

SYLVIA'S CORNER

THE URIM AND THUMMIM-WHAT IT IS, AND WHAT IT IS NOT

Mormons are told that Joseph Smith translated the Book of Mormon with the aid of the Urim and Thummim. An important question that we must ask ourselves is whether the objects used in the Bible bear any resemblance to the items Joseph claims to have used.

The biblical Urim and Thummim were not always mentioned together. Sometimes only one of them was used at a time. And really, nobody knows too much about them.

They are first mentioned in Exodus 28:30, and Leviticus 8:8. Apparently they fit in the pouch of Aaron's breastplate. They were part of the high priest's wardrobe. Their purpose was to discover the will of God. The biblical ones are thought to have possibly looked like two identical gem stones, two flat objects, or maybe something with the letters of the alphabet on them.

Whenever they looked alike, they could be pulled out from the breastplate pockets, and used to obtain a yes or no answer when seeking the Lord's will. It also appears that they were not used after the death of the first prophets.

Their meaning seems to be that of light and perfection. They symbolized the act or light of what was to come. We can only speculate about what they looked like, but we can see references to them by looking up some scriptures.

In Exodus 28:30, Aaron used them to obtain God's judgment. In Leviticus 8:8, Moses publicly put them in the breastplate as he dressed in his priestly clothing in front of his congregation. In Numbers 27, 18-21, Joshua was taken before the congregation and was counseled after the judgement of the Urim only. In this case, Israel had sinned by rebelling against God, so perfection was missing. This is why in this case the Thummim was not used. See Numbers 14:22, where it says that they did not hearken to God's voice, thus they were disobedient to the Word of God. Again in Deuteronomy 33:8 both the Urim and Thummim are used again when Moses was blessing the twelve tribes of Israel.

In Ezra 2:62-63, and Nehemiah 7:65, the Jews that returned from captivity were not found in the genealogy records. They were polluted, not allowed to be priests, and couldn't eat of the holy things until they stood up with the Urim and Thummim. Today this is still of prophetic significance. To this day, Jews do not participate in the Lord's Supper. They are blinded until they see the Messiah.

Saul inquired via the Urim and Thummim in 1 Samuel 28: 6, and when God did not give him an answer, he went to a medium.

When a farmer by the name of Martin Harris was considering publishing the book of Mormon, he took copies of the letters on the gold plates that Joseph Smith claimed to have found to Professor Charles Anthon of Columbia University. He did this in order to establish their authenticity, which Professor Anthon denied. The professor was told that Mr. Smith translated the book with the aid of a giant pair of gold spectacles--so large, that they could only be looked through one side at a time. Other accounts say that they were encased in silver bows. This is definitely not the description of the same items used in the Bible. But it gets even more interesting!

On page 818 of Mormon Doctrine, it claims that after the church was organized, there was no need of the Urim and Thummim. However, in the Journal of Discourses 1861, Volume 9, 86 & 87, it said that the Bishop had the privilege of using the Urim and Thummim. Then in the Mormon Dictionary, it says that they will be used in eternity as an instrument of revelation.

The question we must ask is why, when we would be living with the Lord Jesus Christ--Light and Perfection Himself, would ANY revelation be necessary? Jesus is the Light of the World.