

The Urim and the Thummim

The Old Testament sacrificial system is not very well known today. People simply don't study it – and because they don't study it they miss out on a number of astonishing truths.

One of the most amazing parts of the sacrificial system was something called the Urim and the Thummim. These mysterious items were used to communicate directly with God. The priests in the Old Testament used them to ask God questions and receive direct and specific answers. It would be like writing a letter to God *and then actually receiving a letter in return*. There is nothing like it today, but it existed throughout the Old Testament and was used on many occasions.

The Bible tells us almost nothing about what the Urim and Thummim were or how they worked. This is all that we know:

Exodus 28:30: “And thou shalt put in the breastplate of judgment the Urim and the Thummim; and they shall be upon Aaron's heart, when he goeth in before the Lord: and Aaron shall bear the judgment of the children of Israel upon his heart before the Lord continually.”

We know that they were in the breastplate – and that's the extent of our knowledge. We don't know how they worked, what they looked like, how the priest used them, or how God spoke through them. What we do know is that God used them to give very specific answers. For example, God told the people were Saul was hiding:

1 Samuel 10:22: “Therefore they enquired of the Lord further, if the man should yet come

thither. And the Lord answered, **Behold he hath hid himself among the stuff.**"

The Lord also gave David a host of very specific instructions:

1 Samuel 23:2: "Therefore David **enquired of the Lord**, saying, Shall I go and smite these Philistines? And the Lord said unto David, **Go, and smite the Philistines, and save Keilah.**"

1 Samuel 30:8: "And David **enquired at the Lord**, saying, Shall I pursue after this troop? shall I overtake them? And he answered him, **Pursue: for thou shalt surely overtake them, and without fail recover all.**"

2 Samuel 2:1: "And it came to pass after this, that David **enquired of the Lord**, saying, Shall I go up into any of the cities of Judah? And the Lord said unto him, **Go up.** And David said, Whither shall I go up? And he said, **Unto Hebron.**"

2 Samuel 5:23: "And when David **enquired of the Lord**, he said, **Thou shalt not go up; but fetch a compass behind them, and come upon them over against the mulberry trees.**

24 And let it be, when thou hearest the sound of a going in the tops of the mulberry trees, that then thou shalt bestir thyself: for then shall the Lord go out before thee, to smite the host of the Philistines."

As you can see, these responses went far beyond a simple "yes" or "no". The response could also be very short or quite

lengthy. However, God did not always respond. There was a time when King Saul inquired of the Lord and God refused to answer him:

1 Samuel 28:6: “And when Saul enquired of the Lord, **the Lord answered him not**, neither by dreams, **nor by Urim**, nor by prophets.”

As you can see, the Urim were quite amazing. Wouldn't it be nice to have a system like this today where you could essentially send God text messages and receive written responses back? It certainly is appealing – but there is a reason God retired the Urim and the Thummim. The truth is that God has given us something better. In place of this ancient messaging system God has given us His Word, which is able to equip us to perform all good works:

2 Timothy 3:16: “All **scripture** is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness:

17 That the man of God **may be perfect**, thoroughly furnished **unto all good works.**”

In the Old Testament the Scriptures had not yet been completed, so God allowed mankind to ask Him questions through the Urim and Thummim. In our time, however, the Bible has been finished. Its contents are enough to make us *perfect* and to thoroughly furnish us to do *all* good works. This means that *there are no good works that the Bible does not equip us for*. There are no situations where we need additional direct revelation from God that is not found in the Bible! It contains everything that we need in order to perform all good works. We no longer need the direct revelation from God that the Urim and Thummim provided. In fact, God no longer provides direct revelation; instead He has given us His Word and has pointed us to it. That is where we must

turn our attention if we want to discover God's will.