

[Wednesday, May 31, 2017] The Exodus Series, Exodus 28,vss 15-30, The Breastplate, Urim and Thummim – Craig Thurman

We continue with the garments of the high priest; particularly the breastplate of judgment and the Urim and Thummim. John Owens says this of our Lord Jesus' High Priestly role, and I think it applies so well to the breastplate with its precious stones concealed within and all securely fastened to the bosom of Christ:

'As to the *manner* of it [referring to the High Priestly role of Christ], and the design of it, he gives an account of them himself, John xx. 17. His design herein was not the taking on him the exercise of his power, kingdom, and glorious rule; but the acting with God on the behalf of his disciples." *The Works of John Owen*, vol.1, p.249

How full this statement is. Our High Priest bears His people all equally upon His shoulders according to their *birth* [being born of God]. And they are concealed and borne as precious jewels upon His heart according to their *tribes* [being the sons of God.]

Companion text is Ex.39:8-21, but nothing concerning the Urim and Thummim is here.

חֹשֶׁן מִשְׁפָּט

15 ¶ And thou shalt make the breastplate of judgment with cunning work;

חֹשֶׁן מִשְׁפָּט, cho-shen mish-pat; חֹשֶׁן, cho-shen, is only used with reference to this breastplate. It is used in Exodus 21 times (the exceeding sinfulness of sin, and twice more in Leviticus, totaling 23 (the number for death.); the LXX will have this as once as breastplate, περίσθηθιον, or otherwise it is oracle, λογίον, λογείον.

The breastplate itself is a pouch or bag. The breastplate of judgment is,

'...the chief and most costly of the high priest's garments ... Its importance is at once denoted by being mentioned first in Ex.28:4.' *Gleanings in Exodus*, A. W. Pink, p.263

Ex 28:4 *And these are the garments which they shall make; a **breastplate**, and an ephod, and a robe, and a broidered coat, a mitre, and a girdle: and they shall make holy garments for Aaron thy brother, and his sons, that he may minister unto me in the priest's office.*

after the work of the ephod thou shalt make it; of gold, of blue, and of purple,

Ex.39.8 ... like the work of the ephod

and of scarlet, and of fine twined linen, shalt thou make it.

So, the ephod, girdle, and this breastplate are made of the same materials and have the same appearance. By this we are reminded of the glory of the Person of our High Priest, Jesus Christ: Deity, the Heavenly Man, the King eternal, immortal, and invisible; the strong and valiant Man; and the Righteousness of God.

16 Foursquare it shall be being doubled;

Ex.39.9 It was foursquare; they made the breastplate double:

In other words, once folded it becomes square, foursquare. Being foursquare it is equal on every side. The brazen altar and the altar of incense were also foursquare.

a span shall be the length thereof, and a span shall be the breadth thereof.

Ex.39.9 ... a span was the length thereof, and a span the breadth thereof, being doubled.

So this pouch once folded measure a span. It is said to be from the tip of the little finger to the tip of the thumb as the fingers are stretched apart. That span from little finger to thumb is about 9". And so, as a matter of fact, a span measures about a ½ cubit; a cubit being about 18".

בו

17 And thou shalt set in it settings of stones, even four rows of stones:

Ex. 39.10 And they set in it four rows of stones:

Or, thou shalt **fill** in it settings of stones ...

set, or fill (v.3, *filled*), מְלֵאָה; fem. sing. noun;

Ex 25:7 *Onyx stones, and stones to be set (for settings, מְלֵאִים, plural masc. noun) in the ephod, and in the breastplate.*

the first row shall be a sardius, a topaz, and a carbuncle: this shall be the first row.

18 And the second row shall be an emerald, a sapphire, and a diamond.

19 And the third row a ligure, an agate, and an amethyst.

20 And the fourth row a beryl, and an onyx, and a jasper: they shall be set in gold in their inclosings.

Ex.39.13 ... they were inclosed in ouches of gold in their inclosings.

Or filled settings

In other words, as the two onyx stones were laced to the two shoulder pieces of the ephod, so are these precious stones laced to the breastplate of judgment with golden-type bands or straps.

Same number of stones as in Re.21.19 Typical of *precious* stones.

1Pe.2.4 ¶ To whom coming, as unto a living stone, disallowed indeed of men, but chosen of God, and precious,

*5 Ye also, **as lively stones**, are built up a spiritual house, an holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God by Jesus Christ.*

6 Wherefore also it is contained in the scripture, Behold, I lay in Sion a chief corner stone, elect, precious: and he that believeth on him shall not be confounded.

Because of so much religious error in Christendom sometimes I think we might overly react against it by neglecting truths of God's Word. That the concept of the priesthood is greatly abused in the false religious systems, that most have fabricated a heretical clergy/laity division, it remains true that the saints of God in the true churches of Jesus Christ are all, every one, equal believer-priests to God.

*1Pe 2:5 Ye also, as lively stones, are built up a spiritual house, **an holy priesthood**, to offer up spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God by Jesus Christ.*

Re 20:6 Blessed and holy is he that hath part in the first resurrection: on such the second death hath no power, but they shall be priests of God and of Christ, and shall reign with him a thousand years.

21 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.

This says that the stones are arranged in four rows, and three to a row.

. . . sardius, topaz, carbuncle
. . . emerald, sapphire, diamond
. . . ligure, agate, amethyst
. . . beryl, onyx, jasper

These precious stones are concealed inside the breastplate, out of view of all others and unknown to those outside.

2Co.6.9 As unknown, and yet well known ...

They are Christ's very own. They are Christ's special people for whom He enters into the Holy Place before God.

*1Jo 3:1 Behold, what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God: therefore **the world knoweth us not, because it knew him not.***

In this arrangement we have uniformity, unity.

Ps 133:1 « A Song of degrees of David. » Behold, how good and how pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in unity! (in unity, meaning even or also together, alike, טַוּוֹת־אִלָּוּת) The same, equals, brethren. Not masters and lords over one another.

The evils of exalting men:

*Mt 23:8 But be not ye called Rabbi: for one is your Master, even Christ; and **all ye are brethren.***

9 And call no man your father upon the earth: for one is your Father, which is in heaven.

10 Neither be ye called masters: for one is your Master, even Christ.

11 But he that is greatest among you shall be your servant.

12 And whosoever shall exalt himself shall be abased; and he that shall humble himself shall be exalted.

The names that were engraved upon the two onyx stones were the sons of Jacob, according to *their birth*; six upon one stone, and six upon another. Equally they are borne of the Lord upon His shoulders. These twelve precious stones for the breastplate represent the twelve tribes of Israel as they are arranged about the tabernacle. The *tribe* seems to show the relationship as *heirs*. The Hebrew for tribe, שֵׁבֶט, she-bet is translated *rod, staff, scepter, tribe*. Each has a portion, a lineage, and an order as a tribe. Since the names on these stones are written according to the tribes it probably means that these names vary from those written on the onyx stones.

cf. Nu.2.3-31: on the east, Judah, Issachar, Zebulun; on the south Reuben, Simeon, Gad; on the west Ephraim, Manasseh, and Benjamin; on the north, Dan, Asher, Naphtali

Joseph and Levi are omitted and Ephraim and Manasseh are inserted, and in this way the tribes are counted.

For the insertion of Ephraim and Manasseh, Jacob took the sons of Joseph and his own children.

Ge.48.2 And one told Jacob, and said, Behold, thy son Joseph cometh unto thee: and Israel strengthened himself, and sat upon the bed.

3 And Jacob said unto Joseph, God Almighty appeared unto me at Luz in the land of Canaan, and blessed me,

4 And said unto me, Behold, I will make thee fruitful, and multiply thee, and I will make of thee a multitude of people; and will give this land to thy seed after thee for an everlasting possession.

*5 And now **thy two sons, Ephraim and Manasseh**, which were born unto thee in the land of Egypt before I came unto thee into Egypt, **are mine**; as Reuben and Simeon, they shall be mine.*

6 And thy issue, which thou begettest after them, shall be thine, and shall be called after the name of their brethren in their inheritance.

The tribe of Levi is excluded because they are ordered differently than the other tribes, and for this reason have another *inheritance*.

The tribe of Levi was not numbered or arranged with them; but they encamp all about the tabernacle, nearest to it. (cf. Nu.1.49-51; 2.33)

Concealed within this pouch, unknown by others, yet this is certain: the LORD knows them.

*2Ti 2:19 Nevertheless the foundation of God standeth sure, having this seal, **The Lord knoweth them that are his**. And, Let every one that nameth the name of Christ depart from iniquity.*

Joh 10:3 ... he calleth his own sheep by name, and leadeth them out.

‘The presence of the high priest, the representative of the people, with the names of the separate tribes on his person, brought each tribe before the notice of Jeh and thereby directed His attention to them.’ *International Standard Bible Encyclopedia*, vol. 1, T. Lewis, contributor, p.518

As the high priest bore the judgment of Israel upon His heart:

Ex 28:29 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.

22 And thou shalt make upon the breastplate chains at the ends of wreathen work of pure gold.

My opinion is that these chains are probably the same as those mentioned in verse 14.

Ex 28:14 And two chains of pure gold at the ends; of wreathen work shalt thou make them, and fasten the wreathen chains to the ouches.

They needed to be mentioned in verse 14 as they related to the ouches. Now they need mention as they relate to the breastplate. The chains will bind to the high priest the upper part of the breastplate to the shoulder pieces.

The ends of this beautiful pouch is made with wreathen-braided chains of gold. In other words the left and right sides of this pouch have built into them this gold-braided cord. Remember, that the pouch material was made rectangular in shape, and when folded becomes square. But right now it is rectangular. These chains at each end must continue beyond the pouch itself so that it can be attached to the ouches which are upon the shoulder-pieces.

23 And thou shalt make upon the breastplate two rings of gold, and shalt put the two rings on the two ends of the breastplate.

How that is accomplished is given in the next verse.

24 And thou shalt put the two wreathen chains of gold in the two rings which are on the ends of the breastplate.

These two rings might be slipped over, or as this verse says the chains are put in the rings. In this way the rings are on the ends of the breastplate.

25 And [the other] two ends of the two wreathen chains thou shalt fasten in the two ouches, and put them on the shoulderpieces of the ephod before it.

It could be that the wreathen chains so made and being attached to each ouch on each shoulder forms loops through which the arms are inserted and then the ouch is installed securely in place on the shoulder pieces.

26 And thou shalt make two rings of gold, and thou shalt put them upon the two ends of the breastplate in the border [or, on the edge] thereof, which is in the side of the ephod inward.

Ex.39.19 And they made two rings of gold, and put them on the two ends of the breastplate, upon the border of it, which was on the side of the ephod inward.

These two rings are installed on the inside panels of the lower corners *in the border, on the edge* of the breastplate. This means these two rings are installed on breastplate, ephod side.

27 And two other rings of gold thou shalt make, and shalt put them on the two sides of the ephod underneath, toward the forepart thereof (meaning toward the front of the ephod), **over against the other coupling thereof** (probably referring to the rings on the breastplate), **above the curious girdle of the ephod.** (where the lowest part of the breastplate would be situated ... above the girdle.

Ex.39.20 And they made two other golden rings, and put them on the two sides of the ephod underneath, toward the forepart of it (in other words, on the front of the ephod), over against the other coupling thereof, above the curious girdle of the ephod.

28 And they shall bind the breastplate by the rings thereof unto the rings of the ephod with a lace of blue, that it may be above the curious girdle of the ephod, and that the breastplate be not loosed from the ephod.

Ex.39.21 And they did bind the breastplate by his rings unto the rings of the ephod with a lace of blue, that it might be above the curious girdle of the ephod, and that the breastplate might not be loosed from the ephod; as the LORD commanded Moses.

There is a union of the Person of the High Priest with His people before the LORD. I want you to notice that there upon the breast of the High Priest the breastplate of judgment is bound securely and squarely upon His heart. There it is suspended between the girdle of the strength of His wonderful

and righteous works and the grand and glorious Throne of His Majesty in the heavens. And where are we? Why we are hidden in Him, in that breastplate of judgment. There we are secured from all harm and to every blessing in Jesus Christ. I am His, and He is mine.

Ro 8:34 Who is he that condemneth? It is Christ that died, yea rather, that is risen again, who is even at the right hand of God, who also maketh intercession for us.

1Pe 3:13 And who is he that will harm you, if ye be followers of that which is good?

1Jo 5:5 Who is he that overcometh the world, but he that believeth that Jesus is the Son of God?

29 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.

They are borne upon the heart of the High Priest.

*Joh 13:1 Now before the feast of the passover, when **Jesus** knew that his hour was come that he should depart out of this world unto the Father, having **loved his own** which were in the world, he loved them unto the end.*

Here our Lord Jesus loved us and was preparing to come into the presence of the Father, and we with Him.

Brethren, the first coming of our Lord Jesus Christ was called by some an holy stoop. The breastplate was fastened securely to the breast of the High Priest so that when he stooped those the stones which represented all of His elect people remained with Him unmoved. Christ, in His first coming, came for these that the Father had given to Him before the foundation of the world. When He stooped to become as a man He lost not one of these which were given to Him. (Jn.18.9) And as He was tempted and suffered through His earthly sojourn there they were with Him. When He was

hanged on that cross and drew His last breath they were there bound to His heart before the Father unmoved. When they put away His body in the tomb they were with Him waiting with Him in silence. When He raised from the dead they were raised with Him. And when He ascended into the presence of God and presented Himself before Him in the holiest of all there are those same elect people with Him. Even in His holy stoop His elect are fast to the breast of the Son of God. Everlastingly loved; sins forgiven; declared righteous; made holy; are all of children in Jesus Christ.

Col 1:21 And you, that were sometime alienated and enemies in your mind by wicked works, yet now hath he reconciled

22 In the body of his flesh through death, to present you holy and unblameable and unproveable in his sight ... (all these precious stones)

Heb 9:24 For Christ is not entered into the holy places made with hands, which are the figures of the true; but into heaven itself, now to appear in the presence of God for us ...

We sing this beautiful and meaningful hymn on occasion:

More Secure Is no One Ever

Lina Sandell Berg

More Secure is no one ever, than the loved ones of the Savior –
not yon star on high abiding Nor the bird in home-nest hiding.

God His own doth tend and nourish, in His holy court they flourish;
Like a father kind He spare them, in His loving arms He bears them.

Neither life nor death can ever from the Lord His children sever;
For His love and deep compassion comforts them in tribulation.

Little flock, to joy then yield thee! Jacob's God will ever shield thee;
Rest secure with this defender – at His will all foes surrender.

What He takes or what He gives us shows the Father's love so precious;
We may trust His purpose wholly – 'tis His children's welfare soley.

30 And thou shalt put in the breastplate of judgment the Urim and the Thummim;

What are these? From whence did these come? Or, of what are they composed? I cannot say. Moses is not told to *make* them, but to *put* or *give them*, נתן, na-than, into this pouch.

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.

The major reason that the breastplate is called the breastplate of judgment is very likely because of what was placed inside of it: the Urim and the Thummim. Once placed within Aaron *shall bear the judgment of the children of Israel upon his heart before the LORD continually.*

אור, oor, or ur, masc.; KJV, Urim (7), fires (5), light (1)

He is a consuming fire:

De 4:24 For the LORD thy God is a consuming fire, even a jealous God.

Heb 12:29 For our God is a consuming fire.

He is the light of His people:

1Jo 1:7 But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin.

תמים, masc., tohm, KJV, integrity (11), simplicity (1), Thummim (5), venture (2), full (1), uprightness (2), uprightly (2), upright (2), perfect (2); think *perfection*; related to this is the plural adjective תמימים, tah-meem; *Ge.6.9, Noah was a just man; Ge.17.1, walk before me, and be thou perfect; Ex. 12.5, your lamb shall be without blemish; Lev.22.21, it shall be perfect to be accepted; there shall be no blemish therein; Deu.18.13, thou shall be perfect with the LORD; Ps.18.30, as for God his way is perfect; Ps.18.32, It is God that girdeth me with strength, and maketh my way perfect.*

The High Priest is God representing our case to God.

The Urim and the Thummim gave to the children of Israel, through the High Priest the mind of God.

*Nu 27:21 And he [Joshua] shall stand before Eleazar the priest, who shall ask counsel for him after the judgment of Urim before the LORD: **at his word** shall they go out, and **at his word** they shall come in, both he (Joshua), and all the children of Israel with him, even all the congregation.*

Jesus Christ our High Priest is the mind of God. He is called the Word of God; the mind, the logic, the communication of God.

Joh 1:1 In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.

2 The same was in the beginning with God.

...

14 And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, (and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father,) full of grace and truth.

*Re 19:13 And he was clothed with a vesture dipped in blood: **and his name is called The Word of God.***

The mind of God is conveyed to His children through the High Priest, Jesus Christ.

1Co 2:16 For who hath known the mind of the Lord, that he may instruct him? But we have the mind of Christ.

God is unknowable. None could have known anything of Him but that which He chose to reveal to us. And all that He has revealed of Himself has been through His only begotten Son.

A. W. Pink said,

'[T]he second great truth foreshadowed by the Urim and Thummim: the counsels of God are only to be learned through the Lord Jesus, our great High Priest; and those counsels (of grace) are inseparably connected with His own dear people—as symbolized by the Urim and Thummim and the twelve precious stones, bearing their names, being *together* in the breastplate.' *Gleanings in Exodus*, Arthur W. Pink, p.271

You see, the children of God are enveloped in that same pouch with the Urim and the Thummim which rests upon the breast of the High Priest. We can be sure that the great counsel of God is so coordinated for the love of His children.

Ro.8.28 And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose.

Abraham acknowledged that He is the judge of the whole earth.

*Ge 18:25 That be far from thee to do after this manner, to slay the righteous with the wicked: and that the righteous should be as the wicked, that be far from thee: Shall not **the Judge** (הַשֹּׁפֵט, ha-sho-phet, Qal part. act. sing. masc.) **of all the earth** do right (מִשְׁפָּט, mish-pat, judgment)?*

The answer is yes. All that He does is altogether righteous. And as it regards His children, it is all glorious and good.

Conclusion: the breastplate of judgment 'was the distinctive symbol of the priest in his capacity as the giver of oracles.' *International Standard Bible Encyclopedia*, vol. 1, p. 518, T. Lewis, contributor