

The following material is part of an unpublished paper entitled "Revelation through Urim and Thummim" by Trevor Craigen which was presented to the Post Graduate Seminar in September, 1978 at Grace Theological Seminary, Winona Lake, IN. Cited with permission.

URIM AND THUMMIM
by Trevor Craigen

Etymology

The etymology of this phrase, of these terms, cannot be established with any degree of finality. This has resulted in a wide variety of explanations regarding both their nature and their use. It would also appear that the etymology has been determined by the theory that is held, so that if these are equated with lots, then the words are made to be opposites rather than similarities. Nathan Isaacs makes a pertinent comment:

If we turn to etymology for assistance, we are not only on uncertain ground, but when Bab. (sic) and other foreign words are brought in to bolster up a theory about anything so little understood as the Urim and Thummim, we are on dangerous ground.¹

Basically there are two main views which prevail.

(1) That אֲוִרִים is derived from אָוִר therefore meaning "lights," and that תְּמִיּוֹת is derived from תָּם, thus meaning "Perfections." The translations would then be "lights and perfections," or some similar sounding phrase.² This, almost hendiadystic concept, appears in the Vulgate and Septuagint translations as well.³ (2) That אֲוִרִים is derived from אָרַר "to curse" and being thereby an antonym to תְּמִיּוֹת.⁴ The arbitrary translations of the various versions could best have been left as transliterations.⁵ We do not know what the name meant in ancient times, nor what the objects looked like."⁶

Direct Biblical References
Exodus 28:30; Leviticus 8:8

Several facts can be dearly deduced from the text. (1) Moses was to put them into (נִתְּן אֵל) the breastplate. The setting of the precious stones has been described in the preceding verses. They are mounted on the breastplate, whereas Moses put these "in" after Aaron was dressed in his

high-priestly garments.⁷ (2) That these are probably two separate objects. The definite article and sign of the definite object are used with both nouns. (3) That these were familiar terms and/or objects to Moses so that no further explanation was called for, (4) that these were an essential part of the regalia of the High-Priest when he entered the Holy Place and came into the presence of the Lord. Aaron now carries on his person "the judgment of the sons of Israel over his heart before the Lord continually (NASB)." **מִשְׁפָּט** denotes judgment both in the concrete sense of a verdict or decision and also in the more abstract form of the process of making it.^{7a}

Numbers 27:21

Here Moses commissions Joshua as his successor: the new leader of the nation. However Joshua was distinctly different from Moses in the leadership role. Moses was the law-giver and absolute governor who had a special relationship with God (cf. Deut. 34:10), whereas Joshua was to operate through the High Priest in a way in which Moses did not have to do. Leon Wood speaks of Joshua having to regularly consult Eleazar.⁸ Such an inquiry was to be carried out "before the Lord" by the means of the Urim (an obvious abbreviation for the compound term). The next phrase, **עַל פִּי** can refer to either Joshua, Eleazar, or God. This writer believes that the best alternative is that of Yahweh, the real king of Israel. Moses sought for a leader who would lead the people in and out like a shepherd the sheep (v. 17). Here was their leader moving at the Divine command! They followed their duly appointed shepherd. One cannot help but think of the military campaigns to conquer the Promised Land, and the various movements of the nation as she entered into that Land. This dearly "intimates its use for the guidance and direction of Israel."⁹

Deuteronomy 33:8

Moses blessed the tribe of Levi, and spoke of the Urim and Thummim (here inverted in order) as the right of Levi, who had stood loyally, as represented in Aaron, by the side of Moses at Rephidim (Ex. 17:1-7; Num. 20:2-13), and who had demonstrated, collectively, their loyalty to the Lord against the golden calf worship at Sinai (Ex. 32:26-29).

They could thus be classified as God's "holy one," a tribe set apart for His service. Even though the Urim was only used by the High Priest, being in his garment only, it could still be represented as the right of the tribe.

1 Samuel 28

The Lord did not answer Saul by any of the means through which His will was discerned during that period of Israel's history. This verse cannot be used as evidence for a "no" answer to an inquiry.¹⁰ Saul had already been rejected as the king of Israel by the Lord, and the Holy Spirit had been taken from him and had been given to David (1 Sam. 16). Furthermore the priests had been slain on Saul's orders at the city of Nob and the successor to the High Priest, Abiathar, had escaped to David with the ephod.¹¹

Saul's time and privilege of asking guidance in leading Israel had apparently come to an end. The parallel passage, 1 Chron. 10:14, states that Saul did not inquire of the Lord, and died because he inquired of the medium at Endor. His attitude, or motive in asking was of such a nature that according to the Divine interpretation it was as though he had not inquired at all.¹²

The Urim was definitely, according to this verse another form of God's revelation to the leader of the theocratic nation.

Ezra 2:63; Nehemiah 7:65

Zerubbabel ruled that the question of the priests who had lost their credentials for office could not be decided without the Urim. They were, therefore, excluded from the performance of priestly duties.¹³ Zerubbabel's words do suggest that he understood the Urim and Thummim to be a means of discerning God's decision in matters about which the leaders could not decide because of the lack of information. The matter of appointing priests was a crucial one because according to the Law they must be of the tribe of Levi. No civil leader could ever legislate in this respect, especially if they were setting out to diligently obey His word. Why did he not ask of a prophet? There is no immediate answer to that question. Further, why make such a statement when the various accouterments and regalia for operating in the Temple had all been destroyed in 586 B.C."

There certainly was no possibility of a priest in the future standing up with the Urim. It was Zerrubabel's way of stating that so far as they could determine there was no other possible recourse than that those men should be excluded from the priesthood.

Inquiries of the Lord

Besides these direct statements there are other passages in which the use of the Urim, even though not specifically stated, is possible. It must be noted that according to Moses' command Joshua was to inquire through the

High Priest who bore the Urim and Thummim, so that, at the least, these two, the Priest and the Breastplate, must be present in such an inquiry. **וְשָׂאֵל** occurs in a number of instances in which the leader, or in the absence of an appointed leader, the people collectively, sought guidance from the Lord.

David's Inquiries

There is more of this activity on the part of David recorded in Scripture than for any other individual leader of any other period of Israel's history.

The High Priest and the ephod¹⁴

Abiathar, whose father, Ahimelech, had been slain by Doeg the Edomite at the city of Nob, had escaped the massacre and fled to David. He was now the legitimate high priest (1 Sam. 22).¹⁵ He had brought the ephod with him to David. At Keilah David instructs Abiathar to bring the ephod to him, and he proceeds to ask guidance and counsel of God in regard to the military activity at Keilah and the threat of Saul's approach. The ephod should be considered as identical with the breastplate of judgment because the instructions for the binding of the breastplate to the ephod were such that the breastplate was not to be parted from the ephod (garment) (Ex. 28:28; 39:21), so that the term "ephod" could quite conceivably come to embrace the whole composite unit of ephod and the breastplate affixed to it. The question of the man of God to Eli (1 Sam. 2:28) included in the list of priestly duties the carrying of the ephod before Jehovah. This could only mean the breastplate of judgment. So the presence of the priest and the ephod (which includes the Urim and Thummim) leaves no alternative but to classify these inquiries of David as using that God-appointed means of consultation through the high priest. Furthermore, it is hard to conceive of David as deliberately doing that which was in direct violation of the Law and using an incorrect, unsanctioned instrument to discern the will of God. There is no indication of rebuke for these inquiries conducted through the ephod.¹⁶ David actually called for the ephod on two specific occasions (1 Sam. 23:9f; 30:7f). However, all the inquiries of 1 Sam. 23 are carried out in the context of the priest and ephod being present.¹⁷ Verse 6 is a supplementary explanation relative to the inquiry of the Lord by David.

Thus, it is only the 2 Samuel passages which have no indication of the presence of the high priest and the ephod. But the presence of the introductory formula **וַיִּשְׂאֵל דָּוִד בַּיהוָה** would strongly suggest that a similar procedure has taken place. This formula occurs every time, except in

the middle of the Keilah narrative. The account, after the command to bring the ephod, continues with אָמַר which introduces the content of David's prayer to God.¹⁸

There is only one instance of information sought which was not military in nature, i.e. where should the new capital of Judah be situated?

The beginning of his inquiries

When did David begin to make these inquiries of the Lord? The passages mentioned above all occur after the arrival of the high priest into David's camp. One passage, at first, seems to suggest that David was already frequently asking of God through the high priest (1 Sam. 22:9f). The emphasis is normally placed on the verb "begin" (לִלְמַד and being rendered: "Is today the first time that I have inquired of God for him?" But that word לִלְמַד followed by a construct infinitive can have the emphasis on both the verb and its succeeding infinitive--"Did I begin to inquire..."--not in the sense of having done it already but with the sense of asking whether the king believes that he had made a start of doing it then. Certainly one could wish for a more direct and simple answer by Ahimelech. George Caird refers to this syntactical format and calls it a common Hebrew idiom reinforcing the main verb that follows so that it now means, "Have I indeed inquired of God for him today?"¹⁹ This makes more sense in the light of what follows--"Far be it from me!"

In effect he states, "I have not begun to inquire at all," which reads better than, "Far be it from me to do this for the first time today." He also goes further to categorically deny knowing anything of the charge leveled against him. Doeg, the Edomite, convinced Saul of the conspiracy by adding what the narrative in the previous chapter does not even hint at, namely, that Ahimelech had inquired of the Lord for David. All the parties to the interrogation knew the implication of the charge. If you inquired of God for him then you are admitting that David is the king and Saul is not. Perhaps this explains something of the fear which Ahimelech felt at the presence of David, and the reason for his carefully worded answer. Henry Smith in the ICC really separates the answer into two parts aimed at two parts of the charge, i.e. the fact of the inquiry is not to be denied, but the intention of conspiracy is to be strongly denied.²⁰

However, Ahimelech does seem to have pinpointed the main thrust of the indictment: the issue is not aid for David, which he could have given to him seeing that he was a known official representative of the king (v. 14), but the issue is the priestly recognition of kingship.

The position of David

According to 1 Samuel 16, God had rejected Saul as king and had anointed His new king with the Holy Spirit. Samuel then on the instructions of the Lord anoints David as the king in the presence of his brothers. He is the one now empowered by the Spirit for the assigned task of ruling over God's people. As such, God's guidance pertains to David and not to Saul.

Other Inquiries

By Joshua

Joshua and the elders were deceived by the Gibeonites because they had "not asked for the counsel of the Lord" (9:14 ", וְאֵת פִּי יְהוָה לֹא שָׁאֲלוּ, ²¹. The only explanation is to look back to the charge given to Joshua--ask through the Urim. This was a question of vital importance which had a direct bearing on their properly fulfilling the commandments of God in regard to the conquest of the land and the death of the inhabitants.

The question of Achan will be dealt with under lots.

In the Judges period

The sons of Israel inquired regarding the continuation of their war against the Canaanites (1:1-2). These men were close enough to the time of Joshua, and under the influence of Phinehas, the high priest, that they would have followed the procedure used by Joshua (cf. Josh. 24:31).

Later the sons of Israel would again inquire regarding the civil war with Benjamin (20:18f), and as to who would lead them into the battle. The following facts are obvious: (1) Phinehas, the high priest, fulfilled the function of inquirer, even though the people are also spoken of as making the inquiry, (2) the Ark of the covenant was at Bethel (3) there were three positive answers: yet two military failures, and (4) the introductory formula of שָׁאֵל בְּיַהוָה is used on two occasions, but שָׁאֵל בְּאַלְהֵים on the first occasion of asking. Weeping, fasting, and offering of sacrifices were necessary before they were promised victory.

A host of questions remain unanswered. Should they have asked if victory was theirs despite their overwhelming numbers? Must there be an attitude of repentance and humility? Does the change of the name of God indicate anything? Was the accompanying activity, weeping, fasting, etc., an attempt to secure God's favor?²²

The presence of the Ark testified to the presence of the Lord, before Whom the high priest was to stand when making such an inquiry. After the Ark was captured by the Philistines, or access to it was not possible, the presence of the high priest with the ephod was apparently enough.²³ For

Joshua and the people in the judges period the Ark and the Tabernacle were close at hand.

By Saul

Besides the account in t Samuel 28 in which Saul sought revelation in vain, 1 Samuel 14 is the only other instance of an attempted inquiry by him as the king and before his rejection by God from that position. Saul here commanded Ahijah, the high priest, to bring the "ark of God" to him, or to that place (v. 18). The Septuagint retroverts as **תִּפְּוֹד** (προσάγαγε τὸ εἶφούδ) and this has been taken as the correct reading, thus permitting scholars to postulate the concept of sacred lots because Saul said to the priest "Withdraw thy hand."²⁴ A comparison with 1 Kings 2:26 does seem to make "ephod" read as "ark" because Abiathar certainly did not carry the "ark" for David while he was a refugee. However the MT also reads **אָרֶן** at 1 Kings 2:26. One must wonder then whether Solomon was perhaps referring to that important move of the Ark from Obed-edom's house to Jerusalem, and a mover over which Abiathar as the high priest would have presided. Furthermore, is it possible that Saul had brought the Ark to the battlefield instead of going to where it was, and thus he was able to command it to be brought to him?²⁵ Whatever the answer, at least Saul knew that the symbol of the right of the high priest to ask of God was a necessary prerequisite before he could initiate that activity. The command to withdraw the hand can be taken as a peremptory, "Cancel that order."²⁶

Later in this same chapter, Ahijah advises Saul to inquire of the Lord, but in vain. No answer.²⁷ The mechanics of receiving an answer, or of knowing that none was forthcoming, still remain shrouded in secrecy. Was this silence the result of sin, as Saul intimates in vv. 38f, or was it the result of a disregard for the proper procedure?

In addition, Saul had already caused the people to sin by his rashly uttered oath which prevented them from eating so that now at the sight of cattle they were driven to kill and eat the meat with the blood in it. Further, Saul had already made up his mind to go and spoil the Philistines and only the advice of the priest hold's him back to make the inquiry, he is perhaps already exhibiting that attitude which was defined in 1 Chron. 10:14.²⁸ One thing is clear and that is that Saul understood that something was wrong.

The question of Urim and Thummim being equal to lots arises fundamentally from this passage as it appears in the Septuagint, which reads (in English):

And Saul said unto Yahweh, God of Israel, "Why hast thou not answered thy servant this day? If this inquiry is

in me or in my son Jonathan, Oh Yahweh, God of Israel,
 give Urim; but if this iniquity is in thy people Israel,
 give Thummim."²⁹

Robertson, and others, favor this rendering and believe it gives credence to the Urim and Thummim as being utilized to indicate "yes" or "no" to specific questions.³⁰ The answers are really the result of a sacred lot-casting. The idea is that the Urim and Thummim were either thrown on the ground or pulled out of the breastplate pouch.

The use of the verbs **יִלְכֹּד** and **הִפִּיל** would be the first and only time that they are used in the context of inquiring of the Lord. They do appear in the contexts of lot-casting but never in those clear instances of Urim and Thummim being used. Further, in every other clear instance of Urim and Thummim the answers are more than that which is decided by lot-casting (see below). Lindblom, interestingly enough, rejects the Septuagint version and argues for the superiority of the MT, because he feels that Saul has reverted from priestly lot-casting (which would be Urim and Thummim) to civil lot-casting. He determines this on the basis of who was involved in the episode.

It was not particular individual who performed the lot-casting, it was a group; behind the procedure stood the leaders of the army, i.e. a group of laymen. The priest had no function at all.³¹

He therefore translates the controversial **הִזָּה תִּמְיָם** as "give a true decision."³² The same distinction can be used in another way. Saul did inquire through the Urim and Thummim, but when no reply was forthcoming he switched procedures to that of lot-casting, in order to isolate the guilty party whom he felt had prejudiced his inquiry of the Lord. There is no reason why he should not have prefaced this activity with a prayer, especially as he considered it to be such a serious and solemn affair. Thus he prayed for a true decision to be given by the lots. When **יָבֵב** is used as a neuter adjective it is equal to a substantive, meaning "what is complete, entirely in accord with truth and fact."³³

The fact that the lots fell on Jonathan who was the guilty party can be explained in terms of God's sovereignty (cf. Proverbs 16:33) and not necessarily in terms of God responding to the prayer of Saul as though this were the normal procedure in the land.

Admittedly this passage is a problem and any definitive conclusion must try to take it into account. But a final conclusion on the nature and use of the Urim and Thummim, at the same time, cannot rest solely on a textually debatable passage.³⁴

By Samuel

The nature of the answer given by the Lord in 1 Samuel 10:22 is more suitable to Urim and Thummim than the casting of lots. Here, too, it was the people who desired to know the whereabouts of their newly appointed king. The procedure followed until this point of not being able to locate Saul had been by lot (v. 20 וַיִּלְכְּדוּ: Each tribe, family, etc. was brought near, and one from among them was taken. Now the language changes and that introductory formula appears at the head of the people's question, יְהוָה וַיִּשְׁאַלְוּ עוֹד בְּיְהוָה but עוֹד inserted between those two words

If this is an adverb expressing a continuance of the previous action then there is a problem of having to make the process of lots be the same as inquiring of the Lord, e.g. NASB translation, "Therefore they inquired further of the Lord." But if the waw consecutive at the beginning, of v. 22 is pleonastic³⁵, then the resultant translation can avoid the problem: "Yet they inquired of the Lord." Frankly, there does not appear to have been any need to have made such an inquiry at all, for they could have sent for Saul and brought him forward.

Lindblom concurs that v. 22 cannot be lot-casting and concludes that a "cult-prophet" was speaking.³⁶

Answers to Sacred Lots?

Leon Wood reasons that no occasion clearly depicts a message of greater length than the mere affirmation.³⁷ Although Wood does not accept the idea of two marked stones representing a "yes" and "no" type reply, he, nonetheless, prefers no audible reply through the priest, but argues for a glowing of the stones if the reply was affirmative, otherwise the question would be rephrased until the affirmative glow occurred.³⁸ How long he went on trying different variations of that question before deciding that it was in vain just cannot be known. It would seem far more likely that the reply was either immediate or not at all. There is no occasion of a negative answer in the Scriptures.

The answers to all of the inquiries noted above are far more than that which would be expected by way of a yes/no indication or by way of a yes-only-and-rephrase-the-question-type procedure (see appendix). Wood's assessment appears to suggest that the words recorded in the text as being the actual words of the Lord are a reworked version of an affirmative glow! Consistently the passages record the words of the Lord, but always more than just "yes."

The identification of the Urim and Thummim with the sacred lots appears to have some possibility, but there are serious difficulties with this view due to the fact that the answers ascribed to the Urim and Thummim are not always equivalent to a "yes" or "no" answer .³⁹

Leon Wood also adds that the information given in 1 Sam.10:22 ("Behold, he is hiding himself by the baggage") could have been given "by affirmation to a few questions."⁴⁰ H. Wheeler Robinson adds an interesting little footnote to the effect that private communication with S. R. Driver showed that the latter felt that Urim was connected with an Accadian u'uru (to give an oracular response), but that he did not think of u'uru as ever referring to lot-casting.⁴¹

This writer finds it difficult to accept the author of 1 and 2 Samuel, and of Judges 8 introducing into the text a personal reply of Yahweh, in place of some impersonal mechanically indicated answer. The words of J. Barton Payne are most pertinent:

The judgment of the Urim would thus signify the personal revelation that God granted to the one who wore the high priestly breastplate. In such a way God would answer the official questions that were brought in before the cloud of His presence. Those who question the reality of such supernatural communications generally consider the Urim and Thummim to have been some kind of dice, a sort of sacred lottery. It is true, of course, that lots were known to Israel at this time as a means of making property distributions (Num. 26:55, 56). But dice-casting as a regular means of divine guidance smacks of magic in a way that is unworthy of God's word. 1 Samuel 28:6, moreover, lists Urim in a category that is between dreams and prophets. It suggests that urim is simply another form of God's personal revelation, namely, that which is mediated through priests (cf. Deut. 33:8, 10).⁴²

Its Cessation

There is no further mention of the Urim and Thummim after the time of David until the post-exilic references in Ezra and Nehemiah. Several reasons, which arise from an overview of Israel's history, can be put forward: (1) The increased activity on the part of the prophets, to whom the kings, on more than one occasion, resorted for advice on the affairs of the

nation. Indeed the prophets became the "immediate spokesmen of God, conveying the knowledge of His will to the king."⁴³ (2) The silence of the prophets in calling the leaders to make use of the Urim and Thummim, notwithstanding that they called all in Israel to obey the statutes and commandments of the Lord God, (3) the introduction of pagan idols into the Temple during the reign of Solomon, and the consequent corruption of the priesthood and/or rituals associated there with, (4) the God-given wisdom of Solomon to rule over the people, no doubt, obviated his need of directing revelation (cf. 1 Kings 3:5f), (5) the establishment of the kingdom, historically, by David brought an end to that form of revelation which guided the affairs of God's chosen nation through the chosen leaders at times of national crises.⁴⁴

Summary

(1) The Urim and Thummim, whatever their material likeness, were not images or teraphim, because these were prohibited by God's own Law. Wood's suggestion that these were precious stones because that would fit the jewel motif of the ornate breastplate is plausible.⁴⁵

(2) There is not sufficient evidence to support these being used as lots cast on the ground, or utilized in some other way by being withdrawn from the pouch formed by the doubled fold of the breastplate. It is acknowledged that I Samuel 14 is a problem passage in this regard.

(3) The consistent pattern is an inquiry of the Lord through the high priest who had the Urim and Thummim; understanding that ephod can be identified with the breastplate.

(4) The persons who asked of God were all divinely-appointed leaders of the theocratic nation. The judges period would be the exception in that the people acted collectively in the absence of an appointed leader. Yoma 7:5 in the Mishnah reads, "In these breastplate et al. were the Urim and the Thummim inquired of, and they were not inquired of for a common person, but only for the king, for the court and for one of whom the congregation had need."⁴⁶

Indeed there is no evidence of these being used on behalf of a private individual. The function of the priest as teachers of the Law, and the establishment of proper procedure for appeal to the Central Sanctuary in the event of a problem beyond the wisdom of the local priests, and the harsh penalties for refusal to obey the decision handed down at the Central Sanctuary, would definitely seem to support this idea (cf. Deut. 17:8-13).⁴⁷ Israel was to obey and meditate upon the Word of God in order to make her way successful and prosperous. The ordinary man did not need this type of directing revelation.

(5) The Urim and Thummim, being in the breastplate, which itself symbolically represented the right of the high priest to stand before God on

behalf of His people, was also symbolical. It represented the right of this same priest to request guidance for the leader, who could not approach God directly but had to come via the God-ordained religious structure of the nation. After Moses the leadership role functioned at a different level, i.e. they were no longer the Lawgiver, but had to function within the context of that Law, and could never be totally independent from it.

Whatever was done with the objects would have been symbolic and complimentary to the whole process of inquiry. The problem of the function of the objects, therefore, remains unsolved until further archaeological data are forthcoming.⁴⁸

(6) The content of revelation, the mode of which cannot be explained, was precise and pointed, aimed at answering an immediate situation. "In no sense did it embody principles of permanent validity applicable to later situations or capable of reinterpretation."⁴⁹ Thus it was a directing revelation.

(7) The replies were more than a simple "yes" and were, so far as can be ascertained, the actual word of God given in reply. If "at His command" in Exodus 28:30 does refer to Yahweh, then somehow the priest passed on the direct command of God, receiving it in the same way as did the prophets.

APPENDIX

Inquiries of the Lord

Ref.	<u>Question</u>	<u>Reply</u>
Judg. 1: 1-2	Who shall go up first for us against the Canaanites to fight against them?	Judah shall go up behold I have given the land into his hand.
Judg. 20: 18	Who shall go up first for us to battle against the sons of Benjamin?	Judah shall go up first.
1 Sam. 10:22	Has the man come yet? himself in the baggage.	Behold, he is hiding
1 Sam. 23:2	Shall I go up and attack the Philistines?	Go, and attack the Philistines, and deliver Keilah.
1 Sam. 23:4	Shall I go up and attack the Philistines?	Arise, go down to Keilah for will

(Repeated by David)

give the Philistines
into your hand.

1 Sam. 23:10, 11	O Lord God of Israel, thy servant has heard for certain that Saul is seeking to come to Keilah to destroy the city on my account. Will the men of Keilah surrender me into his hand? Will Saul come down just as thy servant has heard?	He will come down.
1 Sam. 23:12	Will the men of Keilah surrender me and my men into the hand of Saul?	They will surrender to you.
1 Sam.	Shall I pursue this hand? Shall I overtake them?	Pursue, for you shall surely rescue them all.
2 Sam. 2:1	Shall I go up to one of the cities of Judah? Where shall I go up?	Go up. To Hebron.
2 Sam. 5:19	Shall I go up against the Philistines? Wilt thou give them into my hand?	Go up, for I will certainly give the Philistines into your hand.
2 Sam. (Inquiry not stated) 5:23	Troubled at the presence of the Philistines in the valley of Rephaim.	You shall not go directly up; circle around behind them in front of the balsam trees. And it shall be, when you hear the sound of marching in the balsam trees, then you shall act promptly, for then the

Lord will have gone
out before you to
strike the army of
the Philistines.

ENDNOTES

¹ Nathan Isaacs, "Urim and Thummim," In the International Standard Bible Encyclopedia ed. by James Orr et.al. (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1939), p. 3041.

² Leon Wood, "Urim and Thummim," Theolog. (Winter, 1964), p. 25. cf. also Gustave Friednch Oehler, Theology of The Old Testament, (Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House, n.d.), p. 218, where he states that the former term refers to the divine illumination and the latter term to the unimpeachableness of the divine decision. cf. "Urim and Thummim," In Cyclopedia of Biblical. Theological, and Ecclesiastical Literature, Vol. X, ed. by John McClintock and James Strong (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1970, reprint), p. 676 for the various views and translations. Eichrodt, Theology of the O.T., p. 113 fn. states that "light and truth" is the easiest interpretation. et.al.

³ Vulgate reads doctrina et veritas (teaching and truth), and the LXX δήλωσις καὶ ἀλήθεια (declaration/revelation and truth). But the LXX is not consistent using δήλων Num. 27:21; Deut. 33:8; and 1 Sam. 28:6; and φωτίζουσιν in Ezra 2:63; Neh. 7:65, and τελείους for Thummim in Ezra. Similarly the Vulgate in this latter reference uses perfectus.

⁴ Julius Wellhausen, Prolegomena to the History of Ancient Israel (New York: The World Publishing Company, 1965), p. 394; and Rowley, Faith of Israel, p. 291; and Wood, "Urim and Thummim," p. 26 fn. Isaacs, "Urim and Thummim," p. 3041, has "lights" and "darkness" inasmuch as there is a host of Hebrew stems based on the root tm all indicating concealing, closing up, and even darkness.

⁵ Roland de Vaux, Ancient Israel, Vol. 2, (New York: McGraw-Hill Book Company, 1965), p.352.

⁶ Philip J. Hyatt, "Commentary on Exodus," In the New Century Bible, ed. by Ronald E. Clements and Matthew Black (hereinafter referred to as "Exodus"), (London: Oliphants, 1971), p. 283. The fertile imagination of men has produced a score of views on what the Urim and Thummim actually were. Edward Robertson, "The Urim and Thummim: What were they?" Vetus Testamentum, 14: 1 (January, 1964), p. 70 lists the following nine views: (1) a necklace of gems (2) three antique stones which represented three possible answers, affirmative, negative, and neutral (3) polished and unpolished diamonds inscribed with the name of the Lord which the high priest could cast upon the table thereby deducing God's answer based on their final positions (4) revelation and truth, as interpreted by the Septuagint (5) explanation and decision (6) light and right (7) light and salvation (8) taking tmm as meaning "to be without fault" and 'rr "to curse," as opposites

and as the roots of Urim and Thummim. These then would indicate What God would or would not permit (9) a message conveyed by inspiration to the high priest who was wearing the breastplate and the ephod. Cf. also the Bible dictionaries which all give some of the views put forward by the scholars.

⁷ The prepositions לְאֵל and לְעַל are used several times in w. 22-30. לְעַל is used 12 times, 11 times locatively, and once combined with the preposition מִן (v. 28). לְאֵל is used only 5 times, 3 times locatively when it explains where the two gold rings were to be fastened on the breastplate, and twice terminatively meaning "unto" or "into." See Ronald J. Williams, Hebrew Syntax: An Outline, (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1976), p. 51-52, and comments made by Wood, "Urim and Thummim," p. 26. J. Barton Payne, The Theology of the Older Testament, (Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House, 1962), p. 48. His suggestion that these can be identified with the twelve stones of the breastplate cannot be substantiated. The twelve stones are specifically said to be "set in gold filigree" or "interwoven with gold in their settings" -NASB margin. A most difficult thing to do while Aaron was wearing the breastplate.

^{7a} Friedrich Buchsel and Hertrich Volkmar, "מִשְׁפָּט" in the Theological Dictionary of the New Testament. Vol. III (hereinafter referred to as TDNT), ed. by Gerhard Kittel, trans. by Geoffrey W. Bromiley (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1976), p. 924.

⁸ Wood, "Urim and Thummim," p. 26.

⁹ Philip F. Taylor, "A Study of the Urim and Thummim," Unpublished post-graduate seminar paper, O.T. History, Grace Theological Seminary, 1971, p. 6. cf. also "Urim and Thummim" in McClintock/Strong Cyclopedia, p. 676 who state that the counsel was to determine the movements of the host of Israel.

¹⁰ cf. Wood, "Urim and Thummim," p. 27.

¹¹ John J. Davis, The Birth of a Kingdom, (Winona Lake: BMH Books, 1970), p. 93.

¹² Ibid., p. 92.

¹³ C. F. Keil, and F. Delitzsch, "Ezra," In Commentary on the Old Testament in Ten Volumes, Vol 3, (hereinafter referred to as "Ezra") trans. by Sophia Taylor, (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1976, reprint), p. 43. They state that the prohibition to not eat of the most holy things is a reference to their exclusion from specific priestly acts, e.g. approaching the altar of burnt offering, but not denying them a general inclusion among the priestly order, or abolishing a claim to the priestly revenues, so far as those were not connected with priestly functions.

¹⁴ This word transliterates from the Hebrew אֶמֶר which is mentioned numerous times in the O. T. but with different meanings to be determined by the context. (1) linen priestly garment (2) solid object as image of deity (3) object used to consult Yahweh. Hyatt, "Exodus," p. 280. cf. also Helmer Ringgren, Israelite Religion, (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1966), p. 205 who adds the special vestment of the high priest containing the Urim and Thummim, and has the making of an inquiry separate from this; as quoted by Taylor, "A Study of the Urim and Thummim," p. 13.

¹⁵ Leon Wood, A Survey of Israel's History, (Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House, 1976), p. 255.

¹⁶ Wood, "Urim and Thummim," p. 31 concurs by stating "But David loved God and held His law in high esteem. Accordingly, he would have been interested in knowing God's decision always, and so would have sought counsel as we have seen." cf. E. F. de Ward, "Superstition and Judgment: Archaic Methods of Finding a Verdict," Zeitschrift Fur Die Alttestamentliche Wissenschaft, 89: 1 (1977), 1-19, who separates between the ephod and the breastplate and associates it with divination, citing 1 Sam. 14:3-19 as proof (?). Yehezkel Kaufmann, The Religion of Israel, trans. and abridged by Moshe Greenberg (New York: Schocken Books, 1974), p. 88, who distinguishes between these as well and makes the ephod a further legitimate means of obtaining oracles. The identification is made by the following: John J. Davis The Birth of a Kingdom, p. 82; Moshe Greenberg, "Urim and Thummim," In the Encyclopedia Judaica, Vol 16 (Jerusalem: The MacMillan Company, 1971), p. 8; G. L. Archer, "Ephod," in the Zondervan Pictorial Encyclopedia of the Bible, Vol 2, ed. by Merrill C. Tenney, et.al. (Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House. 1975), p. 332, et.al.

¹⁷ The LXX expands 23:6 to overcome an apparent contradiction in the chapter και αὐτὸς Δαυίδ "and he went down with David;" Keil and Delitzsch, "Samuel," in Commentary on the Old Testament In Ten Volumes, Vol. 2 trans. by James Martin (William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1976, reprint), p. 229, have a pertinent comment: "The words 'to David at Keilah' are not to be understood as signifying that Abiathar did not come to David till he was in Kellah but that when he fled after David (ch. xxi 20) he met with him as he was already preparing for the march to Keilah, and immediately proceeded with him thither."

¹⁸ I. Mendelsohn, "Urim and Thummim," in The Interpreter's Dictionary of the Bible, Vol. 4, ed. by George Arthur Buttrick, et.al. (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1962), p. 740 the use of שאל ביהוה is a technical term introducing the inquiry. Keil and Delitzsch, "Samuel," p. 260, שאל ביהוה the term usually employed to signify inquiring the will and counsel of God through the Urim and Thummim of the high priest.

¹⁹ Schroeder, John C., George B. Caird, and Ganse Little, "The First and Second Books of Samuel," In The Interpreter's Bible, Vol. 4, (hereinafter referred to as "Samuel,"), ed. by George Arthur Buttrick, et.al. (Nashville: Abingdon-Cokesbury Press, 1953), p. 1002-1003.

²⁰ Henry Smith, A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Books of Samuel, (Hereinafter referred to as Samuel, ICC) in the International Critical Commentary. New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1909), p. 208.

²¹ v. 7 indicates that the elders of Israel were initially suspicious. The plausible explanations given by the Gibeonites in w. 9-13 succeeded in calming their fears and in deceiving them. The elders did know that peace could be made with "far off nations, so that it seemed to be all "above board" and honest.

²² Keil and Delitzsch, "Samuel," pp. 452-453, wherein they state, "The congregation now discovered, from this repeated defeat, that the Lord had withdrawn His grace, and was punishing them. Their sin, however, did not consist in the fact that they had begun the war itself --for the law in Deut. xxii. 22, to which they themselves had referred in v. 13, really required this, --but rather in the state of mind with which they had entered upon the war, their strong self-consciousness, and great confidence in their own might and power. They had indeed inquired of God (elohim) who should open the conflict; but they had neglected to humble themselves before Jehovah the covenant God, in the consciousness not only for their own weakness and sinfulness, but also of grief at the moral corruption of their brother-tribe."

²³ cf. Wood, "Urim and Thummim," p. 28.

²⁴ Mendelsohn, "Urim and Thummim," p. 740, et al.

²⁵ The Ark was at Kiriath-jearim and remained there for some twenty years. Does this mean that it was never moved temporarily to the battlefield? However the moving of the Ark was of such an important event that if Saul had done this, as e.g. Eli's sons In 1 Sam. 4-5, then the record would no doubt have included it.

²⁶ cf. Keil and Delitzsch , "Samuel," p. 141, "Leave off now."

²⁷ Wood, "Urim and Thummim," p. 27 errs by classifying this as a "no" answer. There is not a record of a "no" answer in the Bible. Either details are given positively or nothing happens at all. Mendelsohn, "Urim and Thummim," states that no answer is tantamount to a "no" answer!?

²⁸ See p. 5 above.

²⁹ D. R. Ap-Thomas, A Primer of Old Testament Text Criticism. (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1966), p. 49.

³⁰ Robertson, "Urim and Thummim: What were they?" p. 68; Kaufmann, The Religion of Israel, p. 92; de Ward, Hebrew Text and the Topography of the Books of Samuel, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1966), p. 117;

Theodorus C. Vriezen, An Outline of Old Testament Theology (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1958), p. 269; Ap-Thomas, Primer of O.T. Text Criticism, p. 49, who cites this as an example of homioteluton, the scribe's eye having passed from the first Israel to the third Israel in the expanded text of the LXX Vorlage, and thus writing down immediately after the first Israel, "give thummim."

³¹ Lindblom, "Lot-casting in the O.T." p. 177.

³² Ibid.

³³ Francis Brown, S. R. Driver, and Charles A. Briggs, A Hebrew and English Lexicon of the Old Testament, (herein-after referred to as BDB), (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1975), p. 1071.

³⁴ Arguments are found for and against the LXX text. Refer to Lindblom, "Lot-casting in the O.T." pp. 172-178; A. Toeg, "A Textual Note on 1 Samuel XIV 41,11 Vetus Testamentum, 19:4 (October, 1969), 493-498, who concludes his study with the words "this sheds some light on one of the techniques of divination in ancient Israel."

³⁵ Williams, Hebrew Syntax, p. 71.

³⁶ Lindblom, "Lot-casting in the O.T." p. 165.

³⁷ Wood, "Urim and Thummim." p. 27

³⁸ Ibid.; de Ward, "Superstition and judgment," p. 2 also assumes that a "yes"/"no" applicable.

³⁹ Davis, The Birth of a Kingdom, p. 93.

⁴⁰ Wood, "Urim and Thummim," p. 28.

⁴¹ H. Wheeler Robinson, Inspiration and Revelation in the Old Testament (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1946), p. 202 fn.

⁴² J. Barton Payne, The Theology of the Older Testament, p. 48.

⁴³ Alva J. McClain, The Greatness of the Kingdom (Winona Lake: BMH Books, 1976), p. 115.

⁴⁴ Ibid., who points out that after Solomon, kings were no longer directly chosen by God, but take the throne either by inheritance or force. Cf. also P.J. Budd, "Priestly Instruction in Pre-Exilic Israel, Vetus Testamentum, 23:1 (January, 1973), p. 3--"It seems therefore that this particular aspect of priestly ministry disappeared with the establishment of the monarchy... "

⁴⁵ Wood, "Urim and Thummim," p. 26.

⁴⁶ Herbert Danby, trans. The Mishnah (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1933), p. 171.

⁴⁷ Peter C. Craigie, "The Book of Deuteronomy," in the New International Commentary on the Old Testament, ed. by R. K. Harrison (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1976), p. 251.

⁴⁸ John J. Davis, Moses and the Gods of Egypt (Winona Lake: BMH Books, 1973), p. 277.

⁴⁹ Budd, "Priestly Instruction in Pre-exilic Israel," p. 3.

