, Jethro. Earlier in our teaching, we covered some similarities between Jethro and Melchizedek.

- o **Exodus 18:20–22 (ESV)**

²⁰ and you shall warn them about the statutes and the laws, and make them know the way in which they must walk and what they must do.

²¹ Moreover, look for able men from all the people, men who fear God, who are trustworthy and hate a bribe, and place such men over the people as chiefs of thousands, of hundreds, of fifties, and of tens. ²² And

let them judge the people at all times. Every great matter they shall bring to you, but any small matter they shall decide themselves. So it will be easier for you, and they will bear the burden with you.

~

As you can see in Exodus 18, the Nation already had a system of decision making and dispute settling prior to the establishment of the High Priest. It's fascinating that a *priest* from Midian is integral in setting up this system of righteous judgments and tonight we see the priesthood of Aaron's family given a specific garment that is essential with decision making.

What is striking about the breastpiece and its function is that you get to see a correlation that the original audience would certainly have seen. The task of making decisions was literally enveloped by the tribes of Israel. Let's try to understand what that could mean for them. Whenever the priest sought the Lord and the breastpiece for a decision, he would always need to first interact with Israel and his people. It would be impossible to separate the decisions he had to make with the Nation he was priest over.

~

We can imagine this would be a considerable comfort to the average Israelite. They knew that the Priest God had ordained over them had their best interest in mind and had a reminder of their entire people every time he sought a decision. There are instances in the Tanakh that we get to see this applied.

- o **Numbers 27:18–21 (ESV)**

¹⁸So the Lord said to Moses, “Take Joshua the son of Nun, a man in whom is the Spirit, and lay your hand on him. ¹⁹Make him stand before Eleazar the priest and all the congregation, and you shall commission him in their sight. ²⁰You shall invest him with some of your authority, that all the congregation of the people of Israel may obey. ²¹And he shall stand before Eleazar the priest, who shall inquire for him by the judgment of the Urim before the Lord. At his word they shall go out, and at his word they shall come in, both he and all the people of Israel with him, the whole congregation.”

~

You can see that the decisions the High Priest—Eleazar makes while inquiring of the breast piece have ramifications for the entire nation! It certainly would be

reassuring for the people that their priest had a constant reminder of them when these decisions were being made. Let's look at one more we touched on earlier.

- o **1 Samuel 23:9–13 (ESV)**

⁹David knew that Saul was plotting harm against him. And he said to Abiathar the priest, “Bring the ephod here.” ¹⁰Then David said, “O Lord, the God of Israel, your servant has surely heard that Saul seeks to come to Keilah, to destroy the city on my account. ¹¹Will the men of Keilah surrender me into his hand? Will Saul come down, as your servant has heard? O Lord, the God of Israel, please tell your servant.” And the Lord said, “He will come down.” ¹²Then David said, “Will the men of Keilah surrender me and my men into the hand of Saul?” And the Lord said, “They will surrender you.” ¹³Then David and his men, who were about six hundred, arose and departed from Keilah, and they went wherever they could go. When Saul was told that David had escaped from Keilah, he gave up the expedition.

~

David here is tasked with a difficult decision to make, and he makes this decision by consulting the ephod, which in Aaron's case contains the breastpiece. It is not necessary to speculate which of the available ephods David is utilizing; rather, it is important to note the intended function of the ephod. For both priests and righteous kings, this divine clothing was highly appraised for making decisions. In considering his choice, it is clear that David has both himself and his men on his mind—it's not hard to imagine him seeing the stones representing the people of his nation and knowing that his decision will affect not only himself, but also his fellow Israelites. Interestingly, both kings and priests are inquiring, which should remind us of the heavenly priest and king Melchizedek, who serves as the original prototype in the book of Genesis. Moreover, this should call to your mind the conversation that occurred in Ps 110 between YHWH, David, and David's Lord. These images all form a collage or mosaic that begins to paint the picture of the need for a righteous king-priest who is from the people of Israel and always has them in mind during every decision.

~

- o **Esther 4:13–14 (ESV)**

¹³Then Mordecai told them to reply to Esther, “Do not think to yourself that in the king's palace you will escape any more than all the other

Jews. ¹⁴ For if you keep silent at this time, relief and deliverance will rise for the Jews from another place, but you and your father's house will perish. And who knows whether you have not come to the kingdom for such a time as this?"

Earlier in the evening we discussed layers of the priesthood and asked the question: who are you a priest to? In this example, Mordechai is neither a Levitical Priest nor a King. But he is certainly acting as a righteous King and Priest to the people by considering both the Lord and the people of Israel in every decision he advises. This results in the rescue of his fellow Jews and blessings to the Gentiles showing that he is adhering to the Heavenly Pattern revealed from Genesis throughout all of time.

~

- o **Esther 10:3 (NIV)**

³ Mordecai the Jew was second in rank to King Xerxes, preeminent among the Jews, and held in high esteem by his many fellow Jews, because he worked for the **good of his people** and **spoke up for the welfare of all the Jews**.

What you should take away from this verse range is first and foremost—according to the Heavenly pattern that the priesthood is a copy of, decision making must be seen in light of Israel.

In your life, how many of your decisions are in light of Israel? Do you consider the Law and constitution of this nation as you make your decisions? Do you look to their example in the word to instruct your personal walk? Is the greater plan of their salvation in your mind when you consider how you spend your time and resources?

~

If we zoom out to the broader perspective of the breastpiece, we are reminded that these details are being given because of how they relate to the heavenly reality. Everything we are learning about is being given to Moses as he sees the Heavens, which is the source material for the Tabernacle and Priesthood.

So with that in mind, we want to show you a few slides concerning the design of the tabernacle that might aid us in our understanding of what is being represented on the breastpiece of the High Priest.

~



According to Numbers 1-5, the arrangement of the tribes around the Tabernacle would have looked like this. Notice how the tribes would have been arranged by sets of 3 on all sides of the Tabernacle. We have also taught you before that the standards that were represented around each side match the descriptions in the Book of Revelation of what is surrounding the throne of God in the Heavens.

With that said, we think that it would help you if you had an aerial view of how this probably looked.



When you consider all that we are discussing concerning the Tabernacle and the Priesthood and their arrangement as a copy of what Moses is seeing in the Heavens, it's worth considering the Heavenly structure and its earthly reflection in these passages:

~

(DO NOT READ)



In Revelation 21, the heavenly city is surrounded by 12 gates, and those gates have 12 angels and it all represents the 12 tribes of Israel!

In Matthew 19, we see that not only will there be 12 gates, according to Matthew, there will also be 12 thrones with the 12 Apostles seated on them and they will judge the 12 tribes. The point is that the breastpiece featured a pattern of 12, the tabernacle featured a pattern of 12 and the heavenly city also features the same patterns of 12.

Lastly, in Revelation 21, in the description of the Heavenly city, there are 12 stones mentioned surrounding the city in the foundation of the city walls just like the 12 tribes surrounding the Tabernacle in the wilderness and just like the 12 stones mentioned surrounding the breast piece in Exodus 28.

~

When we take all of this into consideration, we are able to ascertain that the arrangement of the stones on the Ephod and the tribes around the Tabernacle would bear some similarities!

Remember, every detail that is being given in these chapters of Exodus are facets of things that exist in the heavens, so when we see 12 stones or 12 tribes being represented, the best possible conclusion is that it is a pattern that repeats itself throughout the Bible Narrative.

With that in view, let's continue and see if we can build on this pattern.

~

22 "For the breastpiece make braided chains of pure gold, like a rope. 23 Make two gold rings for it and fasten them to two corners of the breastpiece. 24 Fasten the two gold chains to the rings at the corners of the breastpiece, 25 and the other ends of the chains to the two settings, attaching them to the shoulder pieces of the ephod at the front. 26 Make two gold rings and attach them to the other two corners of the breastpiece on the inside edge next to the ephod. 27 Make two more gold rings and attach them to the bottom of the shoulder pieces on the front of the ephod, close to the seam just above the waistband of the ephod. 28 The rings of the breastpiece are to be tied to the rings of the ephod with blue cord, connecting it to the waistband, so that the breastpiece will not swing out from the ephod.

29 "Whenever Aaron enters the Holy Place, he will bear the names of the sons of Israel over his heart on the breastpiece of decision as a continuing memorial before the Lord. 30 Also put the Urim and the Thummim in the breastpiece, so they may be over Aaron's heart whenever he enters the presence of the Lord. Thus Aaron will always bear the means of making decisions for the Israelites over his heart before the Lord.

~

We must begin with the simple layout describing the Urim and Thummim. We could spend hours debating what exactly these two items are, but for now, it's important to note that the text describes them as in the breastpiece and directly over Aaron's heart.

Take a look at this next slide.



Practically every commentary or a cursory Google search of the Priestly breastpiece will give you an image almost identical to this one. If this is how it looked, then ask yourself: "Where would the Urim and Thummim go?" How could they be placed inside? How could the Urim and the Thummim be directly over the heart of the Priest?

~

It seems that there has been a misrepresentation among *Christian* Scholars that is likely due to a lack of engagement with the Jewish conversation about what this would have looked like, so we decided to show you a much older *Jewish* commentary from someone who would have actually seen priests wearing the breastpiece and what his description and understanding was. Here is an excerpt from Josephus.

~

(READ SLIDE)

THE EPHOD, HISTORICAL CONTEXT

5. (162) Besides these, the high priest put on a third garment, which is called the Ephod, which resembles the Epomis of the Greeks. Its make was after this manner: it was woven to the depth of a cubit, of several colors, with gold intermixed, and embroidered, but it left the middle of the breast uncovered: it was made with sleeves also; nor did it appear to be at all differently made from a short coat. (163) But in the void place of this garment there was inserted a piece of the bigness of a span, embroidered with gold, and the other colors of the ephod, and was called Essen [the breastplate], which in the Greek language signifies the Oracle. (164) This piece exactly filled up the void space in the ephod. It was united to it by golden rings at every corner, the like rings being annexed to the ephod, and a blue ribbon was made use of to tie them together by those rings; (165) and that the space between the rings might not appear empty, they contrived to fill it up with stitches of blue ribbons.

Josephus, F., & Whiston, W. (1987). The works of Josephus: complete and unabridged (p. 89). Hendrickson.

~

Josephus, who lived in the 1st century A.D., writes that there was a place in the middle of the breastpiece that would have been open so that the Urim and Thummim could be placed directly on top of the skin and over the heart of the priest, according to Exodus 28.

This changes the way that we look at the breastpiece because it would not have been possible to have 3 rows of 4 stones, stacked in rows and columns, if the Urim and Thummim was to be in the center. Also, there would be no way to place the Urim and the Thummim over the heart of the priest.

~

With that said, it makes much more sense if the Urim and the Thummim are placed in the center of the breastpiece and then the stones were arranged around them. Now, with this being the case, we might ask, "How would the stones be arranged?" Let's survey an image from earlier.

(SLIDE)



Remember when we mentioned that the 12 stones represented the 12 tribes? We believe it is a proper connection that the 12 stones would have been arranged around the Urim and the Thummim in the same way that the tribes were assembled around the Tabernacle. Let's consult the aerial view one more time so that you can envision this correctly.

~



The tribes were assembled around the Tabernacle in something that would have looked like a cross if you flew over it. In the same way, the stones would have been arranged around the Urim and the Thummim on the chest of the High Priest.

In our view, this next image is a better representation of how the breastpiece was arranged.

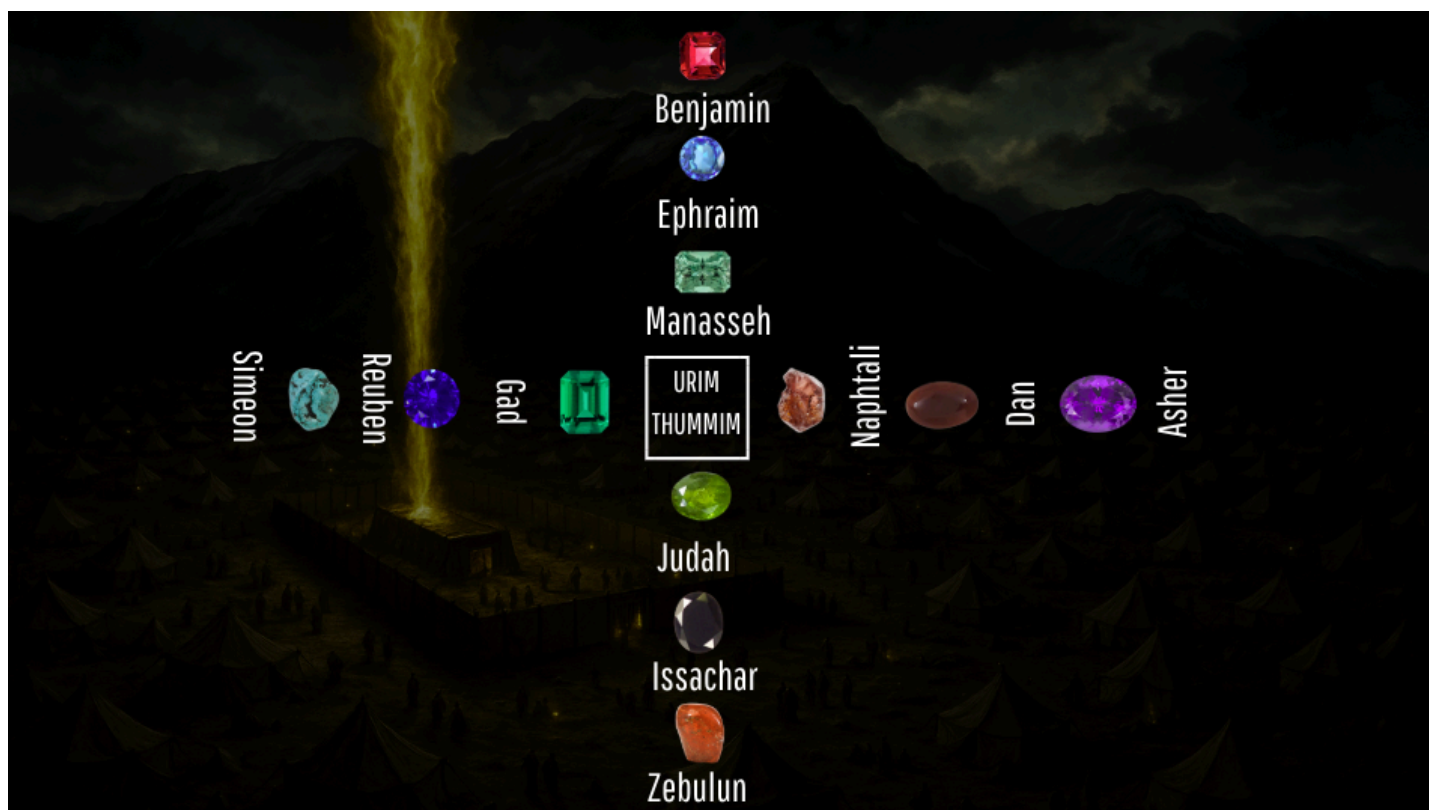
(SLIDE)



Now remember that there was a void in the breastpiece where the Urim and the Thummim would have been placed on the skin of the High Priest and this would have been directly over his heart so we believe this next graphic will help you as well.

~

(SLIDE)



It is fascinating to see that the arrangement of the items on the breastpiece would have resembled the arrangement of the tribes of Israel around the Tabernacle. Imagine you are the original audience of Exodus. Not only would the number of stones and the names on them cause you to reflect on the nation's place in the Priest's decisions, but you would also see that the breastplate and the priest himself was a reflection and a symbol of the entire nation.

The stones are the tribe's organization around the tabernacle, which is characterized by the Urim and Thummim. The Urim and Thummim is directly on the skin over the heart of the priest— **as if the skin is the veil to the holy place and the heart is the holy of holies.**

~

What is even more amazing is to think that this same pattern existed in the heavens long before it is being told to Moses on earth!

Unlike the modern illustration that removes the essential facet of the Urim and Thummim, the historically correct version contains every element and even serves as a replica of the Tabernacle and Tribal arrangement, which, as we have been discussing, is a heavenly arrangement.

Hopefully, this imagery helps bring your understanding closer to what the original audience would have seen and worn in their time.

~

Now that we have an understanding of what this looked like, we still must answer the first question you likely had—what exactly *is* the Urim and Thummim?

It seems that the original audience would have quickly connected the number of stones with the twelve tribes, as we have been discussing. It's not hard to imagine them wondering—*what are those two items in the middle of the tribes?*

Commentators have discussed this topic for centuries and the explanations have been numerous. Most of them try to describe the Urim and Thummim as some kind of magic 8-ball or even a pair of dice. We find this explanation unsatisfactory and cheap. Let's survey the actual Hebrew words and their Greek counterparts to try and gain a proper interpretation. Let's start with the Urim.

~

(DO NOT READ)



אֹרִי	Urim	δήλωσις
<u>Hebrew: H217/224 (fire, fires)</u>		<u>Greek: G1213/1212/6461 (lights, manifestation)</u>
Isaiah 44:16 (NIV) ¹⁶ Half of the wood he burns in the fire; over it he prepares his meal, he roasts his meat and eats his fill. He also warms himself and says, "Ah! I am warm; I see the fire ."		Ezra 2:63 (Brenton LXX En) ...a priest should arise with Lights and Perfections.
Isaiah 31:9 (NIV) ⁹ Their stronghold will fall because of terror; at the sight of the battle standard their commanders will panic," declares the Lord, whose fire is in Zion, whose furnace is in Jerusalem.		Numbers 27:21 (LES2) ²¹ And he will stand before Eleazar, the priest, and they will ask him about the judgment of the lights before the Lord..."
		Leviticus 8:8 – Brenton's Septuagint (LXX) "And he put the oracle on him; and he put on the oracle the manifestation and the truth."

You should remember from our studies in Genesis the word Ur, which means fire. We referenced this when we discussed Abraham coming out of Ur of the Chaldeans or—the fires of confusion. The word *Urim* is the plural form of Ur, being used as a proper noun.

On the left side of the screen, you should see two instances of the word Ur in the prophets. As you can see, both times it is translated as 'fire'. This is the most common translation of the word, but it is also translated as 'lights' in one instance. ~

On the right side of the screen is the Greek equivalent of Urim. When the writers of the LXX came to these three passages that in Hebrew contain *Urim*, to communicate their understanding of the word, they used the word δῆλωσις (day-low-sis), which is translated as 'lights' or 'manifestation'. With that understanding in place, let's now examine Thummim and put it all together.

(DO NOT READ)



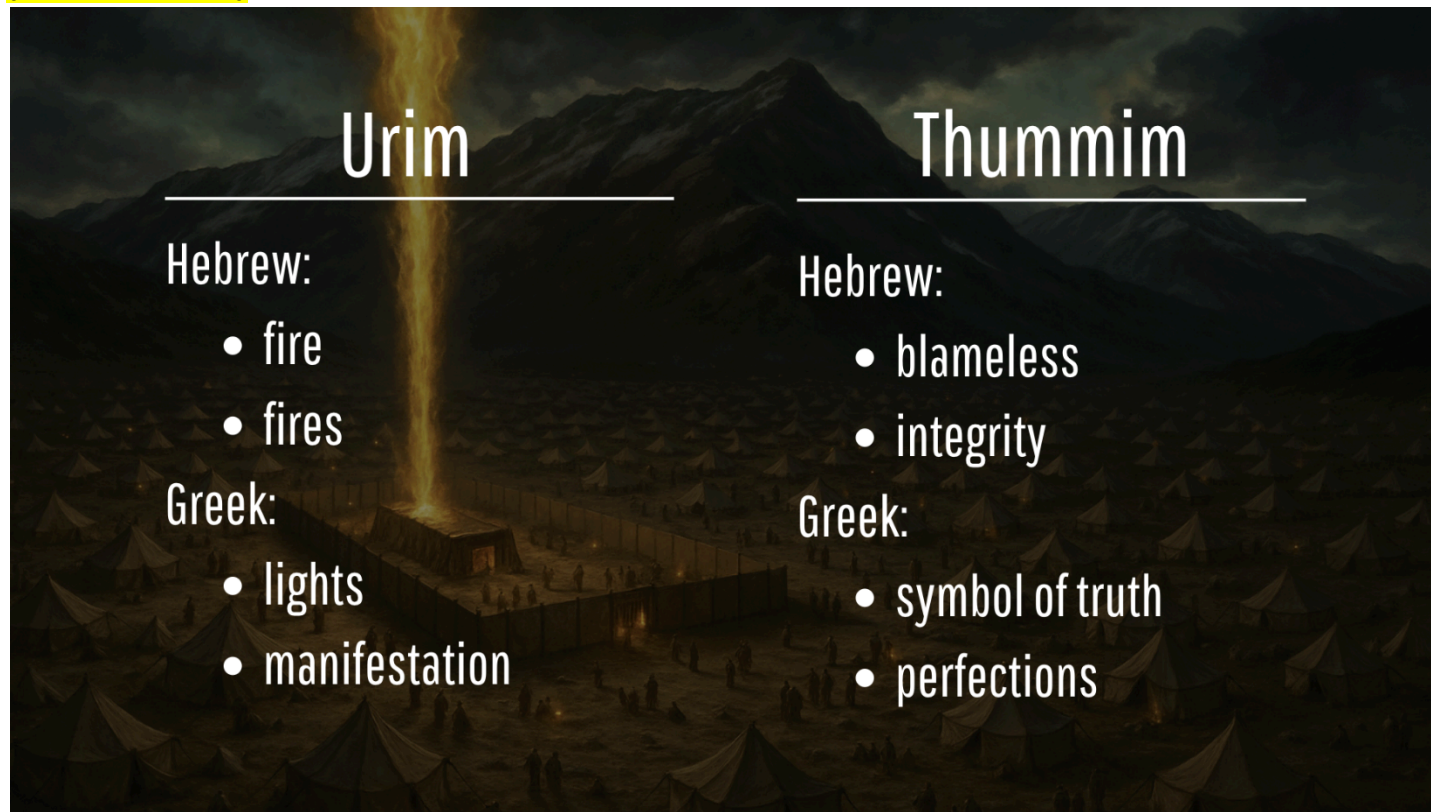
<p>תָּמִים</p> <p>Thummim</p> <p>ἁλήθεια/ τέλειος</p> <p>Hebrew: H8537 (blameless, integrity)</p> <p>Greek: G5050,5046 (truth, perfections)</p>	
<p>Proverbs 10:29 (ESV)</p> <p>²⁹ The way of the Lord is a stronghold to the blameless, but destruction to evildoers.</p> <p>Proverbs 13:6 (NIV)</p> <p>⁶ Righteousness guards the person of integrity...</p>	<p>Deuteronomy 33:8 (LES2)</p> <p>⁸ And to Levi he said:</p> <p>"Give Levi his symbol of clarity and his symbol of truth to the holy man..."</p> <p>Ezra 2:63 (Brenton LXX En)</p> <p>...a priest should arise with Lights and Perfections.</p>

Similar to the word Ur—Thummim is a proper name in a plural form. On the left, when you survey the singular root in Hebrew, we find translations in Proverbs like: 'blameless' and 'integrity'.

~

On the right side, you should see two different Greek words that the LXX translators supplied in place of the Thummim. One is ἀλήθεια (a-lay-thi-a) which is translated as symbol of truth in Deuteronomy 33 and τέλειος (tel-e-os) which is translated perfections in Ezra 2.

(DO NOT READ)



When we consider that the Urim is described as fire, lights, and manifestation and it is one half of the necessary components to make righteous decisions as a Priest of Israel, to us it sounds a lot like the function of the Spirit. Moreover, when we consider that the Thummim is blameless, integrity, truth and perfection—that certainly resembles the function of the Word.

~

(DO NOT READ)

Urim: Spirit

fire, lights, manifestation

Isaiah 4:4 (NIV)

4 The Lord will wash away the filth of the women of Zion; he will cleanse the bloodstains from Jerusalem by a spirit of judgment and a **spirit of fire**.

Genesis 1:2–3 (ESV)

And the **Spirit** of God was hovering over the face of the waters.
3 And God said, “Let there be light,” and there was **light**.

1 Corinthians 12:7 (NIV)

7 Now to each one the **manifestation** of the **Spirit** is given for the common good.

Thummim: Word

blameless, truth, perfection

Psalms 119:1 (ESV)

119 Blessed are those whose way is **blameless**, who walk in the **law of the Lord**!

John 17:17 (ESV)

17 Sanctify them in the **truth**; your **word is truth**.

Psalms 19:7 (ESV)

7 The **law** of the Lord is **perfect**, reviving the soul.

The prophet Isaiah alludes to a Spirit of Fire that will cleanse Israel of its impurities. The Spirit in Genesis 1 appears immediately preceding the creation of light and the beginning of the week of creation. Furthermore, in 1 Corinthians 12, the Apostle Paul describes the various manifestations of the Spirit, each serving a distinct purpose in the edification of the body.

In Psalm 119, those who adhere to the Word are deemed blameless. In John 17, the Word is explicitly referred to as the embodiment of truth. Lastly, in Psalm 19, the Law is described as perfect (Hebrew word: *thummim*) possessing the ability to rejuvenate the soul.

~

Almost none of these passages were present during the making of the priestly garments. Yet, here in the seed book expanded, we are seeing a pattern emerge that will be carried throughout the entire Biblical canon.

When anyone follows the God of Israel, they too—like Aaron, must inquire of the Urim and the Thummim, the Word and the Spirit. As we have discussed in previous teachings, there can never be a time when we inquire of the Word **or** the

Spirit, proper decision making requires both. Consider David's last words in 2 Samuel 23.

~

- o **2 Samuel 23:2 (NIV)**

² “The Spirit of the Lord spoke through me;
his word was on my tongue.

Whenever the Priest inquired of the breastpiece, he would have to consult the Word and the Spirit in light of the nation of Israel and God's plan for his people.

Before we move on in our chapter, you should remember this slide.

(DO NOT READ)

FOUR AND SIX

GOD {

1. I am the LORD your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of slavery. You shall have no other gods before me.
2. You shall not make for yourself a carved image, or any likeness of anything that is in heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth.
3. You shall not take the name of the LORD your God in vain
4. Remember the Sabbath day, to keep it holy.

These four commands illustrate the way that the bride would now relate to Adonai as the groom.

MAN {

5. Honor your father and your mother
6. You shall not murder.
7. You shall not commit adultery.
8. You shall not steal.
9. You shall not bear false witness against your neighbor.
10. You shall not covet your neighbor's... (anything)

These six commands illustrate the way that the bride would reflect the greatness of Adonai as the groom to the rest of the world.

The 10 Commandments given to the entire Nation of Israel can be divided into two sections: the first four commands illustrate the way the people relate to Adonai, and the latter six illustrate the way Israelites would interact with one another. This is not unlike the breastpiece. Aaron is tasked with making righteous decisions, and to do so, he must consult the Word and the Spirit to ensure that he is in order with both God and his fellowman.

~

This is divinely instructional for us and the inspiration for passages from the Apostles, like 1 John 1.

- o **1 John 1:6–7 (ESV)**

⁶ If we say we have **fellowship with him** while we walk in darkness, we lie and do not practice the truth. ⁷ But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have **fellowship with one another**, and the blood of Jesus his Son cleanses us from all sin.

~

What we hope is becoming clear is that the understanding of the original audience aids in the interpretation and application for every passage that comes later. As we move to our final section of the text, we hope you are beginning to see some of the compounding imagery involved in this text. There is a pattern in the heavens that was mirrored on earth. The heavenly and the earthly Tabernacle are also mirrored on the body of the earthly High Priest. Doesn't this also communicate that the Heavenly High Priest is also symbolically clothed in the same way? When you envision Jesus as the High Priest, shouldn't you view him with the Twelve Tribes on His shoulders? Shouldn't you view Him with the encampment of Israel upon His chest? More importantly, shouldn't you see His heart filled with the Urim (Spirit) and Thummim (Word), demonstrating that every righteous decision He makes is in-line with Adonai's promises to Israel and the world?

~

(SLIDE)



Ask yourselves, if this is the right way to view Jesus, how should you engage with these concepts personally? It will become extremely clear that to love Jesus is to love what He loves, namely, Israel!

Let's keep reading.

31 "Make the robe of the ephod entirely of blue cloth, 32 with an opening for the head in its center. There shall be a woven edge like a collar around this opening, so that it will not tear. 33 Make pomegranates of blue, purple and scarlet yarn around the hem of the robe, with gold bells between them. 34 The gold bells and the pomegranates are to alternate around the hem of the robe. 35 Aaron must wear it when he ministers. The sound of the bells will be heard when he enters the Holy Place before the Lord and when he comes out, so that he will not die.

36 "Make a plate of pure gold and engrave on it as on a seal: HOLY TO THE Lord. 37 Fasten a blue cord to it to attach it to the turban; it is to be on the front of the turban. 38 It will be on Aaron's forehead, and he will bear the guilt involved in

the sacred gifts the Israelites consecrate, whatever their gifts may be. It will be on Aaron's forehead continually so that they will be acceptable to the Lord.

39 "Weave the tunic of fine linen and make the turban of fine linen. The sash is to be the work of an embroiderer. 40 Make tunics, sashes and headbands for Aaron's sons, to give them dignity and honor. 41 After you put these clothes on your brother Aaron and his sons, anoint and ordain them. Consecrate them so they may serve me as priests.

42 "Make linen undergarments as a covering for the body, reaching from the waist to the thigh. 43 Aaron and his sons must wear them whenever they enter the Tent of Meeting or approach the altar to minister in the Holy Place, so that they will not incur guilt and die.

"This is to be a lasting ordinance for Aaron and his descendants.

~

As you consider the way that the original audience engaged with the facets of this verse range, consider a few of the astonishing details:

Astonishing Details

1. The forehead of the High Priest bore a gold plate that said: Holy to YHWH
2. The High Priest bears the guilt associated with Israel's offerings
3. The High Priest consecrates Israel's offerings
4. Aaron and his sons served as priests

Wouldn't these astounding details be the cause of immense celebration? A Jewish man was being considered Holy to the Lord continually and it was written on his forehead.

~

This same man was appointed to bear the guilt associated with your offerings. How thankful would you be for Aaron?

The blessing didn't stop with bearing your guilt, this Jewish man also consecrated your offerings to God. How thankful would you be for Aaron?

You might actually be so thankful for Aaron that you hoped he never died! Wouldn't you be thankful for his sons that guaranteed a succession of High Priests like Aaron?

We are a blessed congregation and we don't actually have to guess how Israel viewed these details. We actually have written letters from an Ptolemaic court official in the 2nd century B.C. who observed the High Priest interacting with the people of Israel. He recorded the impression that it left on him. Would you like to hear that impression in his own words?

~

(READ SLIDE)

Historical Impression

[Speaking about the High Priest Aristeas says] "He was girded with a girdle of conspicuous beauty, woven in the most beautiful colors. On his breast he wore the oracle of God as it is called, on which twelve stones, of different kinds, were inset, fastened together with gold, containing the names of the leaders of the tribes, according to their original order, each one flashing forth in an indescribable way in its own particular color, On his head he wore a tiara, as it is called, and upon this in the middle of his forehead an inimitable turban, the royal diadem full of glory with the name of God inscribed in sacred letters on a plate of gold...having been judged worthy to wear these emblems in the ministrations. Their appearance created such awe and confusion of mind as to make one feel that one had come into the presence of a man who belonged to a different world"

(Letters of Aristeas 97-99)

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That instinctive impression is precisely what the ancient hearers were meant to feel—an echo of something heavenly, deeper than mere ritual, woven into the story of God and His people Israel.

Remember, they had the example of Melchizedek who steps onto the stage in the wake of a rescued Hebrew and the spoils of conquered nations, a priest-king emerging from the smoke of deliverance.

They had the example of the High Priest of Israel robed in stones—living symbols of the tribes themselves—jewels wrested from the furnace of Egypt's oppression and set upon his chest as a memorial before God.

These things built the anticipation for Jesus, the true High Priest of Heaven and Earth, who bears a body fashioned from those rescued out of the grip of this present darkness—souls reclaimed from hostile powers and set like gems into His own life.

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Every human being is a fusion of earth's dust and heaven's breath, but Jesus descended as High Priest from the realm of glory to the soil of our world so He could raise His people into something far more radiant than dust.

Israel—and those grafted in by grace—are the precious stones adorning the Messiah's body, each one shining with redeemed purpose.

And we, carried upon Him, are made priests to the nations, bearing the weight and wonder of representing Adonai to a world aching for His light.

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Our closing passage this evening is:

- **Revelation 21:9–11 (ESV)**

9 Then came one of the seven angels who had the seven bowls full of the seven last plagues and spoke to me, saying, “**Come, I will show you the Bride**, the wife of the Lamb.” 10 And he carried me away in the Spirit to a great, high mountain, and **showed me the holy city Jerusalem** coming down out of heaven from God, 11 having the glory of God, **its radiance like a most rare jewel**, like a jasper, clear as crystal.

The pattern in the heavenlies combines the Tabernacle, Temple, and High Priest. They are descriptions of the structures and the Messiah. We are the body of Messiah and are called to shine like precious jewels--like the tribes-- in his breast piece. Israel and we graft-inns are the bride and the city that is the light of the world reflecting our Savior and Groom.