

## Exodus 28:1-43 and 39:1-31 (Part II)

### Introduction

- Exodus 25:8 — [The Lord said to Moses,] let [the people] make me a sanctuary [a sacred space], that I may dwell in their midst.

Last week, we saw **who** can go into Yahweh's royal tent (Aaron, and any high priest descended from him) and also **how** he must enter Yahweh's tent if he would enter it safely (fully and completely clothed in every layer of the priestly garments). But the question, now, is, "Where does this leave the rest of the people?" There's only *one* set of priestly garments, and only one who's allowed to wear them. So once again, aside from the single high priest, the single son of Aaron, where does this leave *every other man, woman, and child* in *all* the nation of Israel?" Where would that have left *you and me*? This morning, we're coming back to Exodus twenty-eight to pick up the verses that we skipped last week – the verses that so wonderfully answer this question.

Remember the various layers of the high priest's garments (ephod and breastpiece, robe, tunic, undergarment; golden plate, turban). Remember the increasing levels of glory and of beauty the further away you went from Aaron's "naked flesh," and so also the more visible the garment became. So the articles of clothing with the greatest glory and beauty were the ephod and the breastpiece. This explains why it's the ephod and the breastpiece (along with the golden plate on the forehead) that carry the greatest weight of meaning and symbolism – more than any other article of the high priest's clothing. So, after describing the ephod—and, specifically, the shoulder pieces that joined the two parts of the ephod together—we read in verses 9-13:

**I. Exodus 28:9-13** — You shall take two onyx stones, and engrave on them the names of the sons of Israel, six of their names on the one stone, and the names of the remaining six on the other stone, in the order of their birth. As a jeweler engraves signets, so shall you engrave the two stones with the names of the sons of Israel. You shall enclose them in settings of gold filigree. And you shall set the two stones on the shoulder pieces of the ephod, **as stones of remembrance for the sons of Israel. And Aaron shall bear their names before the LORD on his two shoulders for remembrance.** You shall make settings of gold filigree, and two chains of pure gold, twisted like cords; and you shall attach the corded chains to the settings.

[See Illustration on page 11]

So, two stones each engraved with six names of the sons of Israel in the specific order of their birth. The point is that what we have represented here is **particularly** or **specifically** the **entire** family of Israel – **all** the twelve tribes according to their order of birth.

And where are all of these twelve tribes to be represented? The Lord is very explicit: "On [Aaron's] two shoulders." The shoulders are perfectly designed for *carrying* and *bearing* burdens (think of backpacks, and purses, and carrying awkward 50 lb. bags of seed or grain). But, in addition to being perfectly suited for carrying burdens, the shoulders are also a very prominent and noticeable place on the body. Today, if we say that someone has a chip on his shoulder, the

point is that that chip is very obvious and blatant, and it's probably meant to be so. So, on the one hand, Aaron "bears" their names on his shoulders as the perfect place to carry a burden, but on the other hand, the point is to bear their names prominently and conspicuously "before the Lord" for His "remembrance." The Hebrew word for "bear" (which is certainly appropriate to the shoulders; cf. Isa. 9:6; Ezek. 12:6-7; Ps. 81:6) can also be translated "**lift up**" (cf. Ps. 25:1-2; 28:2) And so we could say that by "bearing" the names of all Israel on his shoulders Aaron is "lifting them up" before the Lord for His remembrance.

But what is this "remembering"? The point isn't just God remembering an ethnic people or that this ethnic people exists; the point is God remembering the people *particularly with whom He is in covenant*, and remembering to show them His undeserved **covenant** love and faithfulness. (cf. Gen. 9:15-16; Lev. 26:40-42; Jer. 14:20-21; Childs) So when Aaron enters Yahweh's royal tent with all the names of God's covenant people on his shoulders, it's as though he's lifting up their names before the Lord in one continual prayer of **intercession** – a prayer of intercession particularly and specifically for Yahweh's covenant people (*all of the twelve tribes of Israel*). As one commentator puts it: "'Lord, **remember Reuben, remember Levi, remember Judah**, and so forth. **They are your covenant people**.'" (Hamilton) But these realities assume even more depth and beauty than we've yet considered. Let's go on, now, to read about the breastpiece that was fastened to the ephod:

**II. Exodus 28:17–21, 29** — You shall set in [the breastpiece of judgment] four rows of stones. A row of sardius, topaz, and carbuncle shall be the first row; and the second row an emerald, a sapphire, and a diamond; and the third row a jacinth, an agate, and an amethyst; and the fourth row a beryl, an onyx, and a jasper. They shall be set in gold filigree. There shall be twelve stones with their names according to the names of the sons of Israel. They shall be like signets, each engraved with its name, for the twelve tribes... **So Aaron shall bear [lift up] the names of the sons of Israel in the breastpiece of judgment on his heart, when he goes into the Holy Place, to bring them to regular remembrance before the LORD.**

[See Illustration on page 11]

So this time, we have twelve individual stones, each engraved with one of the twelve names of the sons of Israel. Once again, we see the emphasis on **all** Israel, and **specifically** and **particularly**, the *twelve tribes* of Israel. Once again, we also see the emphasis on God *remembering His covenant with His covenant people*. This is the people that the high priest represents before the Lord "when he goes into the Holy Place."

But notice, this time, that Aaron is to "bear" (or "lift up") the names of the sons of Israel "on his **heart**." If the shoulders were a prominent and highly visible location, so also is the chest. But it's the *heart* that's mentioned explicitly.<sup>1</sup> In the Bible, the "heart" represents a person's innermost

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<sup>1</sup> A more basic word for "chest" might have been "*hadeh*" (cf. Dan. 2:32). The Hebrew word translated "heart" ("*leb*") does not refer to the physical organ that we call the "heart." On *rare* occasion, "*leb*" connotes something *physical*, but only in so far as this "something physical" is connected with the very life and breath of a person (cf. 2 Sam. 18:14; Ps. 45:6). In the vast majority of its numerous appearances, "*leb*" refers to the innermost "self" and "being" of a person.

being – it’s the seat of all his choices and all his affections. It’s who he is. So we read in Deuteronomy:

- Deuteronomy 6:5–6 (cf. Prov. 3:3; 6:21; Jer. 17:1) — You shall love the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your might. And these words that I command you today shall be on your heart.

So what does it mean when the high priest “bears” (or “lifts up”) the names of the sons of Israel **on his heart**? Now we have to assume that this is more than just a simple “representation” (in the same sense that someone in the House of Representatives is now representing us). It’s way more than that! The high priest doesn’t just represent Israel. There’s a very real sense in which the entire people of Israel is actually united with the high priest in his person so that whatever he does, it’s **as if** all the people of Israel were actually there themselves doing the same thing **in and through him**.<sup>2</sup> (cf. Stuart) One commentator puts it this way: “Aaron in Yahweh’s Presence was as Israel in Yahweh’s Presence.” (Durham) Can you see how this is more than just a simple “representation”? This is what explains how everything that the high priest does is guaranteed to be effective for the people – the people that he not only represents, but that he even corporately embodies in his person. There wasn’t any tribe that had to wonder if what the high priest did would truly be **effective** for them and **applied** to them because **all** that the high priest did, He did **in their name**, **as** their **representative**, **as** the one who **bore them even on his heart** so that they were corporately united with him, **participating** in all the benefits of all that he did in Yahweh’s royal tent.

Are you seeing what a lovely, awesome thing was the office of the high priest, and his ministry on behalf of the people? How grateful would *we* have been for this high priest? But there’s still more for us to grasp and understand. After the shoulders, and the heart, there’s one more location of special prominence on the body of the high priest, and that’s his forehead. We read in verse thirty-eight:

**IV. Exodus 28:38** — [The plate of pure gold with the engraving ‘Holy to the LORD’] shall be on Aaron’s forehead, and Aaron shall remove<sup>3</sup> any guilt from the holy things that the people of Israel consecrate as their holy gifts. It shall regularly be on his forehead, that they may be accepted before the LORD.

**[See Illustration on page 11]**

So the high priest is to wear a golden plate on his forehead inscribed with the words, “Holy to the Lord.” The question is, *who is it* that’s “holy to the Lord”? Is this a reference to Aaron as the one wearing the engraving, or is this a reference to all Israel as the covenant people who are united

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<sup>2</sup> This biblical (and ANE) way of thinking is foreign to the pervasively individualistic mindset of Christians today. This explains why it is difficult for us to grasp many of God’s dealings with Israel as a corporate “offspring singular.” Compare also the reality that “in Adam” we all died/sinned, just as “in Christ” we have all been made alive and counted righteous.

<sup>3</sup> The Hebrew word, here, is the same word translated earlier with “bear” or “lift up.” The point here seems to be that as Aaron applies the blood of Israel’s sacrifices he will “lift up”—in the sense of “remove” and “carry away”—any guilt associated with Israel’s worship. (cf. Gen. 50:17; Exod. 10:17; 34:7; Lev. 10:17; Num. 14:18; 1 Sam. 15:25; 25:28; Isa.33:24; Hos. 14:2; **Contra Exod. 28:43**; see Hamilton’s comments, contra Currid)

with Aaron and *always* represented in his person? Remember what we read in verse twelve: “Aaron shall bear [the names of the sons of Israel] before the LORD *on his two shoulders* **for remembrance**.” Then, remember what we read in verse twenty-nine: “Aaron shall bear the names of the sons of Israel... *on his heart*... **to bring them to regular remembrance** before the LORD.” And now what do we read? — “And Aaron shall remove any guilt from the **holy** things that **the people of Israel** consecrate as their **holy** gifts. [**The golden plate**] shall **regularly** be on his forehead, that they may be accepted before the Lord.”

The golden plate is simply one more way of bringing the *particular* people of Israel to regular **remembrance** before the Lord. So when the high priest approaches the altar or enters Yahweh’s tent with the blood of Israel’s sacrifices, the Lord will see the words inscribed on Aaron’s forehead and be “reminded” of His **covenant** with Israel – because it’s the covenant by which Israel has been set apart as holy to the Lord. And as the Lord is reminded of His covenant with all Israel, He will be faithful to *forgive* their sins and *remove* their guilt and *accept* them (His holy people) whenever they come before Him in worship. The golden plate is a “reminder” to the Lord that the people the priest represents are the people He has chosen.

In Exodus chapter 39, this engraved plate is referred to as the “plate of the **holy crown** of pure gold.” (39:30) What a vivid reminder of Israel’s royal status before the Lord as a **kingdom** of priests and a **holy** nation. (cf. Exod. 19:6)

## **Conclusion**

When the high priest approached the altar of burnt offering in Yahweh’s outer court, or the altar of incense in Yahweh’s guest room, or the Ark of the Covenant in Yahweh’s throne room with the blood of the sacrifice, what was it that made this priestly work **effective** for anyone else besides just himself? What was it that caused the results of his priestly work to actually be **applied** to anyone else besides just himself? There’s only one answer. He must come **representing**, and even **embodying** in himself, and in all of his priestly work, **particularly** and **specifically all** those who are **holy to the Lord**. When the high priest brings the blood of the sacrifice, He must come **representing particularly** and **specifically all** those with whom God has chosen to be in **covenant relationship**. If the high priest entered Yahweh’s tent without the specific written names of the sons of Israel on his two shoulders, and on his heart, then all that he did there would be **ineffective**. If the high priest entered Yahweh’s tent without the plate on his forehead identifying the people that he represented as “[chosen and set apart] to the Lord,” then all that he did could be of **no value**. The priesthood is tied to the covenant, and so all that the high priest does, he does as the representative—and even the **embodiment**—of God’s chosen (covenant) people.

So what does the priest do? We could describe his work in two major ways.<sup>4</sup> First, when Aaron approaches the altar or enters Yahweh’s tent with the blood of the sacrifice, and the Lord sees “Holy to the Lord” inscribed on his forehead, then Aaron’s application of the blood will remove the sin and guilt of the people. So the work of the priest is the work of making **atonement** for the sins of the people that God has chosen and set apart for Himself. Second, when Aaron enters God’s tent with all the names of God’s covenant people on his shoulders and on his heart, it’s as

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<sup>4</sup> Specifically, his work on behalf of men in relation to God (not vice versa; cf. Heb. 5:1)

though he's lifting up their names before the Lord in one continual prayer of intercession. And so the work of the priest is also pictured as a work of **praying and interceding** for the people that he carries on his shoulders and on his heart.

Now, my brothers and sisters, *we have* a great high priest whose name is Jesus Christ. And how is it that His priestly work can be **applied** to us, and be **effective** for us? First, when Jesus went to the cross to offer Himself up as an atoning sacrifice, He went there already representing, and even embodying in Himself, a very definite people – the people that God had given to Him from out of the world before the world was ever made. (cf. Jn. 17:6; Eph. 1:4). In the same way, after His resurrection, when Jesus ascended into heaven to appear in the presence of God, He went there representing, and even embodying in Himself, a very definite people – the people for whom He had died and shed His blood. This is what makes the work of our great high priest so unfailingly powerful and effective for you and for me. Jesus did not simply go to the cross to make forgiveness only possible for every single human being in all the world, but rather to actually **accomplish** and **apply** forgiveness for all those that He was representing – the forgiveness of all those whose names were written, as it were, upon His shoulders and upon His heart.<sup>5</sup>

We know that in Jesus' priestly work of intercession, He intercedes *only* for God's elect. This is the guarantee that his intercession for us is unfailingly and 100% effective. In other words, if Jesus makes intercession for the world (every single human being) then either every single human being will be saved, or His prayers are not wholly effective. (cf. Luke 22:32) In Jesus' "High Priestly" prayer, we hear Him say:

- John 17:6, 9 — **I have manifested your name to the people whom you gave me out of the world... I am praying for them. I am not praying for the world** but for those whom you have given me, for they are yours.

But if Jesus priestly work of interceding is for a definite and particular people, then we must also see that His priestly work of making atonement was for a definite and particular people. As we'll

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<sup>5</sup> In the Old Testament, the high priest never makes atonement a mere possibility for everyone. Instead, when he applies the blood to the altar, and even sprinkles it on the Ark of the Covenant on the Day of Atonement, he *actually makes atonement*, unfailingly guaranteeing its application to the definite people that He represents (**See Lev. 16; specifically 16:17, 21-22, 30, 33-34**). This Old Testament atonement does not equal the "full" removal of sins that we see in the New Testament (cf. Heb. 10:4, 11). Rather, it signifies the "removal/forgiveness" of Israel's sin(s) *such that* they will not be constantly facing the threat of judgment and total destruction. In connection with this, we must remember that *within the Old COVENANT community* there were both regenerate *and unregenerate* people. The Day of Atonement provided for the continuation of God's *COVENANT people as a whole (including both regenerate and unregenerate)*, and so it only typified the greater realities to come under the New Covenant. There were times under the Old Covenant when people had reached such a level of wickedness and depravity that God said: "He who slaughters an ox is like one who kills a man; he who sacrifices a lamb, like one who breaks a dog's neck; he who presents a grain offering, like one who offers pig's blood." (Isa. 66:3) The point, here, is that these were no longer even true sacrifices and so they were not "acceptable" to God. (cf. Isa. 1:11; 43:23-24; Jer. 6:20; 7:21; Amos 4:4) Of course, not only could we never use the descriptors in Isaiah 66 of the sacrifice of Christ, but neither could we ever say of Christ's atoning sacrifice that it was not acceptable to the Father! Once we have a biblical understanding of the nature of the Old COVENANT people and the relationship of the Old Covenant types to their New Covenant fulfillment in Christ, we will be able to see that Jesus actually, powerfully, effectively *makes atonement* for all whom He represents. *The making of atonement is the guarantee of its application* to all whom God has given to His Son.

see in a moment, this is also what makes His atoning death for us so unfailingly and 100% effective.

- John 10:14–15 (cf. v. 11; Mat. 20:28; 26:28; Isa. 53:11-12) — I am the good shepherd. I know **my own** and **my own** know me, just as the Father knows me and I know the Father; and I lay down my life **for the sheep [for my own]**.
- Ephesians 5:25–27 — Christ **loved the church** and gave himself up **for her**, that he might sanctify her, having cleansed her by the washing of water with the word, so that he might present the church to himself in splendor, without spot or wrinkle or any such thing, that she might be holy and without blemish.<sup>6</sup>

We cannot **divide** the priestly (saving) work of Jesus in half so that He intercedes/prays **effectively** for a **definite** people, but makes atonement only **possible** for an **indefinite** people.<sup>7</sup> The priestly work of Jesus is one single, unified whole, **fulfilling** the pattern of the high priest in the Old Testament. So we read in Romans chapter eight:

- Romans 8:32, 34 (cf. Rom. 5:8; 8:26; 1 Cor. 11:24; 1 Thess. 5:10; 1 Pet. 2:21; 1 Jn. 3:16) — He who did not spare his own Son but **gave him up for us all**, how will he not also with him graciously **give us all things**? ... Who is to condemn? Christ Jesus is the one who **died [for us]**—more than that, who was **raised [for us]**; cf. Rom. 4:25—who is at the right hand of God, who indeed is **interceding for us**.

Those for whom Christ dies and makes atonement are the same ones for whom He intercedes – namely, all those whom He represents; all those whom the Father has given Him from out of the world.

- Hebrews 5:1; 9:24 — Every high priest chosen from among men is appointed to act **on behalf of [particular] men** in relation to God, **to offer gifts and sacrifices for sins** [which Christ has also done; cf. Heb. 5:5-10]... Christ has entered, not into holy places made with hands, which are copies of the true things, but into heaven itself, now **to appear in the presence of God on our behalf** [the self-same ones for whom He died].

In the same way that we must not separate the atoning and intercessory work of our High Priest, so also we must not **separate** Jesus priestly work from out of the context of the Covenant and the Covenant people. Remember that the priesthood is tied to the covenant (“remembrance”/“holy to the Lord”), and so all that our great High Priest does, he does as the representative—and even the embodiment—of God’s chosen **covenant** people.

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<sup>6</sup> Throughout the Bible, the death of Christ is consistently described as “for us” (contextually referring to the saints), or “for you” (once again, contextually referring to the saints). (cf. Mat 1:21; Lk. 19:10; Gal. 1:3-4; 3:13; 1 Tim. 1:15; Titus 2:14; 1 Pet 2:24; 3:18; Rom. 5:8, 10; Gal. 3:13; 1 Pet. 2:24; Eph. 5:25-26; Heb 13:12; Jn. 6:35-39; 10:11, 14-16; 17:1-2, 6, 9-10, 20-21; Rom. 8:32-34; Rev 5:9; Jn 11:51-52; Heb 9:15; Mat. 20:28; 26:28; Heb. 9:28)

<sup>7</sup> It’s important, here, to see that Jesus priestly work of intercession is **inextricably linked** to His priestly work of making atonement. **Both** of these works are **saving** works, and therefore **both** are **wholly essential to our salvation**. (cf. John 17; Luke 22:32)

- Matthew 26:28 (cf. Heb. 7:11-25; 8:1-6; 9:11-22) — This is my blood **of the covenant**, which is poured out **for many** [for all those whom God has chosen for covenant relationship] for the forgiveness of sins.

Once again, the priestly work of our Lord Jesus Christ **fulfills** the pattern of the Old Testament priesthood.

So what about the “**all’s**” in the Bible? Do these “all’s” contradict the clear and pervasive biblical teaching of the priesthood’s representation of a particular and definite people? Far from it! Instead, they only help us to see Christ’s priestly work in a more **marvelous** light than ever before.

We learn from the Bible that the particular and definite people for whom Christ offered Himself as an atoning sacrifice is a people from **every** place on earth and from **every** corner of the world.

- Revelation 5:9 (cf. Rev. 7:9; Jn. 10:16) — You were slain, and by your blood you ransomed people for God from every tribe and language and people and nation.

It’s this people for whom Christ died that’s being made into a new humanity – a whole new creation. (This “New Creation” theology is a pervasive theme stretching from Genesis to Revelation. (cf. especially Genesis, Exodus, Joshua, the writing Prophets, the Gospels, the NT Epistles, and Revelation.) So many of the **universal “all’s”** in the Bible are to be understood in terms of this new creation—this “new world” and “new humanity”—that’s being drawn from every tribe, language, people, and nation. This universal “all” is “**not yet**” because we’re still waiting for Christ’s return, and **yet**, this universal “all” is “**already**” here because the new humanity has already begun in the Church. And so we read in 2 Corinthians chapter five:

- 2 Corinthians 5:14–15, 17–19 — We have concluded this: that one has **died for all**, *therefore all have died*<sup>8</sup> [how can Paul say this?!? Universalism?]; and he **died for all**, that **those who live** might no longer live for themselves but for him who **for their sake died** and was raised... Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a **new creation**. The old has passed away; behold, the new has come... in Christ God was **reconciling the world** to himself [**creating a new humanity—a new world—from every tribe, tongue, people, and nation; the world = the “all” who have “died” with Christ**], not counting their trespasses against them, and entrusting to us the message of reconciliation.

We go on to read in Colossians:

- Colossians 1:18–22 — [Christ] is the head of the body, the church. He is the **beginning [of the new creation]**<sup>9</sup>, the **firstborn from the dead [firstborn of the new creation]**, that in everything he might be preeminent. For in him all the fullness of God was pleased to dwell, and through him to **reconcile to himself all things [conceived of as the new creation; not universalism!], whether on earth or in heaven, making peace by the blood of his cross.**

<sup>8</sup> It is clear from the grammatical context that the two “all’s”, here, are coterminous. Additionally, we must recognize that the Bible knows nothing of a dying (with Christ) that is anything less than eternally salvific.

<sup>9</sup> See message from Resurrection Sunday, 2012

And **you**, who once were alienated and hostile in mind, doing evil deeds, **he has now reconciled** in his body of flesh by his death, in order to present you holy and blameless and above reproach before him.

And then Romans chapter five:

- Romans 5:18–19 — Therefore, as one trespass led to condemnation for **all men [in Adam and the old creation]**, so one act of righteousness leads to justification and life for **all men [in Christ and the new creation (not universalism!); the whole world conceived of in light of the new creation, the new humanity]**.

Our great High Priest offered Himself up as a sacrifice particularly and specifically for the definite people that He represented (the people “in Him”).<sup>10</sup> And so He offered Himself up for a new creation – to create a new humanity from every tribe, tongue, people, and nation. He died for **this** universal “all,” and because His atoning death **can’t possibly fail** to accomplish its purpose, we know now that this same “all” *has, and will*, universally die with Christ and be raised up with Him. *Here* is the infinite saving power of our great High Priest – in His work of making atonement and making intercession for us who have believed in Him! And so now we’re ready to read in the Gospel of John:

- John 1:29 (cf. 4:42; 12:47; 1 Jn. 4:14) — Behold, the Lamb of God, who [*actually*] **takes away the sin of the world!**<sup>11</sup>
- John 3:16–17 — For God **so loved the world**, that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life. For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but **in order that the world might be saved** through him. [God has not failed to achieve His *purpose* in sending Jesus (“in order that”); we know that the whole world is being, and shall be saved through Jesus. (*Not universalism*)]
- 1 John 2:2 (cf. Gal. 3:13; 1 Cor. 6:20; Titus 2:14; Eph. 5:2; Heb. 10:19-20)<sup>12</sup> — He is the propitiation [the atoning sacrifice who has fully satisfied God’s wrath by bearing the curse]

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<sup>10</sup> Perhaps here is as good a place as any to make clear that there is nothing about this biblical doctrine of a definite or particular atonement that should in any way contradict or undermine our commitment to the universal offer and indiscriminate preaching of the Gospel (qualified by Mat. 7:6), the necessity of prayer and evangelism, and the full responsibility, answerability, and accountability of man. We may not know how all of these things fit together, but we know, by faith in God’s word that they do.

<sup>11</sup> Consistently throughout the New Testament, the death of Christ is presented (language and terminology) as that which actually accomplishes a people’s salvation versus that which simply provides for the potential of a people’s salvation. (cf. Mat 1:21; Lk. 19:10; Gal. 1:3-4; 3:13; 1 Tim. 1:15; Titus 2:14; 1 Pet 2:24; 3:18; Rom. 5:8, 10; Gal. 3:13; 1 Pet. 2:24; Eph. 5:25-26; Heb 13:12; Jn. 6:35-39; 10:11, 14-16; 17:1-2, 6, 9-10, 20-21; Rom. 8:32-34; Rev 5:9; Jn 11:51-52; Heb 9:15; Mat. 20:28; 26:28; Heb. 9:28)

<sup>12</sup> 1 Timothy 2:1–7 — First of all, then, I urge that supplications, prayers, intercessions, and thanksgivings be made **for all people, for kings and all who are in high positions**, that we may lead a peaceful and quiet life, godly and dignified in every way. This is good, and it is pleasing in the sight of God our Savior, who desires **all people** to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth. For there is one God, and there is one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus, who gave himself as a ransom **for all**, which is the testimony given at the proper time. For this I was appointed a preacher and an apostle (I am telling the truth, I am not lying), a teacher of the **Gentiles** in faith and truth.

Titus 2:1–14 — **Older men** are to be sober-minded, dignified, self-controlled, sound in faith, in love, and in steadfastness. **Older women** likewise are to be reverent in behavior, not slanderers or slaves to much wine. They are to teach what is good, and so train the **young women** to love their husbands and children, to be self-controlled, pure,

for our sins, and not for ours only [by ourselves, we do not make up the new creation and the new humanity] but also for the sins of the whole world [the new humanity—the universal “all”—drawn from every tribe, tongue, people, and nation].

Think again of Aaron, the high priest, coming before the Lord with the names of God’s covenant people on his shoulders and on his heart, and the reminder on his forehead that they are holy to the Lord. And now think of Jesus, our great High Priest, who went to the cross with our names upon His shoulders and upon His heart, purposefully representing us, and dying for us, whom the Father had given to Him from out of the world, before the world ever began. Think of Jesus, our great High Priest, who stands now in the presence of God with our names upon His shoulders and upon His heart, and the constant reminder upon His “forehead” that we are God’s chosen people – holy to the Lord. (cf. Jn. 17:16-19) Think of Jesus, our great High Priest, whose shed blood for us and constant intercession for us **cannot fail** to save us — and not *only* us, but also the whole world – the “all” for whom He died, and for whom He is even at this moment interceding at the right hand of God. (cf. Jn. 17:20) Think of Jesus, who, in all His priestly work, bears our names upon His shoulders and upon His heart, and who constantly confesses that we are His – a people holy to the Lord. How grateful should we be for our great High Priest!?

In this doctrine of the particular, or definite atonement, we see not only the **power** of God, but also the **love** of God as we could never see it in any other way.

- Ephesians 5:2 — Christ loved us and gave himself up for us, a fragrant offering and sacrifice to God.
- Hebrews 7:23–27 (cf. 9:23-28; 1 Jn. 2:1) — The former priests were many in number, because they were prevented by death from continuing in office, but he holds his priesthood permanently, because he continues forever. **Consequently, he is able to save to the uttermost** those who draw near to God through him, since **he always lives to make intercession for them**. For it was indeed fitting that we should have such a high priest, holy, innocent, unstained, separated from sinners, and exalted above the heavens. He has no need, like those high priests, to offer sacrifices daily, first for his own sins and then for those of the people, since he did this once for all when **he offered up himself**.

Maybe now, we can skip ahead to Exodus 39 and read with a growing sense of wonder and awe:

**V. Exodus 39:6–7, 10–14, 30** — They made the onyx stones, enclosed in settings of gold filigree, and engraved like the engravings of a signet, according to the names of the sons of Israel. And he set them on the shoulder pieces of the ephod to be stones of remembrance for the

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working at home, kind, and submissive to their own husbands, that the word of God may not be reviled. Likewise, urge the **younger men** to be self-controlled. Show **yourself** in all respects to be a model of good works, and in your teaching show integrity, dignity, and sound speech that cannot be condemned, so that an opponent may be put to shame, having nothing evil to say about us. **Bondservants** are to be submissive to their own masters in everything; they are to be well-pleasing, not argumentative, not pilfering, but showing all good faith, so that in everything they may adorn the doctrine of God our Savior. For the grace of God has appeared, **bringing salvation for all people**, training **us** to renounce ungodliness and worldly passions, and to live self-controlled, upright, and godly lives in the present age, waiting for our blessed hope, the appearing of the glory of our great God and Savior Jesus Christ, **who gave himself for us TO redeem us from all lawlessness and to purify for himself a people for his own possession who are zealous for good works.**

sons of Israel, as the LORD had commanded Moses. And they set in [the breastpiece of judgment] four rows of stones. A row of sardius, topaz, and carbuncle was the first row; and the second row, an emerald, a sapphire, and a diamond; and the third row, a jacinth, an agate, and an amethyst; and the fourth row, a beryl, an onyx, and a jasper. They were enclosed in settings of gold filigree. There were twelve stones with their names according to the names of the sons of Israel. They were like signets, each engraved with its name, for the twelve tribes. They made the plate of the holy crown of pure gold, and wrote on it an inscription, like the engraving of a signet, "Holy to the LORD."

Think of your High Priest. Think of how you are represented **in Him** (as it were, on His shoulders, heart, and forehead) as He sheds His blood and then applies His blood to the heavenly altar (cf. Hebrews), and as He prays and intercedes before the Father. What complete security. What awesome comfort. What exceeding joy. What strength to deny self, and to love God and neighbor – to be filled daily with the fruits of the Spirit.

**All glory be to God for the salvation HE has accomplished!**

# The High Priest's Golden Garments

Shemot/Exodus 28

