

Alfred E. Bouter

The Urim and Thummim

"Thou shalt put into the breastplate of judgment the Urim and the Thummim, that they may be upon Aaron's heart when he goeth in before Jehovah; and Aaron shall bear the judgment of the children of Israel upon his heart before Jehovah continually."

Exodus 28:30

The breastplate of judgment was part of the priestly ephod. It was through the Urim ("lights") and Thummim ("perfections") – possibly precious stones that were kept in a pouch or pocket of the breastplate – that the Lord made known His thoughts. Exactly how, we do not know, but it was the high priest who used these stones to receive an answer from God.

A negative example of this is learned from the story of King Saul, who did not receive an answer even though the priest used the ephod (1 Sam. 14). The word Urim starts with the *first* letter of the Hebrew alphabet, whereas the word Thummim starts with its *last* letter. This may indicate that, whatever the situation, God was able to give an answer through the priest whom He had ordained.

The Urim and Thummim were linked with "the judgment – the declaration of what is right – of the children of Israel." They were in the breastplate upon the high priest's heart, for this judgment cannot be detached from his loving heart.

This reminds us that "God is light," maintaining what is right, and also that "God is love"; the breastplate of judgment was carried on the heart. This was "before Jehovah," in the presence of the God who had a special relationship with the people He had redeemed. The New Testament teaches that our Lord Jesus is now in God's

immediate presence from where He sustains us, intercedes for us, and takes care of God's rights in relation to His people (see the letter to the Hebrews).

Source: Daily Bible meditations

