

The Precious Gems of the Breastplate (3)

In the second row of the breastplate of the high priest, there was an emerald, a sapphire and a diamond. The emerald, green in colour, reminds us of the Spring time with its luscious new growth springing to life. This is a picture of the new birth through faith and trust in the Lord Jesus Christ. The apostle Paul wrote, *“Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new”* (2nd Cor. 5:17).

Many associate the emerald stone with the tribe of Juda. It is interesting to note in that connection, that the writer of the epistle to the Hebrews wrote concerning the unchangeable priesthood of the Lord Jesus, *“it is evident that our Lord sprang out of Juda”* (Heb. 7:14).

In the book of the Revelation, John described a scene in which He saw a throne set in heaven. He described the person sitting on the throne, as having the appearance of a jasper and a sardine stone. Then John said, *“there was a rainbow round about the throne, in sight like unto an emerald”* (Rev. 4:2-3).

The prophet Ezekiel also described seeing a throne, *“like the appearance of a rainbow in a cloud on a rainy day, so was the appearance of the brightness all around it. This was the appearance of the likeness of the glory of the Lord”* (Ezek. 1:28).

The rainbow is the token that God gave to Noah following the flood. It was a promise that God would never again destroy all flesh with the waters of a flood. God said that when He looked and saw the bow in the cloud, that He would remember His covenant, or His promise (Gen. 9:11-17).

Joshua reminded the people of Israel of the faithfulness of God in keeping His promises, *“not one thing has failed of all the good things which the Lord your God spoke concerning you. All have come to pass for you; not one word of them has failed”* (Josh 23:14). At the dedication of the temple in Jerusalem, King Solomon also acknowledged the goodness and grace of God in fulfilling His Word, when he said, *“there hath not failed one word of all his good promise, which he promised”* (1st Kings 8:56).

We can rely on the faithfulness of God concerning all of His promises. Paul wrote of the Lord Jesus, *“For all the promises of God in him are yea, and in him Amen, unto the glory of God by (through) us”* (2nd Cor. 1:20).

The Sapphire, with its blue, celestial hues, surpassed only by the diamond in beauty and perfection, reminds us of the heavenly character of our Lord Jesus. Throughout the Gospel of John He reminded the people that He came down from heaven (Jn. 6:38, 51). He said to Nicodemus, *“And no man hath ascended up to heaven, but he that came down from heaven, even the Son of man which is in heaven”* (Jn. 3:13). The apostle John declared, *“No man hath seen God at any time, the only begotten Son, which is in the bosom of the Father; he hath declared him”* (Jn. 1:18).

His disciples recognized Him as the Son of God (Matt. 14:33, 16:16; Jn. 1:49). Even the demons acknowledged Him as the Son of God (Mk. 3:11; Luke 4:41). The Roman centurion and others who watched as He was being crucified, confessed, *“truly this was the Son of God”* (Matt. 27:54).

It is interesting to trace the colour blue through the Scriptures. Found only in the Old Testament, it features prominently in the tabernacle, God’s dwelling place on earth. We might remember that Paul wrote of the Lord Jesus, *“in him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily”* (Col. 2:9).

Blue was seen in the curtains, the gate, the door and the vail of the tabernacle. The ephod of the high priest was made of blue. The breastplate was fastened to the ephod with a lace of blue. All of these remind us of the heavenly glories of the Son of God.

The Sapphire also speaks of sanctification. The word, “*sanctification*”, means “*holy*”. It indicates that which is set apart by God for His purposes and glory, and as such, is the desire of God for every believer. Paul tells us this in his first letter to the Thessalonians, “*for this is the will of God, even your sanctification*” (1st Thess. 4:3).

In fact, Paul wrote in the book of Ephesians, that it is the reason why the Lord Jesus gave Himself for us, “*Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it; That he might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word*” (Eph. 5:25-26).

The greatest example we have of sanctification is in the person of the Lord Jesus who was wholly set apart for God. The Lord Jesus reminded the people of His day, that He had been sanctified by the Father and sent into the world (Jn. 10:36). The writer of the epistle to the Hebrews said of Him, “*who is holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners*” (Heb. 7:26).

The diamond, a clear brilliant stone, suggests many attributes to us that picture the Lord Jesus Christ. A symbol of purity and perfection, it brings before us the absolute purity of the Lord Jesus. We often think of those Scriptures that speak of His sinlessness. Paul wrote that He knew no sin (2nd Cor. 5:21). Peter says that He did no sin (1st Pet 2:22). John confidently affirmed, “*in him is no sin*” (1st Jn. 3:5).

Also known for its ability to reflect light, it pictures for us the Lord Jesus, who is the brightness of God’s glory and the express image of His person (Heb. 1:3). He was the true Light, which lighteth every man that cometh into the world (Jn. 1:9). The light of the knowledge of the glory of God, is seen in the face of Jesus Christ (2nd Cor. 4:6).

But, perhaps the most well-known qualities of the diamond are its strength and endurance. Following His triumphant resurrection out from amongst the dead and prior to His ascension into heaven, the Lord Jesus said, “*All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth*” (Matt. 28:18).

In the book of Revelation, John described the scene where every creature in the entire universe praises God and the Lamb, “*And every creature which is in heaven, and on the earth, and under the earth, and such as are in the sea, and all that are in them, heard I saying, Blessing, and honour, and glory, and power, be unto him that sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb for ever and ever*”. (Rev. 5:12).

The psalmist described the eternal, enduring nature of the Lord Jesus, “*Of old hast thou laid the foundation of the earth: and the heavens are the work of thy hands. They shall perish, but thou shalt endure: yea, all of them shall wax old like a garment; as a vesture shalt thou change them, and they shall be changed: But thou art the same, and thy years shall have no end*” (Ps. 102:25-27).

*Midst myriad hosts amassing,
Their sovereign thus to own,
In majesty surpassing,
The Lamb sits on the throne.*

*Their happy anthem swelling,
In praise unto our God,
The blessed chorus telling,
The virtues of His blood.*

Redeemed from every nation,

*Their homage now they bring,
For blessings of salvation,
To Christ, their Lord and King*

*Bright gems of regal splendour,
Adorn His holy brow;
Let all creation render
True worship to Him now*

Bernie Payne