



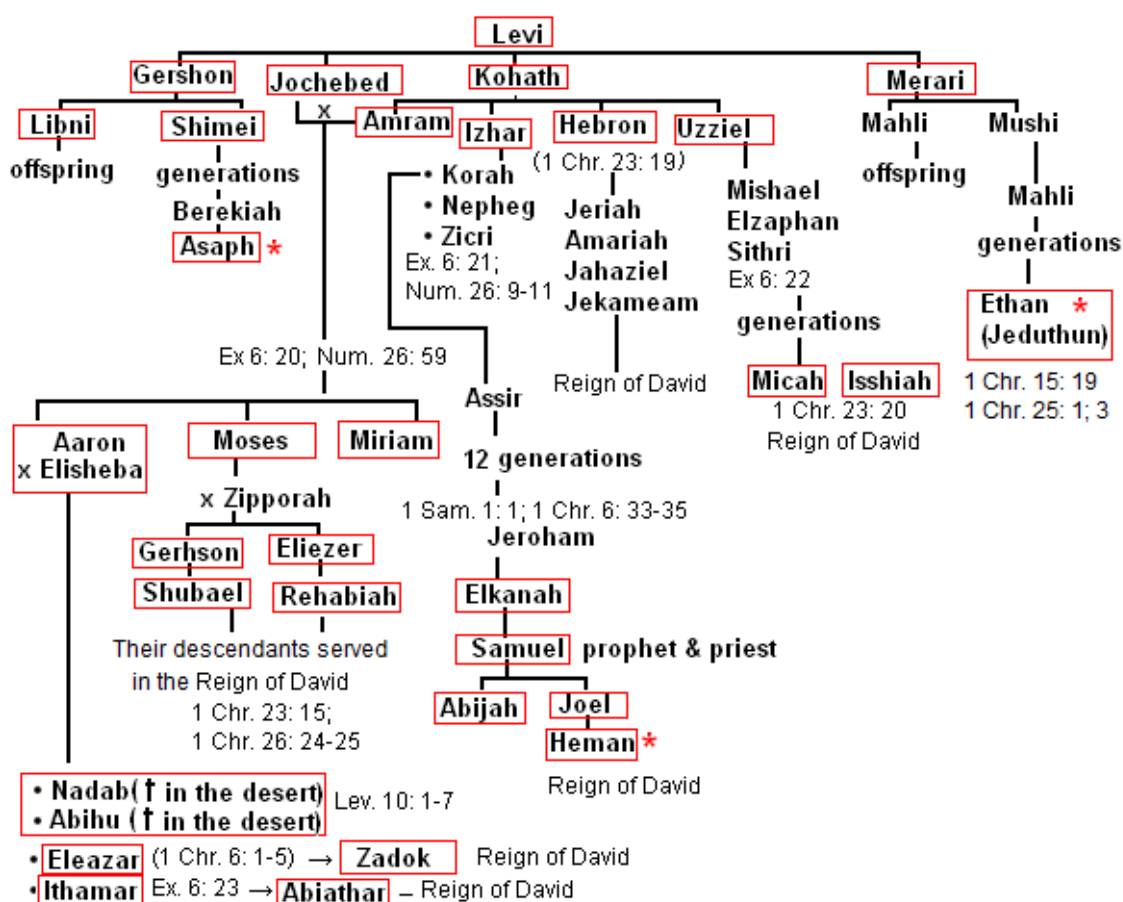
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**BIBLICAL TOPICS FOR STUDY –
 LEVITES AND LEVITICAL PRIESTHOOD**

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Levi was one of the twelve sons of the patriarch Jacob, and his descendants were separated from all their brethren to serve God as priests, especially the sons of Aaron. Levi begot Gershon, Kohath and Merari. Kohath begot Amram, and Izhar, and Hebron, and Uzziel. From the lineage of Amram, through Eleazar and Ithamar, the Lord separated the high priests.



Descendants of Levi [1 Chr. 6: 16-30; 31-48; 1 Chr. 15: 17-19; 1 Chr. 23: 1-32 (musicians of David *)]:

- 1) **Gershon**: Libni → generated offspring
Shimei → generations → Berekiah → Asaph*
- 2) **Kohath**: Amram, Izhar, Uzziel, Hebron. Heman* is a descendant of Izhar.
- 3) **Merari**: Mahli → generated offspring
Mushi → Mahli → generations → Ethan* (Jeduthun): 1 Chr. 15: 19; 1 Chr. 25: 1; 3.

So, we can understand that the Levites were priests who served the Lord, but only those of the lineage of Amram, more specifically of Aaron, were fit to be high priests, for God Himself established to be so, when He spoke with Moses on Mount Sinai.

One of the descendants of **Eleazar** (son of Aaron) gave his name to the eighth family (the family of Abijah) among the twenty-four divisions of the priests (1 Chr. 24: 10), of which Zechariah (Lk 1: 5), the father of **John the Baptist**, was part (Lk. 1: 8-11 cf. Num. 4: 16 – Eleazar was in charge of the holy incense; not Ithamar).

High priests (1 Chr. 6: 1-15; 49-53): Aaron → Eleazar → Phinehas → Abishua → Bukki → Uzzi → Zerariah → Meraioth → Amariah → Ahitub → Zadok (in the time of David) → Ahimaaz → Azariah → Johanan → Azariah (in the time of Solomon) → Amariah → Ahitub → Zadok → Shallum → Hilkiah → Azariah (2 Chr. 31: 10 – in the time of Hezekiah) → Seraiah (taken captive to Babylon along with Zephaniah the second priest – Jer. 52: 24) → Jehozadak (taken captive to Babylon) → **Post-exile**: Jeshua or Joshua (520 BC, during the period of the prophets Zechariah (520-480 BC) and Haggai (520 BC): Ezra 2: 2; Ezra 3: 2; Ezra 10: 18; Neh. 12: 1; 10-11; Hag. 1: 12; Hag. 2: 2; Zech. 3: 1) → Joiakim (Neh. 12: 10 – 480 BC) → Eliashib (Neh. 3: 1; Neh. 12: 10; 22; Neh. 13: 4; 7; Neh. 13: 28 – 458-443 BC) → Joiada (Neh. 12: 10; 22; Neh. 13: 28 – 420 or 415 BC). Probably Eliashib and Joiada were contemporaries of the prophet Malachi (450-400 BC), the period some scholars say that coincide with the return of Nehemiah to Persia, after twelve years as governor in Jerusalem (Neh. 5: 14; Neh. 13: 6), coming back again to the Holy City (Neh. 13: 6). That's why Malachi reproached the priests, for they were neglecting their priestly duties → Jonathan (or Johanan, Neh. 12: 10; 22 – 408-336 BC) → Jaddua (Neh. 12: 10; 22 – 340 or 336 BC, shortly before Alexander the Great (333-323 BC) rise to power and defeat the Persian Empire, whose last ruler was Darius III; Jaddua met Alexander in 332 BC) → **Intertestamental period** → (Beginning in 397 BC, in the spiritual standpoint, i.e., prophetic, after the period of Malachi) → **Historical listing, not biblical** (source: wikipedia.org) → **Dominion of the Ptolemies on Palestine** (323-198 BC): Onias I → Simon I → Simeon the Just → Eleazar → Manasseh → Onias II (Around 234 BC) → **Dominion of the Seleucids on Palestine** (198-167 BC; priest chosen by the Seleucids): Simon II → Onias III (185-175 BC) → Jason (175-172 BC) → Menelaus (172-162 BC; he was not of priestly origin) → Alcimus [162-160/159 BC; He was from a priestly family, but not from the lineage of a high priest. In fact, he was a civil ruler of the province of Judea, appointed by the king of Syria, Antiochus V Eupator (164-162 BC)] → **Revolt of the Maccabees**, under the command of Mattathias Hasmon in the village called Modiin. Mattathias was a priest but there's no proof about having his lineage linked to Aaron's. He was father of five children: John, Simon, Judas (Maccabee), Eleazar, and Jonathan. Mattathias died in the riot (166 BC), and his son Judas Maccabee was appointed general. Finally, the Maccabees drove out the troops of Antiochus IV (Seleucid King) of Jerusalem. The Maccabean revolt lasted from 167 to 160 BC. Judas

Maccabee died and was succeeded by his brother Jonathan, who became high priest of Jerusalem. But during the 7 years between Alcimus' death and Jonathan's position as high priest in Jerusalem, it is not known who held that position. There are only hypotheses of a priest descended from Zadok in the Dead Sea Scrolls, found in 1947 → **Hasmonean Dynasty on Palestine** (167-63 AC): Jonathan Maccabee (153-143 BC) → Simon Maccabee (143-135 BC) → John Hyrcanus I (the youngest son of Simon Maccabee – 135-104 BC) → Aristobulus I (His birth name was Judas, the eldest son of John Hyrcanus I – 104-103 BC) → Alexander Jannaeus (103-76 BC. Alexander, son of John Hyrcanus I inherited the throne of his brother Aristobulus I because he married his widow, Salome Alexandra, according to the levirate law) → Queen Salome Alexandra and John Hyrcanus II (76-67 BC), her eldest son by Alexander Jannaeus → Aristobulus II (67-63 BC – another son of Salome and Alexander Jannaeus) → John Hyrcanus II (restored – 63-40 BC. The grand daughter of John Hyrcanus II, Mariamne I, was the second wife of Herod the Great) → Antigonus (40-37 BC), the son of Aristobulus II. Antigonus was the last king of the Hasmonean Dynasty → about 65–64 BC, the Seleucid Empire was annexed to the Roman Republic. The same way, the Hasmonean Period was ended, and the **Roman Period** began, when Pompey invaded Jerusalem (63 BC) and Herod the Great rose to power as king → **Herodian Dynasty**: Herod was son of Antipatrus, an Idumaeen (or Edomite), placed by General Pompey as procurator of Palestine in 67 BC. Antipatrus, prospered in the court of the last Hasmonean kings and came to rule Judea after Roman occupation → Herod the Great appointed Ananelus as high priest (37-36 BC), succeeded by Aristobulus III of Judea (36 BC). Aristobulus III was Herod's brother-in-law and brother of Mariamne I; he was assassinated by Herod, who had already murdered John Hyrcanus II of Judea (36 BC) → Ananelus (restored – 36-30 BC), Joshua ben Fabus (30-23 BC) → Simon ben Boethus (Father of Mariamne II, who married Herod the Great) → Joazar ben Boethus (4 BC) → Eleazar ben Boethus (4-3 BC) → **Annas** (6-15 AD – Ananus ben Seth or Annas ben Seth, the father, who is mentioned in the Gospel) → **Caiphas** (18-36 AD, Annas' son-in-law: Lk 3: 2; Jn 18: 13. He was appointed high priest by the Romans). The five sons of Annas also served as high priests:

- Eleazar ben Ananus (16-17 AD)
- Jonathan ben Ananus 36-37 AD, after the death of Caiaphas)
- Theophilus ben Ananus (37-41 AD)
- Matthias ben Ananus (43 AD)
- Ananus ben Ananus (63 AD)

• Num. 35: 2-3; 6-7: “Command the Israelites to give, from the inheritance that they possess, towns for the Levites to live in; you shall also give to the Levites pasture lands surrounding the towns. The towns shall be theirs to live in, and their pasture lands shall be for their cattle, for their livestock, and for all their animals... The towns that you give to the Levites shall include the six cities of refuge, where you shall permit a slayer to flee, and in addition to them you shall give forty-two towns. The towns that you give to the Levites shall total forty-eight, with their pasture lands.”

They received towns to inhabit, among the other tribes:

The **towns of the Levites** are described in Josh. 21: 1-45 (NIV), and are 48 towns in all (Josh. 21: 4-7): Kiriath Arba (or Hebron, which is also a **city of refuge** for one accused of murder), Libnah, Jattir, Eshtemoa, Holon, Debir, Ain, Juttah and Beth Shemesh, Gibeon, Geba, Anathoth and Almon, Shechem (in the tribe of Ephraim, and also a **city of refuge** for one accused of murder), Gezer, Kibzaim and Beth Horon,

Eltekeh, Gibbethon, Aijalon and Gath Rimmon (in the tribe of Dan), Taanach and Gath Rimmon (in the tribe of Manasseh), Golan in Bashan (in the tribe of Manasseh, also **a city of refuge** for one accused of murder), Be Eshterah, Kishion, Daberath, Jarmuth and En Gannim, Mishal, Abdon, Helkath and Rehob, Kedesh (in the tribe of Naphtali, in Galilee, and also **a city of refuge** for one accused of murder), Hammoth Dor and Kartan, Jokneam, Kartah, Dimnah and Nahalal, Bezer (in the tribe of Ruben and also **a city of refuge** for one accused of murder), Jahaz, Kedemoth and Mephaath, Ramoth (in Gilead, **a city of refuge** for one accused of murder), Mahanaim, Heshbon and Jazer. The bible says in verse 41: “The towns of the Levites in the territory held by the Israelites were forty-eight in all, together with their pasturelands.”

• Num. 4: 15-16; Num. 4: 24-28; Num. 4: 29-33 – the responsibilities of the Levites in the Tabernacle.

The Levites served inside of the sanctuary, in the Holy Place and in the Holy of Holies. In the Old Testament **the duties of Levites were many, not only to sing**, as some think. In 1 Chr. 23; 24; 25; 26, before the temple of Solomon was built and the ark of the Covenant no longer needed to be carried on their shoulders to any place of Israel, the bible tells us the functions of priests and Levites (determined by David): they kept the utensils of the temple, they moved the furnishings, they baked the bread of the Presence, they kept supplies for sacrifice, they were musicians, administrators (guards of the treasures of the temple), assistants of the priests in rituals, official gatekeepers and judges (1 Chr. 23: 4).

Their service was done in **24 divisions**, in shifts (1 Chr. 24: 1-31). They were separated each week twice a year to fulfill their priesthood. But we also should remember the previous guidance given by God to them, when the temple had not yet been built: they kept the utensils of the temple; for instance, they should keep the golden lampstand lit every day, they burnt incense on the golden altar twice a day, removed the ashes from the altar, moved the furnishings they carried the Ark of the Covenant on their shoulders, the table with the bread of the Presence, the altar of incense and the bronze altar by its poles – Ex. 25: 26; Ex. 27: 7; Ex. 30: 27-4); they prepared the holy anointing oil, baked the bread of the Presence, kept supplies for sacrifice, kept the fire ever burning on the altar of the altar of bronze etc..

Kohath's family took care of the most holy things of the tabernacle, after Aaron and his sons cover them; then they carried them, including the Ark of the Covenant. Aaron and his sons took care of the priesthood itself, serving in the Holy of Holies and the Holy Place. Therefore, they took care of the sacred objects of the Holy of Holies and of the Holy Place (The leadership was Eleazar's, the son of Aaron: Num. 3: 31; Num. 4: 3; Num. 4: 16-20). **Gershon's** family took care to carry the curtains and the outer covering, as well as other utensils of the tabernacle, except the sacred objects; and the family of **Merari** was responsible for the objects, the stakes and everything else that was in the Outer Court the tent of Meeting, besides its wood frames. The latter two families were under the command of Ithamar, the second son of Aaron: Nm 3: 25-26; Num. 3: 36-37; Num. 4: 21-28; Num. 4: 29-33. Therefore, each one played his own function. This is very important to us because it is the working together of each member of the Church that helps to keep it in order and helps the priest in his function that is the prayer and the ministry of the word. From the age of thirty to fifty the Levites were separated to serve the Lord (Num. 4: 3; 23; 30; 43). They gave the tithe of tithes they received from the people to the high priest (Num. 18: 26; Num. 18: 28-29; Neh. 10: 37-38). They were given towns to live in among the tribes of Israel, forty-eight in all. By placing the things of God above the personal things, including their own families,

Moses blessed them, asking God to protect them from evil and to deliver them from all their enemies (Deut. 33: 8-11).

Today, after the coming of Jesus, the bible says that **we are the Levites**, the priests of the Lord on Earth and we should carry out our office with holiness (1 Pet. 2: 9: “But you are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, God’s own people, in order that you may proclaim the mighty acts of him who called you out of darkness into his marvelous light”). Through our attitudes of worship, faithfulness and sincere praise to Jesus, many people will be rescued from the darkness and will leave the false gods to know the true light, which is the Son of God.

Let’s talk a bit about the **Tabernacle of the Lord**, built after the departure of His people from Egypt:

After the departure of the children of Israel from Egypt, when they were in the wilderness, God commanded that a sanctuary was built so that people could distinguish between the sacred things and the worldly ones. He needed a consecrated place, separated from all other things and places, in order to be fully worshiped. Today, as children of God, this is the ordinance we have: to build within us a holy place where He can be in privacy with us and to be able to speak to us, to treat us and to direct us, just as He did with Moses. It’s written:

- 1 Cor. 3: 16-17: “Do you not know that you are God’s temple and that God’s Spirit dwells in you? If anyone destroys God’s temple, God will destroy that person. For God’s temple is holy, and you are that temple.”

- 1 Cor. 6: 15-20: “Do you not know that your bodies are members of Christ? Should I therefore take the members of Christ and make them members of a prostitute? Never! Do you not know that whoever is united to a prostitute becomes one body with her? For it is said, ‘The two shall be one flesh’. But anyone united to the Lord becomes one spirit with him. Shun fornication! Every sin that a person commits is outside the body; but the fornicator sins against the body itself. Or do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit within you, which you have from God, and that you are not your own? For you were bought with a price; therefore glorify God in your body.”

We can realize, then, that **we are the true sanctuary of God**, not made by human hands, but by the Holy Spirit living inside our body, our soul and our spirit, and willing to occupy all the space that belongs to Him, since we no longer belong to ourselves. If we compare this with the Tabernacle commanded by God to Moses (Ex 25; Ex 26; Ex. 27; Lev. 24: 1-9), we’ll notice some interesting things:

The **Tabernacle** was divided into three parts: **The Holy of Holies**, where the Ark of the Covenant was, and was separated from the Holy Place by a thick curtain. There, only the high priest entered once a year to offer sacrifice for sin (In the Day of Atonement). In the **Holy Place** was the **table** with the **Bread of Presence** or shewbread (to the north) and the **golden lampstand** (to the south). In front of the veil (curtain), in the Holy Place, in front of the Ark of the Covenant, there was also the **altar of incense** or **golden altar**, where Aaron and his sons burnt incense twice a day as regular offerings to the Lord, and once a year made atonement over it with the blood of the sin offering on behalf of the congregation of Israel (Ex. 30: 10). Though placed in the Holy Place, the golden altar was considered a part of the Holy of Holies. Out of the Holy Place, there was the **Outer Court** with the **bronze basin** where the priests washed their hands and feet, and the **altar of burnt offerings**, where the sacrifices were made for the people. Beyond the Outer Court there was **the Court of the Gentiles** (when Herod’s temple was built), where the foreigners could only have a glimpse of the interior of the temple through a balustrade that they could not surpass. Separating the Holy Place from the Holy of Holies there was a **thick veil**, as I have said, which symbolized the

separation between the holy and the profane, between God and men. As I also said, in the Holy of Holies there was the Ark of the Covenant, and there, the High Priest could only enter once a year to worship the Lord and make atonement for his sins and the people's (Lev. 16: 14-16; 18-19; 30; 33; 34; Heb. 9: 25). It was the curtain that was torn when Jesus died on the cross symbolizing that His death was breaking the separation between us and God. From that moment, as the high priest, He was making the final sacrifice to give us free access to the heart of the Father. The temple thus constructed bears a resemblance to our being and our life. **The Outer Court** represents our social relationships in which many people see us, greet us, but know little of us. The **Holy Place** is our soul, in which participate the closest people as our family and friends who know us better and know what goes on in our hearts. In the **Holy of Holies**, which corresponds to our spirit, where are the inmost of our desires and our true self, only the Spirit of God has access.

The **lampstand** (Menorah, מְנֹרָה – Strong #4501 – noun feminine of manowr) means the light, the Spirit of God with the Israelites (the glory of God). The **table** means communion and intimacy with God, and the **bread**, the food and the divine provision. The **ark** with the people symbolized that YHWH was with them. Today, it is we who carry His presence wherever we go. Within our hearts there must be the fire of the Spirit constantly burning (the flame burning in the lampstand), the love for His work (the fire burning on the altar) and praise, for it draws us to the throne. As for the other duty of the Levites (burn incense on the golden altar twice a day) we may remember what is written in:

- Rev. 5: 8: “When he had taken the scroll, the four living creatures and the twenty-four elders fell before the Lamb, each holding a harp and golden bowls full of incense, which are the prayers of the saints.”

- Rev. 8: 3-4: “Another angel with a golden censer came and stood at the altar; he was given a great quantity of incense to offer with the prayers of all the saints on the golden altar that is before the throne. And the smoke of the incense, with the prayers of the saints, rose before God from the hand of the angel.”

Thus it is clear that we, as priests of Christ, burn the incense of our prayer daily before Him. And as priests, we remove the ashes that remained, that is, what had no reason to be inside us anymore and was delivered to the Lord in prayer. The fire of His Spirit burned evil and revived us.

Before we talk about the **priestly garments**, there is still something to be said about the Levites:

From the beginning, God separated the children of Levi for His work and gave them no possession among the people of Israel. Their brethren would bring them tithes and offerings to meet their material needs, while they would be concerned to give them spiritual supply. By doing so, the people were blessed and would not lack food in the House of the Lord: Num. 3: 6-12; Num. 3: 41; Num. 4: 1-3; Num. 8: 24-26; Num. 18: 6; 8; 14; 20-21; 23-24; Deut. 10: 8-9; Deut. 12: 11-12; 19; Deut. 18: 1-8; Deut. 14: 27; Josh. 13: 33; Josh. 14: 4; Josh. 18: 7.

- Ezek. 44: 28-30: “This shall be their inheritance: I am their inheritance; and you shall give them no holding in Israel; I am their holding. They shall eat the grain offering, the sin offering, and the guilt offering; and every devoted thing in Israel shall be theirs. The first of all the first fruits of all kinds, and every offering of all kinds from all your offerings, shall belong to the priests; you shall also give to the priests the first of your dough, in order that a blessing may rest on your house.”

The Levites gave the tithe of the tithes of all the gifts they received, and they were to be given to the high priest:

- Num. 18: 26: “You shall speak to the Levites, saying: When you receive from the Israelites the tithe that I have given you from them for your portion, you shall set apart an offering from it to the Lord, a tithe of the tithe.”

- Num. 18: 28-29: “Thus you also shall set apart an offering to the Lord from all the tithes that you receive from the Israelites; and from them you shall give the Lord’s offering to the priest Aaron. Out of all the gifts to you, you shall set apart every offering due to the Lord; the best of all of them is the part to be consecrated.”

- Neh. 10: 37-38: “... and to bring the first of our dough, and our contributions, the fruit of every tree, the wine and the oil, to the priests, to the chambers of the house of our God; and to bring to the Levites the tithes from our soil, for it is the Levites who collect the tithes in all our rural towns. And the priest, the descendant of Aaron, shall be with the Levites when the Levites receive the tithes; and the Levites shall bring up a tithe of the tithes to the house of our God, to the chambers of the storehouse.”

Today, the tillage symbolizes your job, your profession, from where you take the fruits of your labor for your livelihood.

The Levites were also exempt from taxes:

- Ezr. 7: 24: “We also notify you that it shall not be lawful to impose tribute, custom, or toll on any of the priests, the Levites, the singers, the doorkeepers, the temple servants, or other servants of this house of God.”

Other references about Levites:

- Lev. 10: 8-11; Lev. 21: 1-24 – the laws for the priests
- Num. 1: 47-54 – the Levites were not counted in the census of the people of Israel
- Deut. 33: 8-11 – the tribe of Levi is mentioned in the blessings of Moses

Today, the Levitical priest is everyone who holds the leadership position as a priest, for example, the pastor of the church, and those who help him in the instruction of the people, and who have been separated for this office and often have no secular work. They were separated by God only for the ministry. The bible says that the Levitical priest, that is, the pastor, receives the tithe of the people and gives his tithe to God, that is, the tithes of the tithes he receives, being used in the work of the House of God. The high priest is Jesus.

Now, let’s talk about the **priestly garments**:

The priestly garments are described in Ex. 39: 1-31 and Ex. 28: 1-43. The Lord tells Moses to make **linen undergarments, tunics, sashes and turbans** (Ex 28: 40-43). Linen represents the righteous acts of the children of God (Rev. 19: 8), therefore holiness, which cannot mix with the robes of the world’s sin. That’s why he talked about changing clothes to get close to others who were not priests (Ezek. 44: 19; Lev. 16: 23-24), that is, we cannot talk or discuss the word of God on equal terms with those who do not yet understand it, because they would mock it and would scorn it. It would be like giving finest pearls to pigs. In Ancient times, the sweat was a sign of impurity; therefore, the guidance for the priests was **not to use wool, lest they should sweat** (Ezek. 44: 17-18). For us, this means that a priest does not need to wear ‘heavy clothing’, that is, knowledge that does not have the wisdom of God, nor impure thoughts and impure feelings of the world, because they bring an unnecessary burden to his life, besides it does not please the Lord. The linen garments of the priests were woven with the linen brought from Egypt. Samuel wore a linen ephod (1 Sam. 2: 18); David danced before the ark using a linen ephod (2 Sam. 6: 14). It seems indeed that the use of linen was associated with special people, holy ones. Linen and fine linen were reputed as precious gifts to a woman loved by a man (Ezek. 16: 10; 13, when God compares Jerusalem to His bride). Hence, the bible says that the Lord has set apart for

His Church, for His bride, garments of fine linen, bright and pure, because the fine linen is the righteous deeds of saints (Rev. 19: 8).

The ephod (עֶפֹד – Strong #646, Noun Masculine) was an ancient garment, a tunic made of finely twisted linen and of gold, and of blue, purple and scarlet yarn – Ex. 39: 2, made in two parts. The front was separated from the back, and the two were attached to the shoulders with gold rings set by an onyx stone, like shoulder pieces, and where the names of the twelve tribes of Israel were written. Six names were placed in order of birth on one shoulder, and six on the other (Ex. 28: 10). The ephod was used by the high priest when he presented himself to God in the Holy Place of the temple. The waistband over the ephod was of the same fabric (Ex. 39: 5).

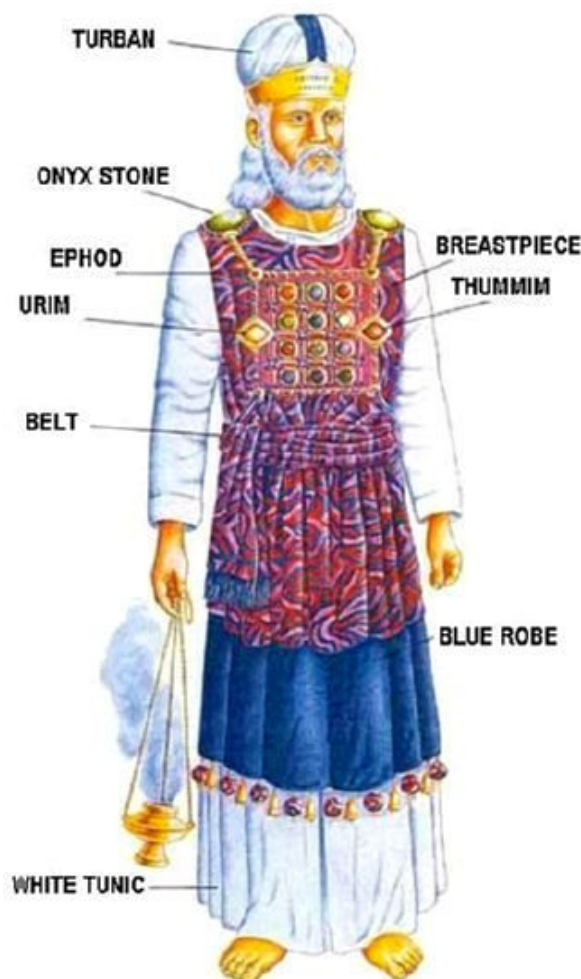
The breastpiece (Ex. 39: 8-21) was made of the same material of the ephod, of square and double form. It was the length of a span, and the breadth of a span (Ex 39: 9 cf. Ex 28: 16), that is, 22 centimeters (9 inches) in the four sites, and where four orders of precious stones (four rows of three stones) were placed in a number of twelve, corresponding to the number of the twelve tribes of Israel. This symbolized for the Jews the unity of the people of God, while the position of the stones on Aaron's chest speaks of the affection of God towards His people. On the breastpiece of judgment were placed the **Urim and Thummim** (Ex 28: 30). They were two flattened objects through which God's will was consulted. The two had written in one side the word Urim, derived from 'ārār (to curse); on the other side it was written the word Thummim, from tāmam (to be perfect). If when casting lots, both sides of the Urim were facing upwards, it meant a 'no' from God. If they were both Thummim, it meant 'yes,' and if one was Urim and another Thummim, it meant 'unanswered.' As in the OT there was not the distribution of the Holy Spirit on all people, only on the leader, with whom God spoke personally (in this case, Moses, Aaron's brother), consults were made to Him by the priest through these two objects. But this was only delegated to the priests. After the coming of Jesus, the Holy Spirit began to speak to all His children (Acts 1: 23-26 – This is the only time in the NT when are mentioned the act of casting lots as a means of divine choice; Acts 13: 1-3 – here, there were already prophets, through whom the Holy Spirit spoke). The most important thing for us today is that we must always consult the Lord, in all circumstances of our lives, and hear clearly the voice of His Spirit in our hearts so that we take the right direction.

Under the ephod, there was a **tunic or robe** of blue color in a single piece, with an opening in the center for the head, and it had no sleeves. It was longer than the ephod. Around the hem of the robe there were bells of gold between the pomegranates of blue, purple and scarlet yarn and finely twisted linen (Ex. 39: 22-26). The bells and the pomegranates alternated around the hem of the robe. The bells sounded when the priest moved, and this conveyed the idea of listening to God while we serve Him, and brings also the idea of a service with joy. The sound of bells could be heard when Aaron entered the Holy Place before the Lord, and his people, by hearing, would know that he had not died in the presence of God, but his offering for them had been accepted. The pomegranate is a very well-known and popular fruit in the East and it becomes syrup, juice and astringent remedy. This means that pomegranate symbolizes fructification (it has abundant seeds) and God's word as spiritual food and remedy to us.

Over the body, under the ephod and the robe of blue color, there was a **tunic of fine linen and the linen undergarment**. The linen tunics were long and loose, from the belt down. Therefore, the Lord told Moses that the Levites should wear linen undergarments, which stretched from the waist to the thigh (the knees; Ex. 39: 28; Ex. 28: 42-43; Lev. 16: 4). The undergarments were hidden by the tunic, and did not allow the nakedness of the priest to be exposed (Ex. 20: 24-26). As for this precaution about

the priest's nakedness, it was because of his sacred office, so as not to arouse any kind of feeling contrary to reverence for the Lord, if his garments moved with the wind, or if he had to climb the steps to the altar of the burnt offering, which stood at a height of fifteen feet (4.5 meters) in the temple of Solomon. In the tabernacle of Moses, the height of the bronze altar was five feet (1.5 meter); therefore, the stairs were not necessary. It is interesting that linen undergarments were only permitted at that time to the priests, not to the men of the people. In his head the high priest wore the **turban of fine linen**. The plate (rosette) around the turban (the sacred diadem) was of pure gold and on it was engraved an inscription: "Holy to the Lord." They fastened a blue cord to it to attach it to the turban (Ex. 39: 30-31). It was a constant reminder of the covenant of holiness for the people of Israel and for the high priest in his calling.

For the other priests there was the same long linen tunic with long sleeves and seamless, all woven in one piece; also the headdresses (like a turban, but of conical form), the linen undergarments from the waist to the thighs, and the linen sash, embroidered with blue, purple and crimson yarns (Ex. 39: 27-29).



The garments of the high priest



The garments of the priests and the high priest



Linen undergarments of the priests / The turban



The stones on the breastplate of judgment (breastpiece of decision – NIV)
used by the High Priest



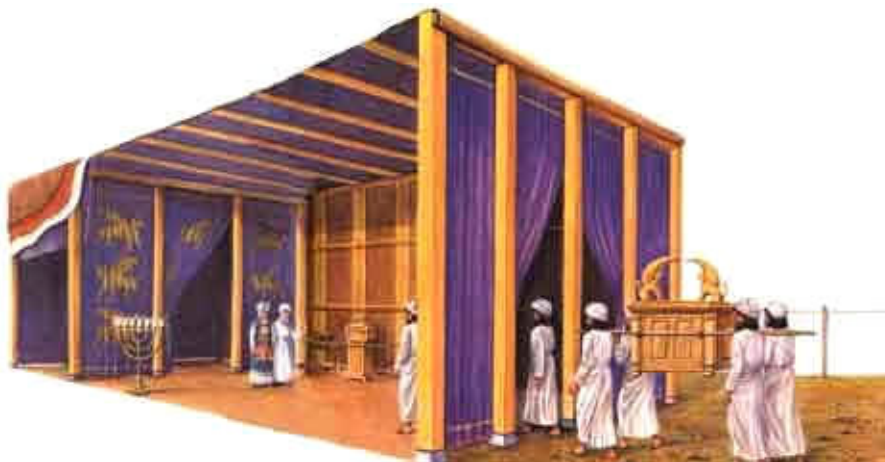
The exterior view of the Tabernacle



The altar of the burnt offerings



The bronze basin for the purification of the priests



The interior view of the tabernacle and its furnishings in the Holy Place and in the Holy of Holies



The golden altar (altar of incense)



The table with the Bread of the Presence (To the north)



The golden lampstand (To the south) / The Ark of the Covenant in the Holy of Holies



When Jesus died on the cross, the curtain of the sanctuary was torn in two parts from top to bottom (Matt. 27: 51a), thereby showing that His death had ended with the separation between God and man because of his sin. Today, our High Priest is Jesus (Heb. 2: 17; Heb. 4: 14-15; Heb. 7: 26; Heb. 8: 1-3; Heb. 9: 11).



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