

The Gospel in Stone



Jesus' Work Symbolized in the High Priest's Breastplate

And thou shalt make the breastplate of judgment with cunning work; after the work of the ephod thou shalt make it; of gold, of blue, and of purple, and of scarlet, and of fine twined linen, shalt thou make it. Foursquare it shall be being doubled; a span shall be the length thereof, and a span shall be the breadth thereof. And thou shalt set in it settings of stones, even four rows of stones: the first row shall be a sardius, a topaz, and a carbuncle: this shall be the first row. And the second row shall be an emerald, a sapphire, and a diamond. And the third row a ligure, an agate, and an amethyst. And the fourth row a beryl, and an onyx, and a jasper: they shall be set in gold in their inclosings. And the stones shall be with the names of the children of Israel, twelve, according to their names, like the engravings of a signet; every one with his name shall they be according to the twelve tribes. Exodus 28:15-21

Carbuncle	Topaz	Sardius
Diamond	Sapphire	Emerald
Amethyst	Agate	Ligure
Jasper	Onyx	Beryl

Lesson Author's Note: In our search for information on these stones, we found a wide variety of opinions among commentators regarding their actual types and colors. We chose to focus on the meanings of the original Hebrew words in understanding the symbolism relating to Jesus Christ, our Heavenly High Priest.

Sardius

The name Sardius comes from the Hebrew word *'ôdem*, which means “redness,” referring to a red gem such as ruby or garnet. The word *'ôdem* is related to the Hebrew *'âdâm* which means “man,” “a human being” and also the name “Adam.”

Who is the second Adam?

1 Corinthians 15:45-47

Topaz

Topaz is translated from the Hebrew word *piṭdâh* which refers to an unknown precious stone. The Greek Old Testament (the Septuagint) renders it *topazion*. Its symbolism is uncertain.

Carbuncle

The Hebrew word *bârêqath*, referring to a flashy but unknown gem, is translated into English as Carbuncle. A related Hebrew word, *bârâq*, means “a flashing sword.”

What did Jesus have coming from His mouth when John saw Him in a vision?
Revelation 1:16

Emerald

The Hebrew word *nôphek*, which refers to a glistening, shining gem is rendered in English as Emerald.

What did John see around God's throne?
Revelation 4:2, 3

The rainbow is a symbol of God's promise in His covenant of mercy and grace made to the world in Genesis 9:12-17. Jesus came to renew and confirm God's covenant with humanity.

Sapphire

Sapphire is translated from the Hebrew word *sappîyr*. Sapphire is typically blue. Jewish tradition says that God engraved the original Ten Commandments on Sapphire.

What did God want His people to wear on the borders of their garments?
Numbers 15:38-40

What did Moses and the other leaders see under God's feet?
Exodus 24:9, 10

What did God's throne appear to be made of when Ezekiel saw it in vision?
Ezekiel 1:26; 10:1

God's Law, represented by the color blue as in sapphire, is the foundation of His government. Jesus perfectly lived the Law, showing us that we can, through His power, also live the Law of righteousness.

Diamond

The Hebrew word *yahălôm*, which is translated as diamond, refers to a very hard stone in the sense that it can break or “overcome” other things.

Jesus gives us assurance that we can have peace and joy even when there is trouble all around us in the world. Why?

“*In the world ye shall have tribulation: but be of good cheer; I _____ the world.*”
John 16:33

In a vision, John saw Jesus riding on a white horse. What was Jesus doing?

... *he went forth* _____, *and to conquer.* Revelation 6:2

What does Jesus promise to those who overcome sin in their lives?

Revelation 3:21

Ligure

Ligure is translated from the Hebrew word *leshem* and refers to an unknown gem. One Bible Encyclopedia describes it as “magnetic amber stone.”

What did Jesus say He would do if He was lifted up on the cross?

John 12:32

What did He promise to those who would come to Him?

Matthew 11:28

Agate

The Hebrew word *shêbû*, which is translated as Agate, refers to a gem that sparkles with flashes or streamers like flames. *Shêbû* is akin to another Hebrew word, *shâbâh*, which gives the idea of leading away captives.

When Jesus sent the Holy Spirit to His disciples, what did they see?

Acts 2:1-4

Who has captured us?

2 Timothy 2:26

Jesus said He was anointed to bring help to those who had difficulties. What would He do for captives?

Luke 4:18

Some are in bondage to fear. What is one of the fears that Jesus is able to deliver us from?

Hebrews 2:14, 15

Amethyst

Amethyst is translated from the Hebrew word *'achlâmâh* which is a gem stone associated with dreams or visions.

Who wrote about Jesus as the coming Messiah?

Luke 24:27; Acts 10:43

Jesus fulfilled and is fulfilling all that the prophets had seen in vision about the coming Messiah.

(Matthew 5:17)

Beryl

The Hebrew word *tarshîysh* is translated into English as Beryl. Other Hebrew words of similar origin have to do with leadership and authority. When Ezekiel had his visions of the heavenly wheels and their intricate interactions in perfect coordination with other heavenly beings (Ezekiel 1 & 10), he described them as looking like Beryl. They were all doing God's will together. Daniel saw a vision of Jesus looking like Beryl (Daniel 10). God's will and His control over the affairs of this world result in order and harmony, represented by this stone.

How did Jesus describe how He ordered His life?

“ . . . I do _____ of myself; but as my _____ hath taught me, I speak these things. . . . for I do always those things that _____.” John 8:28, 29

Where does Jesus have authority?

Matthew 28:18

Onyx

The Hebrew word *shôham*, from which Onyx is translated, refers to whitening.

What does God offer to do about our sins?

Isaiah 1:18

Jesus compares His church to a beautiful bride. What does she wear at the wedding?

. . . to her was granted that she should be arrayed in fine linen, _____ and _____; for the fine linen is the _____ of saints. Revelation 19:7, 8

Jesus died so we could be covered with a clean, white robe of righteousness. (Revelation 7:14) which is represented by this onyx stone.

Jasper

The Hebrew word *yâshphêh* refers to a polished gem and is translated into English as Jasper because of the resemblance of the name. In Revelation the splendor and glory of God and of His capital city are compared to Jasper (Revelation 4:3; 21:10, 11). Jesus revealed God's glory in a way that humanity could comprehend.

When John saw God in His throne room in Heaven, what did He look like?

Revelation 4:2, 3

God's great city, the New Jerusalem, shines with His glory. (Revelation 21:10, 11) What are its walls made of?

Revelation 21:18

This stone represents God's glory. When Moses asked to see God's glory (Exodus 33:18), what did God show Him?

And he said, I will make all my _____ pass before thee, and I will proclaim the name of the LORD before thee; and will be _____ to whom I will be gracious, and will _____ on whom I will shew mercy. Exodus 33:19

God's most significant glory is His gracious character which is what He revealed to Moses. Jesus wonderfully showed God's glory by demonstrating His goodness, grace, and mercy.

Urim and Thummim

And Aaron shall bear the names of the children of Israel in the breastplate of judgment upon his heart, when he goeth in unto the holy place, for a memorial before the LORD continually. 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. Exodus 28:29, 30

The Urim and Thummim were two stones of unknown variety also set in the Breastplate.

What was the purpose of the Urim and Thummim stones?

And he shall stand before Eleazar the priest, who shall _____ for him after the judgment of Urim before the LORD: . . . Numbers 27:21

And when Saul _____ of the LORD, the LORD _____ him not, neither by dreams, nor by Urim, nor by prophets. 1 Samuel 28:6

The Urim and Thummim were God's method of answering questions “Yes” or “No.”

Urim is a plural form of the Hebrew word for “light” (Genesis 1:3). It seems to be referring to the dawn, the first light, the strengthening light.

What are some descriptive titles for Jesus?
John 8:12

Revelation 22:16

Thummim is a plural form of the Hebrew word for “integrity” (Psalm 25:21), or “perfect” (Psalm 101:2) and seems to be referring to completeness and fullness of integrity, perfection.

In what way does God want us to be like Him?
Matthew 5:48

What has been given by God to help us toward this goal?
2 Timothy 3:16, 17

What other way does God accomplish this work?

Make you _____ in every good work to do his will, working in you that which is wellpleasing in his sight, through _____; . . . Hebrews 13:21

Through scripture, and Jesus' example and His power, we can be complete and perfect in God's sight.