

What Were Urim and Thummin?

Question: What was the purpose of Urim and Thummin and how did it work?

Answer: Urim and Thummin means “lights” and “perfection” and were placed in the breastplate of the Old Testament high priest (Ex. 28:30). They were probably stones, although it has also been suggested it was a piece of parchment that was inserted into a flap in his garment. The process of consulting God by Urim and Thummin is not given in Scripture, although it was clearly used to help Israel make divine decisions.

The Jewish historian Josephus (*Ant.* iii, 7, 5) identifies them as sardonyxes on the shoulders of the high priest’s ephod, and says they were bright before a victory or when a sacrifice was acceptable, and dark when any disaster was impending. Michaelis (*Laws of Moses*, v, 52), believes they were three stones, on one of which was written Yes, on another No, while the third was left blank. These were used as lots, and the high priest made the correct decision according to which one was drawn.

Joshua was guided by Urim in leading Israel into Canaan. (Num. 27:18-24). When Saul rebelled against God, the Scripture says, “When Saul inquired of the Lord, the Lord did not answer him, either by dreams or by Urim or by prophets” (1 Sam 28:6).

Today every believer has the Holy Spirit in his or her heart to help make the decisions He wants us to make.

Making Life Count Ministries
P.O. Box 680174
Prattville, Alabama 36068
www.makinglifecount.net