

Exodus, Part 17

We have looked at three of the four articles of worship inside the Tabernacle: the Ark of the Covenant in the Holy of Holies, and the Table of Shewbread and the Manorah in the Holy Place. We will see the fourth, the Altar of Incense when we get to Chapter 30. But now we will take a look at the design of the Tabernacle itself and the articles of worship outside the Tabernacle in the court.

The Tabernacle and everything associated with worship were designed to be portable. It could be disassembled, transported to another location, and reassembled. Some of the lighter parts were carried on the backs of the Levites, but because of the weight of many of the components, some were transported on carts drawn by oxen (Numbers 7:1-9).

Disassembly and reassembly must have taken days when one considers the entire Tabernacle complex. It was to be set up at the center of the camp, and each of the twelve tribes had designated locations to camp around the Tabernacle complex. The marching order was strictly regulated.

The entrance to the Tabernacle always faced east, as did the entrance of the later Temple in Jerusalem. The reason is that Messiah was expected to come out of the East. This is a shadow pointing to the Second Advent when the Messiah arrives coming out of the east at the end of the Tribulation.

Let's have a look at the construction of the Tabernacle.

The Tabernacle

Exodus 26:1 “Moreover, you shall make the tabernacle with ten curtains of fine twined linen and blue and purple and scarlet yarns; you shall make them with cherubim skillfully worked into them. ² The length of each curtain shall be twenty-eight cubits, and the breadth of each curtain four cubits; all the curtains shall be the same size. ³ Five curtains shall be coupled to one another, and the other five curtains shall be coupled to one another. ⁴ And you shall make loops of blue on the edge of the outermost curtain in the first set. Likewise you shall make loops on the edge of the outermost curtain in the second set. ⁵ Fifty loops you shall

make on the one curtain, and fifty loops you shall make on the edge of the curtain that is in the second set; the loops shall be opposite one another. ⁶ And you shall make fifty clasps of gold, and couple the curtains one to the other with the clasps, so that the tabernacle may be a single whole.

A cubit is roughly equal to the length of a man's arm from the elbow to the tip of the fingers or about 18 inches.

The Tabernacle was surrounded by a large courtyard enclosed in fencing. Detailed instructions are provided for the construction of the Tabernacle. Some uncertainty exists over how the various curtains and wooden frames fit together.

The rectangular Tabernacle structure was 15' by 45' and divided by a curtain into two rooms. In the smaller of these rooms (a perfect cube 15' by 15' by 15') would be placed the Ark of the Testimony. Because God would be seated there, enthroned between the cherubim, this part was called the *Most Holy Place* or Holy of Holies. The larger room (to the east) with the entrance was designated the *Holy Place*; it would be furnished with the Table of Shewbread, the Lampstand, and the Altar of Incense.

The curtain separating the two rooms contained woven figures of cherubim as a reminder that the way into the immediate presence of God was barred to sinful man. It was the final barrier between the Israelites and God. Under penalty of death, no one was allowed behind this veil except the High Priest, and then only once a year on Yom Kippur after sacrifices and a ritual cleansing. Matthew 27:51 records that when Jesus died, this curtain in the Temple was torn from top to bottom. By his death on the Cross, Christ removed the spiritual barrier that existed between God and humankind.

The Tabernacle proper was a tent with various coverings placed over a wooden framework and located within a courtyard we will describe later. There were four different coverings comprising the tent: the inner two of woven fabric and the outer two of animal skins. The Tabernacle had a wooden framework at the sides, top, and back. Over the top and back of the structure were placed 10 curtains which served to make the Tabernacle a large tent.

The 10 curtains were made of linen and brilliantly colored (blue, purple, and scarlet) yarn and were embroidered with cherubim. The curtains were each 6' wide and 42' long. Joined together they draped over the wooden framework to form a tent-like structure.

When the long edges of 5 of the curtains were joined together the newly formed curtain measured 30' by 42'. With the next set of 5 curtains, the 10 together and fastened by 50 gold clasps on the edge of each of the adjoining two sets measured 60' by 42'.

The 60' width of 10 curtains each 6' wide enabled the curtains to cover the top of the tabernacle 45' long and the back 15' high. The 42' length of each curtain extended over the top of the tabernacle which was 15' wide and down each side (15' high) to within 18" (one cubit) of the ground.

Exodus 26:7 “You shall also make curtains of goats' hair for a tent over the tabernacle; eleven curtains shall you make. ⁸ The length of each curtain shall be thirty cubits, and the breadth of each curtain four cubits. The eleven curtains shall be the same size. ⁹ You shall couple five curtains by themselves, and six curtains by themselves, and the sixth curtain you shall double over at the front of the tent. ¹⁰ You shall make fifty loops on the edge of the curtain that is outermost in one set, and fifty loops on the edge of the curtain that is outermost in the second set. ¹¹ “You shall make fifty clasps of bronze, and put the clasps into the loops, and couple the tent together that it may be a single whole. ¹² And the part that remains of the curtains of the tent, the half curtain that remains, shall hang over the back of the tabernacle. ¹³ And the extra that remains in the length of the curtains, the cubit on the one side, and the cubit on the other side, shall hang over the sides of the tabernacle, on this side and that side, to cover it.

Over the colorful curtains that hung within the tabernacle forming its walls, ceiling, and back with an exquisite tapestry, hung another set of curtains. These 11 curtains were made of goat hair, a black weather-resistant material still used today by Bedouins for tent-making. They were longer than the inner curtains (45' rather than 42'), so they touched the ground on the tabernacle sides. Five of the goat-hair curtains were to be joined

together like the inner curtains, and the other six goat-hair curtains in the same way. When the two sets were joined together by bronze clasps, the length was 66'. This covered the length of the tabernacle (45') and the back (15' high). This hid from outside view the brilliant colors of the inner curtains and the costly furniture in the tabernacle.

Exodus 26:14 And you shall make for the tent a covering of tanned rams' skins and a covering of goatskins on top.

Over the goat-hair curtains were placed two other curtains: ram skins dyed red and the hides of sea cows, here translated as "goat skins" but probably referring to dugongs. The NKJV translates it as "badger" skins. No dimensions are given for these coverings. They were placed over the goat-hair curtains and likely were of the same dimensions.

It is uncertain what material the *covering of goatskins on top* was. The Hebrew word for "goat skins" can be translated in several ways. There are good grounds for believing that it was derived from the dugong. Dugongs are large, slow-moving, herbivorous mammals that spend most of their time in seagrass beds. They are often confused with Manatees because of their similar characteristics and behavior, but there are some key differences. Dugongs have a fluked tail that resembles a whale's, while manatees have a paddle-shaped tail that's more like a beaver's. Dugongs also have a large snout with a protruding upper lip, while manatees have a whiskered snout with a divided upper lip that curls in. Dugongs are usually smaller than manatees, averaging 8–10 ft long and weighing 510–1,100 lbs, while manatees average 8–13 ft long and weigh up to 1,300 lbs. Dugongs live their entire lives in saltwater in the Red Sea and Indian Ocean while manatees can live in freshwater or saltwater in the Caribbean, Gulf of Mexico, Amazon Basin, and Western Africa. Dugong hides are still used today by local Bedouins to make sandals.

Exodus 26:15 "You shall make upright frames for the tabernacle of acacia wood. ¹⁶ Ten cubits shall be the length of a frame, and a cubit and a half the breadth of each frame. ¹⁷ There shall be two tenons in each frame, for fitting together. So shall you do for all the frames of the tabernacle. ¹⁸ You shall make the frames for the tabernacle: twenty frames for the south side; ¹⁹ and forty bases of silver you shall make

under the twenty frames, two bases under one frame for its two tenons, and two bases under the next frame for its two tenons; ²⁰ and for the second side of the tabernacle, on the north side twenty frames, ²¹ and their forty bases of silver, two bases under one frame, and two bases under the next frame. ²² And for the rear of the tabernacle westward you shall make six frames. ²³ And you shall make two frames for corners of the tabernacle in the rear; ²⁴ they shall be separate beneath, but joined at the top, at the first ring. Thus shall it be with both of them; they shall form the two corners. ²⁵ And there shall be eight frames, with their bases of silver, sixteen bases; two bases under one frame, and two bases under another frame.

²⁶ “You shall make bars of acacia wood, five for the frames of the one side of the tabernacle, ²⁷ and five bars for the frames of the other side of the tabernacle, and five bars for the frames of the side of the tabernacle at the rear westward. ²⁸ The middle bar, halfway up the frames, shall run from end to end. ²⁹ You shall overlay the frames with gold and shall make their rings of gold for holders for the bars, and you shall overlay the bars with gold. ³⁰ Then you shall erect the tabernacle according to the plan for it that you were shown on the mountain.

The “walls” of the Tabernacle were not solid but consisted of wooden upright frames forming a trellised construction over which the curtains were draped. Each frame was 15’ high and 2’ 3” wide. The width of each frame apparently extended outward from the inside of the tabernacle. Josephus wrote that the frames were 3” thick. If so, then the upright frames were about 2’ apart.

The two projections on each frame were like tenons that fit into the silver bases or mortices. Forty-eight frames were used altogether, 20 for the south side, 20 for the north side, 6 for the west (back) side, and an extra one at each corner for additional strength. The frames were also secured by a series of 15 crossbars (5 on each of the two sides and 5 at the back) that fit through gold rings horizontally. These bars were to be overlaid with gold. The center bar on each side was to extend the full length; apparently the other bars were shorter.

Two curtains were to be made: one that separated the Holy Place from the Most Holy Place and one at the entrance into the Tabernacle. The Holy

Place was the larger room inside the Tabernacle, and the Holy of Holies (Most Holy Place) was a smaller cube-shaped room separated from it by a curtain or veil.

Exodus 26:31 “And you shall make a veil of blue and purple and scarlet yarns and fine twined linen. It shall be made with cherubim skillfully worked into it. ³² And you shall hang it on four pillars of acacia overlaid with gold, with hooks of gold, on four bases of silver. ³³ And you shall hang the veil from the clasps, and bring the ark of the testimony in there within the veil. And the veil shall separate for you the Holy Place from the Most Holy. ³⁴ You shall put the mercy seat on the ark of the testimony in the Most Holy Place. ³⁵ And you shall set the table outside the veil, and the lampstand on the south side of the tabernacle opposite the table, and you shall put the table on the north side.

The inner curtain was to be made of brilliantly colored yarn and linen like the 10 curtains over the tabernacle, but covered with rich embroidery of cherubim. Hung on gold hooks on four posts overlaid with gold and in silver bases (vv. 18–21), the curtain divided the tabernacle into two sections. In the inner court, the Most Holy Place (Holy of Holies), was placed the ark and its cover. In the outer section, the Holy Place, was the table of the bread of the Presence and the lampstand. Also in the Holy Place, though not mentioned till later (30:1–10) was the altar of incense.

Exodus 26:36 “You shall make a screen for the entrance of the tent, of blue and purple and scarlet yarns and fine twined linen, embroidered with needlework. ³⁷ And you shall make for the screen five pillars of acacia, and overlay them with gold. Their hooks shall be of gold, and you shall cast five bases of bronze for them.

The curtain at the tent’s entrance was to be of the same materials as the inner curtain, but apparently without the cherubim embroidery. Also, the bases for the golden posts were to be bronze, not silver because this curtain would be part of the exterior that had bronze throughout. This curtain was supported by five posts, not four as with the inner curtain. With more posts in the opening, the spaces for entering the Tabernacle itself were narrower than the spaces between the four posts at the entrance into the Holy of Holies. The purpose of fewer posts at the entrance to the Holy

of Holies was probably to create more room to maneuver the Ark of the Covenant in and out.

The combination of wood and its gold covering suggests the humanity and deity of our Lord Jesus Christ. There were many parts to the tabernacle, but it was considered one structure. What set it apart as truly special was that the glory of God dwelt there.

The Bronze Altar

In giving instructions about the Tabernacle, God progressed to the courtyard outside the Tabernacle. In the courtyard, less costly materials were used, the predominant metal being bronze, and the structure is less complex. Here we find two articles of worship: the Bronze Altar and the Laver or Bronze Basin which we will see in Exodus 30:18. The Bronze Laver was for Aaron and his sons (the priests) to wash their hands and feet before they entered the Tabernacle.

Exodus 27:1 “You shall make the altar of acacia wood, five cubits long and five cubits broad. The altar shall be square, and its height shall be three cubits. ² And you shall make horns for it on its four corners; its horns shall be of one piece with it, and you shall overlay it with bronze. ³ You shall make pots for it to receive its ashes, and shovels and basins and forks and fire pans. You shall make all its utensils of bronze. ⁴ You shall also make for it a grating, a network of bronze, and on the net you shall make four bronze rings at its four corners. ⁵ And you shall set it under the ledge of the altar so that the net extends halfway down the altar. ⁶ And you shall make poles for the altar, poles of acacia wood, and overlay them with bronze. ⁷ And the poles shall be put through the rings, so that the poles are on the two sides of the altar when it is carried. ⁸ You shall make it hollow, with boards. As it has been shown you on the mountain, so shall it be made.

The Bronze Altar was where sacrifices were made. It was a square shape, measuring five cubits by five cubits, and was three cubits high (7.5 by 7.5 by 4.5 feet). One striking feature of this altar was that it had a horn on each corner, to which the sacrificial offering was tied. The basic structure was made of wood, overlaid with bronze, or brass. The fire for the altar was lit in

a grate of brass under the altar. Like other furnishings, this altar had rings by which it could be carried on staves.

The grating, or bronze network, placed on a ledge within and halfway up the altar (a little more than 2' up) helped reinforce the altar.. Poles were also to be overlaid with bronze and inserted into bronze rings at the altar's corners for use in carrying the altar. The bottom half of the altar was to be hollow but it may later have been filled with small stones, not with earth as some suggest, with the fire being built on the rocks. The exact location of this altar is not given but it was "at [just inside] the entrance to the Tabernacle" (40:29).

This altar illustrates that the Israelites could approach God only through sacrifice. Only by sacrifice is sin atoned for. This altar was the first object a worshiper saw in the Tabernacle courtyard. Sacrifices for sin were continually being made. This was a shadow of the ultimate Sacrifice Jesus Christ (Heb. 10:1–18). He is pictured in all the sacrifices God commanded Israel to bring (Lev. 1–5; Heb. 10:1–14).

The Court of the Tabernacle

Exodus 27:9 "You shall make the court of the tabernacle. On the south side the court shall have hangings of fine twined linen a hundred cubits long for one side. ¹⁰ Its twenty pillars and their twenty bases shall be of bronze, but the hooks of the pillars and their fillets shall be of silver. ¹¹ And likewise for its length on the north side there shall be hangings a hundred cubits long, its pillars twenty and their bases twenty, of bronze, but the hooks of the pillars and their fillets shall be of silver. ¹² And for the breadth of the court on the west side there shall be hangings for fifty cubits, with ten pillars and ten bases. ¹³ The breadth of the court on the front to the east shall be fifty cubits. ¹⁴ The hangings for the one side of the gate shall be fifteen cubits, with their three pillars and three bases. ¹⁵ On the other side the hangings shall be fifteen cubits, with their three pillars and three bases. ¹⁶ For the gate of the court there shall be a screen twenty cubits long, of blue and purple and scarlet yarns and fine twined linen, embroidered with needlework. It shall have four pillars and with them four bases. ¹⁷ All the pillars around the court shall be filleted with silver. Their hooks shall be of silver, and their bases of bronze.

¹⁸ The length of the court shall be a hundred cubits, the breadth fifty, and the height five cubits, with hangings of fine twined linen and bases of bronze. ¹⁹ All the utensils of the tabernacle for every use, and all its pegs and all the pegs of the court, shall be of bronze.

The outer walls of the Tabernacle complex were rectangular in shape (75' × 150') with the outer wall made of linen curtains supported by and hung on 20 posts on the south side, 20 on the north, and 10 on the west end, all set in bronze bases and having silver hooks for hanging the curtains. The posts were about 7½' apart, and the curtains were kept tight by bronze tent pegs.

The entrance was 30' wide and always faced east. Three posts helped support the curtains on each side of the entrance. Those posts were about 7½' apart.

Like the curtains at the entrance to the Holy Place and to the Most Holy Place, the curtain at the courtyard entrance was also made of colorful yarn and fine linen. The curtain to the Holy Place was to be hung on five posts, but this curtain was to be hung on four posts. The height of the surrounding curtain wall was 7 ½'. This was high enough to prevent casual onlookers from peeping in, yet it was only half the height of the tabernacle itself so that the Tabernacle could be seen.

Surrounding the tent of meeting was a linen fence with a beautiful woven "gate," opening to the place where the Brazen Altar stood. Looking at the total picture, we see that there were three parts to the Tabernacle: the outer court that everybody could see; the holy place, containing the Table of Shewbread, the lampstand, and the incense altar; and the Holy of Holies, containing the Ark of the Covenant.

Just as the people were prevented from coming up Mt. Sinai into the divine presence, so too the courtyard fence prevented them from approaching God inadvertently. As Exodus regularly emphasizes, only those who are holy can live in God's presence; to approach God otherwise has fatal consequences.

This threefold division of the Tabernacle complex suggests the tripartite nature of human beings—spirit, soul, and body.

1 Thes. 5:23 Now may the God of peace himself sanctify you completely, and may your whole spirit and soul and body be kept blameless at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. ²⁴ He who calls you is faithful; he will surely do it.

Just as the holy place and the holy of holies were two parts of one structure, so our soul and spirit comprise our “inner person”.

2 Cor. 4:16 So we do not lose heart. Though our outer self is wasting away, our inner self is being renewed day by day.

Moses could take down the fence of the outer court, and it would not affect the tent. So with our own death, the body may turn to dust, but the soul and spirit go to be with God and are not affected by the change.

2 Cor. 5:1 For we know that if the tent that is our earthly home is destroyed, we have a building from God, a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens. ² For in this tent we groan, longing to put on our heavenly dwelling, ³ if indeed by putting it on we may not be found naked. ⁴ For while we are still in this tent, we groan, being burdened—not that we would be unclothed, but that we would be further clothed, so that what is mortal may be swallowed up by life. ⁵ He who has prepared us for this very thing is God, who has given us the Spirit as a guarantee. ⁶ So we are always of good courage. We know that while we are at home in the body we are away from the Lord, ⁷ for we walk by faith, not by sight. ⁸ Yes, we are of good courage, and we would rather be away from the body and at home with the Lord

The Oil for the Lampstand.

Exodus 27:20 “You shall command the people of Israel that they bring to you pure beaten olive oil for the light, that a lamp may regularly be set up to burn. ²¹ In the tent of meeting, outside the veil that is before the testimony, Aaron and his sons shall tend it from evening to morning

before the Lord. It shall be a statute forever to be observed throughout their generations by the people of Israel.

To supply light in the Tabernacle, the Lampstand with its seven lamps required a continual supply of olive oil to keep the lamps burning continuously as a lasting ordinance.

The Priest's Garments

Having described the tabernacle and its furniture, the Lord then instructed Moses concerning the priesthood that was to preside over the nation's religious life. The priests were to minister in the Tabernacle complex in a variety of ways: burn incense on the golden altar twice daily, maintain the Lampstand and the Table of Shewbread, maintain and offer sacrifices on the Altar of Burnt Offering (Bronze Altar), and bless the people. In addition, they presided over civil cases (e.g., Num. 5:5–31; Deut. 19:17; 21:5), instructed the people in the Law (Deut. 17:9, 11; 33:8, 10), and gave encouragement in times of war (Deut. 20:2–4).

Exodus 28:1 “Then bring near to you Aaron your brother, and his sons with him, from among the people of Israel, to serve me as priests— Aaron and Aaron's sons, Nadab and Abihu, Eleazar and Ithamar.

The priests who were to officiate in the ministry of the Tabernacle were Aaron and his four sons. Later Nadab and Abihu died under God's judgment (Lev. 10:1–2) so that the Aaronic priesthood continued through his two younger sons: Eleazar who succeeded his father as high priest (Num. 3:4) and Ithamar.

Exodus 28:2 And you shall make holy garments for Aaron your brother, for glory and for beauty. ³ You shall speak to all the skillful, whom I have filled with a spirit of skill, that they make Aaron's garments to consecrate him for my priesthood. ⁴ These are the garments that they shall make: a breastpiece, an ephod, a robe, a coat of checker work, a turban, and a sash. They shall make holy garments for Aaron your brother and his sons to serve me as priests. ⁵ They shall receive gold, blue and purple and scarlet yarns, and fine twined linen.

The garments of the high priest were set apart from common clothing to elevate the office and to serve as a constant reminder of God’s holiness. Worn only when the priests served in the Tabernacle, they were to be made by Spirit-endued craftsmen and of the same materials (yarn and fine linen) as the curtains of the Tabernacle.

Exodus 28:6 “And they shall make the ephod of gold, of blue and purple and scarlet yarns, and of fine twined linen, skillfully worked. ⁷ It shall have two shoulder pieces attached to its two edges, so that it may be joined together. ⁸ And the skillfully woven band on it shall be made like it and be of one piece with it, of gold, blue and purple and scarlet yarns, and fine twined linen. ⁹ You shall take two onyx stones, and engrave on them the names of the sons of Israel, ¹⁰ six of their names on the one stone, and the names of the remaining six on the other stone, in the order of their birth. ¹¹ As a jeweler engraves signets, so shall you engrave the two stones with the names of the sons of Israel. You shall enclose them in settings of gold filigree. 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. ¹³ You shall make settings of gold filigree, ¹⁴ and two chains of pure gold, twisted like cords; and you shall attach the corded chains to the settings.

“Ephod” is a transliteration of the Hebrew word that describes a particular garment—a sleeveless coat made of the same material and colors as the hangings in the tabernacle. It was held together at the shoulders by special clasps and covered the priest’s upper body. It had two parts, a front, and a back, that were fastened on two shoulder pieces with straps (braided chains) of gold with mounted onyx stones and held to the body with a belt at the waist. On the two onyx stones were to be engraved the names of Israel’s 12 tribes, 6 on each stone, so that as Aaron entered the Tabernacle he would figuratively bear Israel before God.

Exodus 28:15 “You shall make a breastpiece of judgment, in skilled work. In the style of the ephod you shall make it—of gold, blue and purple and scarlet yarns, and fine twined linen shall you make it. ¹⁶ It shall be square and doubled, a span its length and a span its breadth. ¹⁷ You shall set in it four rows of stones. A row of sardius, topaz, and

carbuncle shall be the first row; ¹⁸ and the second row an emerald, a sapphire, and a diamond; ¹⁹ and the third row a jacinth, an agate, and an amethyst; ²⁰ and the fourth row a beryl, an onyx, and a jasper. They shall be set in gold filigree. ²¹ There shall be twelve stones with their names according to the names of the sons of Israel. They shall be like signets, each engraved with its name, for the twelve tribes.

The high priest's breastpiece was to be made of the same cloth as the ephod. It was to be 9" (half a cubit) square with 12 precious stones in gold settings mounted in four rows of 3 stones each. On each stone was to be engraved the name of one of the tribes of Israel, probably in the same sequence as the names on the engraved onyx stones.

Exodus 28:22 You shall make for the breastpiece twisted chains like cords, of pure gold. ²³ And you shall make for the breastpiece two rings of gold, and put the two rings on the two edges of the breastpiece. ²⁴ And you shall put the two cords of gold in the two rings at the edges of the breastpiece. ²⁵ The two ends of the two cords you shall attach to the two settings of filigree, and so attach it in front to the shoulder pieces of the ephod. ²⁶ You shall make two rings of gold, and put them at the two ends of the breastpiece, on its inside edge next to the ephod. ²⁷ And you shall make two rings of gold, and attach them in front to the lower part of the two shoulder pieces of the ephod, at its seam above the skillfully woven band of the ephod. ²⁸ And they shall bind the breastpiece by its rings to the rings of the ephod with a lace of blue, so that it may lie on the skillfully woven band of the ephod, so that the breastpiece shall not come loose from the ephod.

The breastpiece was attached snugly over the ephod by four gold chains. Two of the chains were slipped through gold rings at the upper corners of the breastpiece and attached to the ephod's shoulder pieces. The other two gold chains were slipped through gold rings at the lower corners of the breastpiece and attached to the side seams of the ephod and tied with a blue cord to the waistband.

Exodus 28:29 So Aaron shall bear the names of the sons of Israel in the breastpiece of judgment on his heart, when he goes into the Holy Place,

to bring them to regular remembrance before the Lord. ³⁰ And in the breastpiece of judgment you shall put the Urim and the Thummim, and they shall be on Aaron's heart, when he goes in before the Lord. Thus Aaron shall bear the judgment of the people of Israel on his heart before the Lord regularly.

The breastpiece, "over his [Aaron's] heart" occurs three times in these verses and was to serve as a continuing memorial before the Lord. Another purpose is indicated in the Urim and the Thummim, which were the means by which the priests made decisions for the Israelites. The breastpiece was "folded double" to form a pocket for the Urim and Thummim.

The "Urim" and "Thummim" which mean "lights" and "perfections" were a means of seeking answers to questions from God through the priest. They were two stones. How they were used in determining God's will is unknown, but some suggest the Urim represented a negative answer and the Thummim a positive answer. Perhaps this view is indicated by the fact that Urim (*'ûrîm*) begins with the first letter of the Hebrew alphabet, and Thummim (*tûmmîm*) with the last letter. I see the statement by Jesus in Revelation that He is the alpha and omega, the first and last letters of the Greek alphabet, as relating to this. It is through Christ, the Alpha and Omega, the Urim and Thummim, through which man is to relate to God. When the Israelites inquired of the Urim and Thummim for answers, they were inquiring of God, and it was Jesus Christ who answered with a perfect understanding of the situation. God is the source of all blessings if one follows His leading and empowerment.

Exodus 28:31 "You shall make the robe of the ephod all of blue. ³² It shall have an opening for the head in the middle of it, with a woven binding around the opening, like the opening in a garment, so that it may not tear. ³³ On its hem you shall make pomegranates of blue and purple and scarlet yarns, around its hem, with bells of gold between them, ³⁴ a golden bell and a pomegranate, a golden bell and a pomegranate, around the hem of the robe. ³⁵ And it shall be on Aaron when he ministers, and its sound shall be heard when he goes into the Holy Place before the Lord, and when he comes out, so that he does not die.

Under the ephod, the high priest was to wear a blue sleeveless robe that hung below his knees and was reinforced at the collar. It was to be seamless with alternating pomegranates and gold bells on the hem. Only a high priest properly attired could enter the Holy of Holies which is here described as the “Holy Place *before the Lord*”. It is said that the High Priest had a rope tied around one ankle when he went behind the veil into the Holy of Holies. Should he die, signaled by the ceasing of the tinkling bells, his body could be dragged out without anyone having to risk death to go inside to retrieve him.

Exodus 28:36 “You shall make a plate of pure gold and engrave on it, like the engraving of a signet, ‘Holy to the Lord.’ ³⁷ And you shall fasten it on the turban by a cord of blue. It shall be on the front of the turban. ³⁸ It shall be on Aaron’s forehead, and Aaron shall bear any guilt from the holy things that the people of Israel consecrate as their holy gifts. It shall regularly be on his forehead, that they may be accepted before the Lord.

The turban of the priest was to be made of linen. The Hebrew word translates as “mitre” or “diadem”. The most obvious feature of the turban was a plate of pure gold engraved with the words “Holy to the Lord.” This expression of Israel’s need for purity before God was attached to the front of the turban (and over Aaron’s forehead) with a blue cord. This engraving was a “sacred diadem” or crown (29:6; 39:30; Lev. 8:9). As a representative of the people, he bore their guilt when he ministered.

The nation of Israel was accepted before God because of the high priest, just as God’s people are accepted because of our relationship with our High Priest Jesus Christ.

Heb 4:14 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.

God’s people today are a holy priesthood.

1 Peter 2:5 You yourselves like living stones are being built up as a spiritual house, to be a holy priesthood, to offer spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ.

And a royal priesthood.

1 Peter 2:9 But you are a chosen race, a royal priesthood...

Exodus 28:39 “You shall weave the coat in checker work of fine linen, and you shall make a turban of fine linen, and you shall make a sash embroidered with needlework.

⁴⁰ “For Aaron’s sons you shall make coats and sashes and caps. You shall make them for glory and beauty. ⁴¹ And you shall put them on Aaron your brother, and on his sons with him, and shall anoint them and ordain them and consecrate them, that they may serve me as priests.

⁴² You shall make for them linen undergarments to cover their naked flesh. They shall reach from the hips to the thighs;

The tunic of fine linen was a long white coat worn beneath the robe of the ephod (Lev. 8:7). The sash was a wide belt worn around the waist of the priest, which hung down at the ends. Even these items would add dignity and honor to the priests and thus help increase the people’s appreciation for them and for God. The priests were to wear *linen undergarments* to prevent them from inadvertently exposing themselves in the Holy Place. When they were fully attired they were to be consecrated.

Exodus 28:43 and they shall be on Aaron and on his sons when they go into the tent of meeting or when they come near the altar to minister in the Holy Place, lest they bear guilt and die. This shall be a statute forever for him and for his offspring after him.

Because God is holy, the OT priests were to approach Him with dignity and care, otherwise, they would incur guilt and die. Aaron and his sons were to dress appropriately when they entered the Tabernacle (the Tent of Meeting) to serve before the Lord.

The fine linen of all the garments reminds us of the righteousness that ought to characterize our walk and service. If the priests did not wear the proper garments, they were in danger of death. The priests of the heathen cults sometimes conducted their rituals in a lewd manner, but the Lord's priests were to cover their nakedness and practice modesty.

As the OT priests were to approach God with reverence and dignity, likewise are we to approach God in our capacity as royal priests in this Church Age. As they were to be cleansed through animal sacrifices and ceremonial washings, so should we approach God cleansed by the confession of our sins.