



SPIRITUAL WARFARE

Volume 8

Joseph A Cortes



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The Emerald Stone and Judah

In this series, I am still in the latter part of verse 14, ***“and having on the breastplate of righteousness...”*** This is not self-made righteousness, not man-made righteousness, not self-righteousness, not a righteousness that comes through our efforts as a Christian to-do list. No, this is righteousness imputed into us. We are clothed with it because of what Christ has done and provided for us.

Often people take the verses that Paul outlines for us in Ephesians 6:10 through 18 about the Christian armor and define what Paul is saying here by using the Roman armor that was available for Paul to see to give us an illustration of what he was saying. That is a good starting point, but it is milk, specifically, it is non-fat milk, not whole milk. And that is where Christianity is stuck. Paul was a scholar of the law of what was available to him in the Old Testament. He was not comparing the armor of a Roman soldier to get the message to the Ephesians. No, he was referring to the High Priest and the breastplate and all the pieces of the armor described in Ephesians 6. Through the breastplate of the High Priest, Paul was showing how important the breastplate was in the Old Testament and to the Israelites. Although the breastplate had its significance in the Old Testament even the Old Testament saints did not know exactly what it would prophecy for the future. But now looking back, we can see clearly the importance, the meaning, the definitions, the understanding and knowledge, and the symbolism that comes from the High Priest's breastplate that all points to Christ and what He has made available to us to protect the center seat of our emotions, the heart, the breastplate. So that is why we begin here with Ephesians 6:14.

“Stand therefore, having your loins girt about with truth, and having on the breastplate of righteousness;”

We have already gone through Exodus 28:15, the priest's clothes, where we read,

“And thou shalt make the breastplate of judgment [the mishpat] 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....”

We covered all the colors and the twined linen. We skipped verse 16, but we will come back to it. Then, in verse 17 the stones in the breastplate are described,

“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.”

Currently, we are looking at these stones and the names of the children of Israel, the 12 brothers, engraved on these stones. Verse 18 begins,

“And the second row shall be an emerald...” The emerald is where we are now. Skipping to verse 21 we read,

“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.”

“And the second row shall be an emerald....” The name of the tribe on the emerald stone is Judah. The emerald is green which always symbolizes life in both Old and New Testament. In this case, the emerald was a bright rich green gem similar to one of those flashing lights that I preached on last time. So, the emerald was a bright rich flashing green gem. It is also the fourth foundational stone in the New Jerusalem and that has significance. It also represents here in verses 21 and 18 the one who rules the lights over the earth. In addition, it represents Jesus Christ, who rules over the lights over this earth and how Christ divides the light from darkness. The chosen ones are us, the saints. We are children of light divided from the children of darkness because we are the saints chosen to carry out His commission to live in the light. This is not just an Old Testament statement here in Exodus 28. It is also found in Ephesians 5:8, ***“For ye were sometime darkness, but now light in the Lord: walk as children of light;”***

This emerald stone represents life, and it represents the children of the light and Jesus because He rules the light and separates light and darkness. It is a tag on us and it cannot be taken away. Satan might try, but he will be unsuccessful. In the New Testament, I Thessalonians 5:5 says the same thing, ***“Ye are all the children of light, and the children of the day: we are not of the night, nor of darkness.”*** We are not children destined for destruction; we are children destined for peace and safety throughout eternity. This green colored gem, which symbolizes life, also allows us and our spiritual enemy to know that we are part of the children of light. We are not part of the darkness. Satan likes to live in darkness, and I am not just talking about the nighttime. He likes to keep your mind in darkness. He likes to blind you with darkness. Black becomes white, white becomes black. If he is able to accomplish that, then he has the victory over your life. He is the one who is successful, and Christ is not in the picture. The emerald represents the One who rules over the light.

Just as we have looked at three brothers already, Reuben, Simeon and Levi, we begin now with Jacob's fourth son, Judah. Go to Genesis 29:35,

“And she conceived again, and bare a son: and she said, Now will I praise the LORD: therefore she called his name Judah; and left bearing [or stood from bearing].”

This is Jacob's fourth son born to Leah, and she named him Judah which means ‘praise’ because she praised the Lord for showing her favor. Remember she was not the favorite wife. She thought that Rachel and Jacob hated and despised her, but God listened to her plea and heard her voice and she came forth with these first four sons. Judah being the fourth son left her praising the Lord who had shown her favor. Now we march through Genesis as we did with the other brothers and we do not see Judah in the picture until the Joseph story where he has his dream; he became Jacob's favorite son, but the brothers were jealous. We begin where Joseph is looking for his brothers, finds them, they plotted against him, wanted to kill him, but they decided to sell him. We are now in Genesis 37:26. We begin here because Judah's name is on the fourth stone and we need to see some of his background before we move into the promise and prophesy of Judah. Verse 26 begins,

“And Judah said unto his brethren, What profit if we slay our brother, and conceal his blood?”

They were planning to kill Joseph, and leave him for dead, but Judah steps up and says, “What profit if we slay our brother, and conceal his blood?” At least he did not want to kill him. He was not as bad as the others. However, what he did in verse 27 was just as bad because he would go back to his father and lie to him saying that Joseph was dead, some animal tore him up, and the only thing remaining was his bloody torn coat.

“Come, and let us sell him to the Ishmeelites, and let not our hand be upon him; for he is our brother and our flesh.”

Well, that is just grand of Judah. Look how he tries to justify not killing his own brother, but then justifies the selling of him. He tells his brothers, “There is money involved, so we can make a profit. We kill two birds with one stone. We get Joseph out of our hair. This silly kid thinks we are going to bow down to him and take orders from him. Well, we will show him. We will sell him and make money off him and see who gets the last laugh. Let's not kill him. After all, he is our brother.” What a lame excuse for selling him. Two wrongs do not make a right in this case. ***“Come, and let us sell him to the Ishmeelites, and let not our hand be upon him; for he is our brother....”*** If he is your brother, why sell him? Why not say in this case, “Unto thee, O brother, I have sinned. Forgive us. We had temporary insanity going on. The desert heat got to us.” Not only do I think Joseph would have forgiven them, but he probably would not have mentioned it to his father. But nevertheless, we really do not know what would have happened. We just know what did happen. Verse 27 ends by saying,

“...and let not our hand be upon him; for he is our brother and our flesh. And his brethren were content. [Because they would get money out of this by selling him as a slave.] Then there passed by Midianites merchantmen; and they drew and lifted up Joseph out of the pit, and sold Joseph to the Ishmeelites for twenty pieces of silver: and they brought Joseph into Egypt.”

Then the brothers lied. They took Joseph's coat, killed a goat kid, dipped the coat in blood and lied to their father that Joseph was dead. They saw their father devastated, weeping, and mourning, but none of them had the courage to say, “Father, we have sinned. This is what truly happened to Joseph.” They were all scoundrels, below the level of scum. Yes, that is what I said. They were worthless, arrogant, egotistical, good for nothings, not instruments that God could use at this point; and fully controlled by Satan and his army. This is where we leave the story with Joseph for now. Then in chapter 38, we are given information about Judah and Tamar. It is a very important chapter if you want to understand the lost tribes of Israel and how someone would have rule over the throne of David until Shiloh comes, which was still yet to come. It is inserted here, but God in His compassion is going to get His way whether we like it not. The brothers must change along the path because God backs them up against the wall where it is not their way any longer, but His way. And these brothers would get there, but before they did God was already going to work on the promise He gave to Abraham. The story of Judah and Tamar is a very important chapter when studying the lost tribes of Israel and the throne where in two places

eventually there will be someone there to carry out the fulfilment of God's Word and the promise to Judah about that throne.

We move across chapters 39 and 40, where Joseph is lied about again and spends time in prison. Pharaoh has dreams, Joseph was able to decipher the dreams and Pharaoh made Joseph second in rulership in Egypt. Only Pharaoh was greater on the throne and only because Joseph interpreted the Pharaoh's dream of seven years of plenty and seven years of famine was Egypt able to store enough food for the entire area around Egypt where everybody would come, including Joseph's brothers, who were looking to buy food. This event is recorded in Genesis, chapter 42. It is in through this story that I have already taught about Reuben and how his life was changed. Now we read from chapter 43, where Simeon is held as prisoner, even though I do not believe he was truly a prisoner. Reuben, who had already lost his birthright, was willing for his father to slay his sons if he did not come back with Benjamin in their second trip to Egypt. It is important to follow me here because I am laying down the groundwork to see how the lives were changed before they were used by God in a prophetic way for the future. Verse 1 begins,

“And the famine was sore in the land.

And it came to pass, when they had eaten up the corn which they had brought out of Egypt

[that Joseph sent with the brothers while holding Simeon until Benjamin was brought back.

Jacob did not want any part of getting food from Egypt, but food runs out.], **their father said unto them, Go again, buy us a little food.** [Jacob was saying, “You better get back there. The supply is low, and we are not going to make it unless you go back to Egypt.” Judah now stands up and speaks.]

And Judah spake unto him, saying, The man did solemnly protest unto us, saying, Ye shall not see my face, except your brother be with you.”

Joseph was speaking of Benjamin, Jacob's youngest son and the second son by Rachel. Jacob did not want to lose of that son. He had already been through what happened to Joseph, but Judah knew what Joseph said and he knew he would not be able to bring back any food. He did not know if he was even going to survive if Benjamin was not brought along with him.

“If thou wilt send our brother with us, we will go down and buy thee food:

But if thou wilt not send him, we will not go down: for the man said unto us, Ye shall not see my face, except your brother be with you.

And Israel said, Wherefore dealt ye so ill with me, as to tell the man whether ye had yet a brother?

And they said, The man asked us straitly of our state, and of our kindred, saying, Is your father yet alive? have ye another brother? and we told him according to the tenor of these words: could we certainly know that he would say, Bring your brother down?”

“We did not give the information. We did not tell him we had another brother, the man asked.” It was almost like Joseph knew exactly what his brothers were thinking. The brothers did not know his true name yet. There was no escaping from the information because Joseph already knew, except maybe the brother, that he never saw Benjamin.

“And Judah said unto Israel his father, Send the lad with me, and we will arise and go; that

we may live, and not die, both we, and thou, and also our little ones. [Judah is now stepping up and saying, “Let's go back so that we may live. Not only you, father, but the whole tribe, the whole clan.”]

I will be surety for him; of my hand shalt thou require him: if I bring him not unto thee, and set him before thee, then let me bear the blame for ever:”

We saw before Reuben and Simeon not resisting and now Judah. We saw how Levi stood up with Moses. The tribe of Levi had to even come against their own kindred and friends to be obedient to God and slay the ones that were disobedient. Now here is Judah. Each brother in his own terms finally took responsibility to be the man that God could now use, willing to give up their own lives for the sake of others. And that is what John 15 said also. Jesus said, “No greater love is demonstrated by the ones that would give up their lives for another.” Those are His words in the New Testament, and here these are men demonstrating that fact in the Old Testament. Judah now steps up and says, “We can't go back without our brother. Nothing good will come from it father, but I will be a surety for him. Do with my life what you want if I fail in bringing not only Benjamin back, but also Simeon. Whatever you require from my life, I will fulfil even if it means death ***“...if I bring him not unto thee, and set him before thee, then let me bear the blame for ever:”***”

Christ did not have to say it this way because He had no fault or sin. He came from the line of Judah, but He bore the blame for all of us forever. Our sin was placed on Him and now God looks at us differently without sin. Does it mean that we are not a sinner any longer; absolutely not. I sin daily. I have told you that enough and I do not want to bore you with the details any longer. I sin daily but thank God that Christ is there to bear the blame for my sin forever. And we have here another brother demonstrating the same thing. We see a change from Genesis 37 to Genesis 43. The first four brothers are no longer the self-seeking, arrogant, egotistical Satan-controlled men any longer, but tamed rebels that God could use to achieve His purposes. When you are starving and you have nothing else to turn to, Joseph does not look so bad any longer. In fact, everything that he said had come to pass. Ego has just now gone out the back door. It is not important in their lives any longer. What is important is the survival of this nation; not many at this time, but if God's Word is true, what had been promised to Abraham would be fulfilled, and these brothers had to step up and realize and take responsibility. Even if it meant giving their own life, God's will be done. It is the missing story as we quickly read through these scriptures. These men stepped up to the responsibility and said it was no longer their way, but God's way and now they were individuals that God could use to fulfil His purposes.

With that, go to Genesis 44. The brothers go back to Egypt and Benjamin goes with them. Joseph is thrilled to see Benjamin, but Joseph plans one more test. In this chapter, Joseph's silver cup is planted on the animals going back with the necessities of food and so forth to Jacob. Joseph lets them leave, but then as they were leaving he stops them and they find the missing silver cup. That is what we read about in Chapter 44, verse 1,

“And he commanded the steward of his house, saying, Fill the men's sacks with food, as much as they can carry, and put every man's money in his sack's mouth.

And put my cup, the silver cup, in the sack's mouth of the youngest [Benjamin's], and his corn money. And he did according to the word that Joseph had spoken.

*As soon as the morning was light, the men were sent away, they and their asses.
And when they were gone out of the city, and not yet far off, Joseph said unto his steward, Up, follow after the men; and when thou dost overtake them, say unto them, Wherefore have ye rewarded evil for good?
Is not this it in which my lord drinketh, and whereby indeed he divineth? ye have done evil in so doing.
And he overtook them, and he spake unto them these same words.
And they said unto him, Wherefore saith my lord these words? God forbid that thy servants should do according to this thing [They did not know the silver cup was hidden as one further test by Joseph to see if they were true changed servants of God.]:
Behold, the money, which we found in our sacks' mouths, we brought again unto thee out of the land of Canaan: how then should we steal out of thy lord's house silver or gold?
With whomsoever of thy servants it be found, both let him die, and we also will be my lord's bondmen.
And he said, Now also, let it be according unto your words: he with whom it is found shall be my servant; and ye shall be blameless.
Then they speedily took down every man his sack to the ground, and opened every man his sack.
And he searched, and began at the eldest, and left at the youngest: and the cup was found in Benjamin's sack.”*

Imagine their faces when they saw that. Imagine what was going through Judah's mind and the rest of the brothers at that time, but especially Judah because he knew he was the security bond for Benjamin's life. The silver cup was missing and was found in Benjamin's sack on his beast of burden, his ass or camel.

*“And Judah and his brethren came to Joseph's house; for he was yet there: and they fell before him on the ground.
And Joseph said unto them, What deed is this that ye have done? wot ye not that such a man as I can certainly divine [or make trial, is a better translation]?
And Judah said, What shall we say unto my lord? what shall we speak? or how shall we clear ourselves? [They were speechless. They had no idea what was going on.] God hath found out the iniquity of thy servants: behold, we are my lord's servants, both we, and he also with whom the cup is found.
And he said, God forbid that I should do so: but the man in whose hand the cup is found, he shall be my servant; and as for you, get you up in peace unto your father.
Then Judah came near unto him, and said, Oh my lord, let thy servant, I pray thee, speak a word in my lord's ears, and let not thine anger burn against thy servant: for thou art even as Pharaoh.
My lord asked his servants, saying, Have ye a father, or a brother?
And we said unto my lord, We have a father, an old man, and a child of his old age, a little one; and his brother is dead, and he alone is left of his mother, and his father loveth him.
And thou saidst unto thy servants, Bring him down unto me, that I may set mine eyes upon him.
And we said unto my lord, The lad cannot leave his father: for if he should leave his father, his father would die.*

And thou saidst unto thy servants, Except your youngest brother come down with you, ye shall see my face no more. [In other words, you are not getting any food unless I see Benjamin.]

And it came to pass when we came up unto thy servant my father, we told him the words of my lord.

And our father said, Go again, and buy us a little food.

And we said, We cannot go down: if our youngest brother be with us, then will we go down: for we may not see the man's face, except our youngest brother be with us.

And thy servant my father said unto us, Ye know that my wife bare me two sons:

And the one went out from me, and I said, Surely he is torn in pieces; and I saw him not since: And if ye take this also from me, and mischief befall him, ye shall bring down my gray hairs with sorrow to the grave.

Now therefore when I come to thy servant my father, and the lad be not with us; seeing that his life is bound up in this lad's life;

It shall come to pass, when he seeth that the lad is not with us, that he will die: and thy servants shall bring down the gray hairs of thy servant our father with sorrow to the grave.”

Imagine Joseph listening to this. His brothers did not care. In fact, they lied to their father, fabricating Joseph's death, pretending a wild animal killed him and all that was left was a bloody coat that his father made for him. They did not care how their father was suffering years prior to this event, but now these are changed men. They did not want to see their father go through what they knew was wrong, what was a sin and how they not only sinned against Jacob but sinned against God in what they did. These are changed men and they are pleading with Joseph trying to make him understand why it was important to take Benjamin back their father. We pick the story up again in verse 32,

“For thy servant became surety for the lad unto my father, saying, If I bring him not unto thee, then I shall bear the blame to my father for ever.

Now therefore, I pray thee, let thy servant abide instead of the lad [“Let Benjamin go, and let me take his place.”] a bondman to my lord; and let the lad go up with his brethren. [“I will be your slave; just let Benjamin go. I cannot bear to see my father go through this again. I might not have had the guts to tell him what really happened, but there is no way I am going to let something happen without putting my best efforts forward and replacing his life with mine, taking his place and being your slave in the place of my brother.”]

For how shall I go up to my father, and the lad be not with me? lest peradventure I see the evil that shall come on my father.”

You know the rest of the story. At this point, Joseph saw the change in his brothers. They came through with flying colors in this final test. They had changed hearts and changed lives, instead of lives controlled by mischief and malicious evil ways, but now a life controlled by God willing to substitute their lives not only for the sake of Israel the nation to survive, but also their father. After seeing these changed men, Joseph could not refrain himself anymore. Reading on in chapter 45, Jacob and Israel come down and dwell in the best part of the land which Joseph controlled.

We leave the story there and do not pick it up again until chapter 49. Now we are getting close to the breastplate and its significance. We will start in verse 8. This is where Jacob is giving

blessings to all his sons. We already covered the blessing of Levi, Reuben and Simeon, and now we hear of Judah's blessing and promise here in verse 8. We have blessings and promise by Jacob here and also when we get to Moses' prophetic promise. We will go through verses 8 to 12. It is loaded not just with the things I am telling you about, but it also relates to the breastplate because these scriptures also have other implications. I am going to stay focused on what concerns us about the breastplate and how Satan perceives this breastplate. That is why I am teaching on it. This is how Satan perceives it. Satan knows more about it than we do. I am just trying to get us up to speed as fast as possible, understanding that I cannot cover everything and do not know everything about it. Scripture is constantly revealing its information to me and I am sure to others around this world. I am just trying to keep up as fast as I can as things are being revealed through God's Word. Let's look at it. Verse 9 begins,

“Judah is a lion's whelp: from the prey, my son, thou art gone up:”

Read the first phrase, ***“Judah is a lion's whelp: from the prey, my son, thou art gone up:”*** This is a prophesy of Judah's reign over Israel and also testifies that all of God's creation, not just Adam-like beings, will bow down to Jesus who came from the line of Judah. We will all bow down to Jesus; man and Satan, principalities, demons, and evil wicked spirits. Everyone must bow down to Jesus. When Satan and his minions and his armies look at that stone on the breastplate, they are not bowing down to me as a priest or to you as a priest. He is bowing down, which is why I cannot stand Christians that run with their tail between their legs. We better not do that. Yes, Satan is a powerful, mighty being, even Michael the archangel had to deal with him, but every creature, both good and evil, mankind or angel-like, or animal, must bow down to Jesus who came from the tribe of Judah. Yes, Satan is powerful; yes, he has one up on us because he has many methods. I do not even know if we can think that evil, but we have something that he does not have – Jesus.

Go to Jude 1:9, which states, ***“Yet Michael the archangel, when contending [really disputing] with the devil he disputed....”*** He was not in a physical fight at this point with the devil. I am sure he would like to be, but at this point I do not think Michael the archangel withstood much of a chance. I know some day he is going to come, and God will give him the power and strength to overcome Satan in the Book of Revelation. I truly believe that, but at this point if he had that kind of power he would not be in dispute with Satan. He would just overpower him and take Moses' body and do whatever he did with his body. ***“Yet Michael the archangel, when disputing with the devil he disputed about the body of Moses....”*** I am sure the devil wanted to do whatever he wanted to do with Moses' body. I am not even sure what exactly. I have my theories, but that is not the subject matter. However, he wanted the body of Moses. Michael came down here on assignment to get Moses' body and do whatever his assignment was with his body, but he ran into Satan and they disputed and argued back and forth. Then it reads, ***“disputing with the devil he disputed about the body of Moses, durst not bring against him a railing accusation, but said The Lord rebuke thee.”*** Michael knew he could not overtake Satan physically or by rational means or common sense, whatever you want to call it. The only way he could overtake Satan and capture Moses' body and do whatever he did with it is by these four words ***“The Lord rebuke thee.”***

When Satan sees our green gemstone with the name of Judah on it, he knows that this is a

prophecy of Judah's reign over Israel. It also testifies of God's creation and he must bow down to Jesus who came from the tribe of Judah. Everything that God created bows down to Jesus Christ. When you confront Satan, you are a fool if you think you can do anything in your power. Even Michael the archangel knew better. You are a fool if you think you can come against evil in your strength and power. You are a fool headed for devastation, but you are not a fool when you recognize what that stone symbolizes. I am wearing the stone that is a part of my spiritual breastplate that makes the enemy recognize he does not bow down to me, but he must bow down to my creator Jesus Christ. Take it, analyze it, memorize it, make it part of your everyday being and realize what power you and I really have. This is not power we create, but power given to us through Christ in dealing with the enemy. That is why it aggravates me to see Christians, like I said earlier, with their tail between their legs.

Let's move on and go back to Genesis and look at verse 9, ***“Judah is a lion's whelp: from the prey, my son, thou art gone up: he stooped down, he couched as a lion, and as an old lion; who shall rouse him up?”*** Like a lion, Judah symbolizes here that he can overcome his prey. If you read this verse, ***thou art gone up*** after overcoming his prey, 'gone up' in the Hebrew means *to ascend, to exalt*. It refers to how Christ descended to the lower parts of the earth. You find it in Ephesians 4, where He descended to the lower parts of ***Hades*** with the keys of death, which I have said over and over is nothing more than the blood of Jesus Christ which He carried as the keys of death and hell, and then He ascended in victory and went up to the heavenlies. It is in Ephesians 4:8, that we read, ***“Wherefore he saith, When he ascended up on high...”***

Just as ***‘thou art gone up’*** refers to Jesus. Yes, He is talking to the tribe of Judah, but the prophecy behind this is talking about Jesus and how He would go up after He would overcome His prey. He would descend, then He get victory and ascend and present not only the captives that He set free, but His blood to His Father. So read that verse again,

“Wherefore he saith, When he ascended up on high, he led captivity captive, and gave gifts unto men.

(Now that he ascended, what is it but that he also descended first into the lower parts of the earth?

He that descended is the same also that ascended up far above all heavens, that he might fill all things.)”

“Thou art gone up,” O Lord, and you lived up to the promise that you made. You did fulfil all things and Satan is reminded every time he takes a look at that stone that Jesus had victory over ***Hades*** and after that victory, He rose and sailed into the heavenlies and now He is sitting at the right hand of His Father with His blood which I am sure Satan sees as he visits the throne knowing that, “Darn it! Jesus won.” We can praise hallelujah! He is our victor and He has gotten victory for all of us.

‘Gone up’ in the Hebrew means *to ascend*. Remember that. The rest of verse 9 reads, ***“...he stooped down, he couched as a lion, and as an old lion; who shall rouse him up?”*** This tells us that Jesus and Judah will not be defeated and rousing them up would be futile. That is the promise. Rousing Jesus, who goes before us now, would be futile. Through Christ, we inherit the same promise to conquer our enemies and foes. When our enemies rouse up against us, they do

not even realize that they are heading towards their devastation. Think about it, when our spiritual enemy rouses our physical enemies, all he is doing is rousing Him up. As a result, they are headed towards devastation and they will not achieve victory. If you go to the Romans letter we know, through all things we are more than conquerors through Jesus Christ because as the rest of that scripture says, He loved us, and He died for us. Genesis 49, verse 10 goes on to say,

“The sceptre shall not depart from Judah, nor a lawgiver from between his feet, until Shiloh come; and unto him shall the gathering of the people be.”

The sceptre is the official staff symbolizing his authority and power. Judah was designated as a ruler and lawgiver over Israel. Israel would not cease from this responsibility. Even as we speak, even though all things have been fulfilled through Christ, this responsibility does not cease. That is why I said in Genesis 38, it is important to understand the chapter about Judah and Tamar in regard to the lost tribes. They will not cease from the responsibility until Shiloh comes. Shiloh is another form of peace and here he refers to the prince of peace Jesus Christ. Verse 10 ends with the words,

“...and unto him shall the gathering of the people be.”

The people of the world will be gathering unto him, but not ***“until Shiloh come.”*** Some people think Shiloh was Jesus' first physical body presented here on earth for 33-1/2 years, but that was just part of the fulfilment. This verse has not been fulfilled completely yet, but it will be, and the people of the world will be gathering unto Him, not Satan. Verse 11 continues,

“Binding his foal unto the vine, and his ass's colt unto the choice vine; he washed his garments in wine, and his clothes in the blood of grapes:”

A foal is an ass's colt, so the description here is referring to young beasts of burden. The vine in this verse symbolizes Jesus Christ and fruitfulness. I preached enough on this in the Fruit of the Spirit series from John 15 several times now. Jesus Christ symbolizes the vine and fruitfulness. As branches or beasts of burden as described here in verse 11, we must keep connected to the vine to do His work, which is to be involved in the employment of the Word of God. A lot of people in the Christian world want to produce their own fruit, but the only fruitful fruit is the fruit that is connected to the vine controlled by Jesus. Then you will be fruitful both spiritually and naturally. The wine in this verse symbolizes the joy of the Lord, which is where we get our strength. It is also declared in Nehemiah. When we are faithful to the employment of His Word He rewards us with joy and our righteous garments are bathed with His joy making it part of the fruit of the Spirit. Wine is a symbolism of joy in the Old and New Testament, in this case, joy that is placed in the Lord and the employment of the Word of the Lord. When we partake in that, we are clothed with His garments and bathed with His joy. There is no substitute for this. Reading in verse 12 we see,

“His eyes shall be red with wine, and his teeth white with milk.”

When a man is drunk with wine, you can see the red in his eyes, but here it symbolizes not drunk with wine but literally drunk with the Holy Spirit controlled by Jesus. In comparison, it is

noticeable that a drunk man is controlled by wine when he stumbles around. However, if you are drunk by wine, symbolized by the Holy Spirit, you are controlled by Jesus. It is obvious and you do not have to show it off. You do not have to see if you have it because you are a changed person by Christ who has filled you with the Spirit, His new wine. Natural wine controls and affects a man's eyes that you can see it. Spiritual wine affects and controls a man's spiritual eyes. There is a difference.

Milk here symbolizes the Word of God. Go to I Peter 2:2, where Peter writes, ***“As newborn babes, desire the sincere milk....”*** Eventually you must graduate from milk to meat. Peter is specific here; all newborn babes start with milk. ***“As newborn babes, desire the sincere milk of the word,”*** so milk is the Word. Meat is the gaining of understanding and knowledge of the Word ***“that ye may grow thereby.”***

If we want the same benefits as Judah, then we must be filled with what it is saying in Genesis 49:11 and 12. That is, we must be filled with the Holy Spirit and the Word of God, which is what Jacob blessed Judah with. He did not even realize as he was blessing Judah at the time that this was a future prophesy and all things would be fulfilled through the one who came through the land of Judah, Jesus Christ.

Go to Deuteronomy 33:7, where Moses blesses Israel. Here we read,

“And this is the blessing of Judah: and he said, Hear, LORD, the voice of Judah, and bring him unto his people: let his hands be sufficient for him; and be thou a help to him from his enemies.”

It was prophesied and promised that the Lord would hear Judah's voice when Moses said, ***“And this is the blessing of Judah: and he said, Hear, LORD, the voice of Judah....”*** Judah's voice would be heard by the Lord and was fulfilled openly by Jesus Christ. The coming Messiah through Judah would save and help them from their enemies including us as well.

Jesus faced His enemies, which are our spiritual enemies also. The people you deal with are just the pawns in the chess match. The spiritual beings that control and dictate things and constantly bring accusations to the Father is the enemy that Jesus will deal with on our behalf. Jesus faced these enemies and His enemies are our enemies. To see these enemies, do not just look on your neighbor, your boss or someone who is suing you as your enemy. Christ faced the ultimate enemies which is sin in all its aspects from the little white lies to murder. He faced all sin. He had victory over all sin and hell. He descended, but He also ascended and exalted Himself next to His Father. He achieved victory. ***Hades*** could not keep Him. The enemies I am talking about that you need to focus on we have victory over because of what Christ did for us. He also hears our voice as is promised through Judah, so we no longer live under the defeat of sin, hell and death. Satan and his army is defeated; hell is defeated; sin is defeated; death is defeated. He conquered and achieved victory and so will we if we stay connected to Jesus Christ and let Him clothe us with the proper attire, the armor of God.

I wrote down eight points in these blessings and prophesy, not just from Judah, but also through Moses that applies to us now if we have that breastplate on, which we obtain by faith. Faith

activates these armor pieces. Without it, it is impossible to please God, but I want you to remember what this green stone engraved with the name of Judah symbolizes in regard to spiritual warfare and the breastplate of righteousness.

1. Our enemy must bow down to the Lord Jesus Christ.
2. Jesus has overcome His prey and ours also.
3. He has ascended in victory and our enemy's accusations are futile because we are covered in the blood of Jesus which makes us more than conquerors through Jesus Christ who loved us.
4. Because He is the Prince of Peace, we will gather to Him and not to Satan our enemy. This is what Satan hates the most.
5. We have been given the privilege to be Christ's beasts of burden to employ the Word of God. If I have not engrained it in your mind by now, then there is no hope for you. We have been given the privilege to be Christ's beasts of burden to employ the Word of God. That is what Satan sees. Like I said, he knows our commission better than we do at times.
6. Soldiers of Jesus Christ are branches connected to the vine to bear both spiritual and natural fruit that is controlled by the Holy Spirit because of the activation of faith and trust in His Word.
7. Because of our faithfulness to Christ, we will be rewarded with righteous garments bathed with joy.
8. Satan sees and knows when he looks at our breastplate that Jesus will hear our voice in battle. When He sees that breastplate just as the promise to Judah proclaimed, He will also see and hear our voice in battle whatever we face and save us from our enemies which include Satan and his army, sin, hell and death.

What a powerful stone! They are all powerful. Satan does not have a chance if we will just hang on, understand and learn from God's Word and apply it by faith. It is a powerful message and we need to understand it.

I looked up the Testament of Judah that was written about 100 years before Christ. I went to the last chapter where its prophesied Christ and His coming. It starts with verse 21 and goes to verse 33,

“And a man [Jesus] shall arise from my seed, like the sun of righteousness, Walking with the sons of men in meekness and righteousness [This is Jesus before He even arrived on the scene.];

And no sin shall be found in him [and no sin was].

And the heavens shall be opened unto him, to pour out the spirit, even the blessing of the Holy Father; and He shall pour out the spirit of grace upon you.

And ye shall be unto Him sons in truth, and ye shall walk in His commandments first and last. Then shall the sceptre of my kingdom shine forth; and from your roots shall arise a stem; and from it shall grow a rod of righteousness to the Gentile, to judge and to save all that call upon the Lord.

And after these things shall Abraham and Isaac and Jacob arise unto life [And they did. It was the victory achieved in *Hades*. He led the captives out of captivity, and they sailed with Jesus into the heavens.]; and I and my brethren shall be chiefs of the tribes of Israel [‘And ye shall be’ is why each tribe is on the gate in the New Jerusalem.];

And ye shall be the people of the Lord, and have one tongue; and there shall be there no spirit

of deceit of Beliar [that is Satan], for he shall be cast into the fire for ever. [After the 1,000 years.]

And they who have died in grief shall arise in joy, and they who were poor [poor in spirit] for the Lord's sake shall be made rich, and they who are put to death for the Lord's sake shall awake to life.

And the harts of Jacob shall run in joyfulness, and the eagles of Israel shall fly in gladness; and all the people shall glorify the Lord for ever.

Observe, therefore, my children, all the law of the Lord, for there is hope for all them who hold fast unto His ways.”

And that is what I intend to do, and it is why I want you to understand what tools we are given to hang on with all our might to the ways of the Lord. He did not leave us without the tools to fight the spiritual fight. He goes before us, He is part of us, and we as branches must be connected to Him. We will achieve victory, just as He did, if we let Him have control over our life through the Holy Spirit, get involved and stay connected with Him and employ the Word of God to all the nations, Gentiles and Jews alike. It is what we have been called to do. It is what we have been given to fight in not only our personal battles, but the battles related to the employment of the Word of God. These are eight important points to remember about this stone in the breastplate of righteousness.

The Fifth Stone

Go to Ephesians 6:14, ***“Stand therefore, having your loins girt about with truth, and having on the breastplate of righteousness;”*** We are still on the latter part of this verse, ***“and having on the breastplate of righteousness;”***

In this breastplate series, I am laying down a foundation of the different names of the tribes on these stones on the breastplate. I have referenced Exodus many times in this series, which I believe is what Paul was referring to when speaking about the breastplate; not some Roman soldier's gear that most Christians preach. It is a good starting point, but as I have covered many times in the past in this series, that is milk and not the meat of the Word. It is unfortunate that many preachers dish out the milk and never advance to the meat.

Paul is referring not just to this particular piece of the armor, but you will also see in other pieces of the armor Old and New Testament concepts. God designed clothing, in this case for the breastplate that we would put on when representing the priest's role. In the New Testament, we are all priests so we all must put on the spiritual armor. There are different callings that He chooses as roles for us in the priesthood just as He did in the Old, and because we are all priests in the New Testament, we all must wear this Christian armor. Without it, we will fall on our faces and never see victory. There might be times that you might find it easier than others, especially if you backslide, but we cannot have victory over the enemy, Satan and all his minions, unless we have on this Christian armor.

Our starting point during this breastplate part of the series has been Ephesians 6:14. We have gone back to the Old Testament in Exodus 28 and from there we have launched to other areas of scripture. In Exodus 28, let us start with verse 15,

“And thou shalt make the breastplate of judgment [or mishpat] with cunning work; after the work of the ephod thou shalt make it; of gold, of blue, and of purple, and of scarlet [I have taught on all these colors and their significance.], and of fine twined linen, shalt thou make it. [I have also taught on that.]

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. [We covered this.]

And the second row shall be an emerald, a sapphire....”

We covered the emerald and the sapphire is what this chapter is about. Verse 21 continues to say,

“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.”

Each one of these stones had a tribe. I am sticking with the Old Testament tribes, even though throughout history in different areas, especially when you get to the Book of Revelation, God changes the order of these tribes twice. I will add Ephraim and Manasseh as an addition to this breastplate when I get to it. But on this breastplate, we are just covering Jacob's 12 sons, not substituting Ephraim and Manasseh and removing Judah and the third son Levi. I am not going to be doing that. I am sticking with how the Old Testament laid down this breastplate in those times and then I will add Ephraim and Manasseh as we move into the New Testament.

“And the stones shall be with the names of the children of Israel, twelve, according to their names, like the engravings of a signet;”

We have covered the first four sons, and now we will read about the fifth son of Jacob and the fifth stone of sapphire in the second row. The name of the tribe on the stone is Dan. The sapphire is a rich blue or a deep purplish-blue gem that it is also found as the second foundational stone in the New Jerusalem. Some of you may know the number five means grace, but it also has another meaning. In the Old and the New Testament, it means *abundant life* in addition to *grace*. To see this, go to Genesis 1:20-23 and look at where the number five had its beginnings when we reference *abundant life*.

“And God said, Let the waters bring forth abundantly the moving creature that hath life, and fowl that may fly above the earth in the open firmament of heaven.

And God created great whales, and every living creature that moveth, which the waters brought forth abundantly, after their kind, and every winged fowl after his kind: and God saw that it was good.

And God blessed them, saying, Be fruitful, and multiply, and fill the waters in the seas, and let fowl multiply in the earth.

And the evening and the morning were the fifth day.”

Abundant life had its beginnings on the fifth day. You will see it carried out through the Old and New Testaments, especially the significance of abundant life rather than what is being taught today. It is not what Oral Roberts taught on abundant life. It is none of that. Abundant life has a totally different meaning than what is being preached today. That is not the subject matter, but I wanted to show where it got its beginnings here in Genesis 1:20-23 concerning abundant life.

I think most of you know that atonement was displayed through the five offerings, which is another appearance of the number five. Those five offerings were part of Abraham's journey to the five altars and are: the burnt, the meal, the peace, the sin and the trespass offerings.

Go to Isaiah 9 for a quick review of the number five and then we will move forward on the breastplate and Dan. In Isaiah 9:6 we will see the wonderful promise of the one that would provide grace and abundant life in the New Testament; that one being Jesus Christ, our Lord and Saviour. It is a wonderful promise. Verse 6 begins,

“For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given: and the government shall be upon his shoulder: and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, The mighty God, The everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace.”

Let's look at each individual name that He was called and what each means.

1. **Wonderful.** In the Hebrew, *pele'* and means *miracles and possibilities*. Things that are impossible to us are possible through Christ Jesus. No matter what we face, He will get us through because He is the God of the impossibilities.
2. **Counsellor.** In the Hebrew, *ya'ats*, the *One who would bring the Word literally to direct us*. Jesus Christ would leave the gospel as a record to direct us, to feed us, to nourish us even now so we can grow in the faith and trust in Him.
3. **The mighty God.** In the Hebrew it is just *El*, *the one true God with strength and power*. Without His strength and power, we would all be doomed. He had strength and power to overcome all of Satan's attacks and temptations and to take the punishment that He took, the mocking and scourging to die on that cross, and to trust in His Father that He would be resurrected once again and because of His resurrection we have eternal hope. Only the one true God has that kind of strength and power.
4. **The everlasting Father.** Everlasting literally means *forever through all eternity* in the Hebrew; Father literally means *head of household* in the Hebrew. If you really think about it; yes, He is the head of household; yes, there is now the possibility through Christ to live throughout eternity without ever experiencing eternal death. Yes, we might experience physical death, but we will never face eternal death if we keep our trust and faith in Him. He is everlasting and will go through eternity forever, but He is also the head of the household. A lot of you probably know Ephesians 5:23 by memory where Christ says He is the head of the church, head of the household and the saviour of the body. It is what that promise means. Christ would be the head of the church and the saviour of the body. Some get confused about the everlasting Father. He is the everlasting head of the household; not the one who is head of the Old Testament saints, but head of the church in this age of dispensation and grace.
5. **The Prince of Peace.** In the Hebrew it is *sar shalom*. Prince obviously means *the head or captain, or ruler* and He is the captain of our salvation. This shows another demonstration of what Christ, who still had not yet come, would be when He did come. Thank God that He did. He is the Christ, the head of the household, and the captain of my salvation. If I keep trusting in Him, I will go throughout eternity with Him forever because He is the one true God who has that kind of strength and power to make this promise come to pass. Thank God, He is also the one who brought the Word to direct and guide us, to teach us, to make us grow from the milk level to the meat level.

Of course, He could not do any of this if He was not the God of the impossibilities. I love this scripture and would love to go verse by verse by verse through the Book of Isaiah. I long for the time I can go through this book. It is one of the books that I have studied the most and it is my favorite book in the Old Testament. This verse is a sample of how the number five is so important in scripture. It not only provides grace, and shows its symbolism in grace, but also in abundant life. Christ has given us both, not just through the Old Testament, but also in the New. With this introduction, go to Genesis 30 to make the trek through scripture concerning Dan. We

have been going son by son through Jacob's family record and now we are at the fifth son. Verse 1 begins,

“And when Rachel saw that she bare Jacob no children [Leah has produced four sons up to this point and Rachel, the favorite wife, has not produced one.], Rachel envied [in the Hebrew she had a jealous anger about her, she was fuming mad that she could not produce children] her sister; and said unto Jacob, Give me children, or else I die. [Imagine what was going through Jacob's mind. “What have I been trying to do!” Just think about it.] And Jacob's anger was kindled against Rachel: and he said, Am I in God's stead, who hath withheld from thee the fruit of the womb?”

Literally Jacob's *nostrils were glowing*, is what was said in the phrase ***“And Jacob's anger was kindled against Rachel”***. He was not very happy with her statement, ***“Give me children, or else I die,”*** because I am sure, Jacob being Jacob, he continually did his best effort to give Rachel what she requested. I am cleaning this up a little bit, but he told Rachel, “It is not me that has held back. I have done everything I can. Get off my back woman.” If he did not say it, he was sure thinking it. He probably tried to the point of exhaustion. Put flesh and blood on these characters. Look what he has done and how many he has produced so far with Leah, but Rachel is mad because she is not getting any action and is possibly blaming Jacob here. I am not talking about the way you are thinking. I am talking about action as far as producing children. She is not getting anywhere. She probably exhausted Jacob trying to produce children because of the competition between her and her sister. I know some of you men are thinking, “Boy, put me in that position.” I can almost read some of your carnal thoughts. Well, stay with me here. Men will be men, but let's stay with God's Word. Verse 3 continues with Rachel scheming. Since she cannot produce any children, she wanted Jacob to use her maid Bilhah; this poor woman who had nothing to do with this to produce children. In the Hebrew, Bilhah means *troubled*, and I guess I would be troubled too if I got placed in the middle of not only Rachel's anger, but also Jacob's. Of course, Jacob being Jacob, the fruit does not fall far from the tree.

“And she said, Behold my maid Bilhah, go in unto her; and she shall bear upon my knees, that I may also have children by her. And she gave him Bilhah her handmaid to wife: and Jacob went in unto her.”

We do not see any resistance on Jacob's part. Look at all these characters that God used throughout history and what He had to work with. Because of what He promised Abraham, He had to use all these characters. It is obvious it changed through God's Word in biblical history, but the change came slowly. That is why I can identify with all these characters and I am sure you can too because we put flesh and blood on it. They were not perfect Christians as soon as they converted; it was a road they took. These were people with problems and desires. I am not justifying what Jacob and Rachel did, but God kept His word through all this nonsense. I have read others, and it is amazing that they justify and clean up what they did so it looks purer to the Christian. They say, “Well, this is what God allowed because He wanted to produce these 12 children.” God did not need Bilhah if His intention was to produce 12 children so somewhere down the road there would be 12 tribes. He did not need Bilhah or the other handmaid that Leah used later in scripture. He did not need either of them. He could have stayed within the realms of Rachel and Leah, Jacob's wives. Between verses 1, 2 and 3, you do not see Jacob or Rachel

pleading with God because of not being able to bear children.

Do you see the record that when man or woman take over and want to be in charge how things are going to happen in their lives? They leave God out of the equation completely and take matters into their own hands. I am just as guilty and so are you. Maybe not to this degree, some of this is not even allowable today, at least not legally in this country the United States of America. I am not condoning or condemning it. What I am trying to put across is that God was left out the equation, and that is what I come against. Even though I have been guilty of it so many times, the message does not change. Even if I do not live the message the way I preach it, it still does not change, and my commission does not change one iota. I still must preach the Word the way God laid it down. I am so tired of people over the years saying, "Well, you don't live what you say." I fall short, but I am just like any other Bible character; a work in progress who understands that I give occasions to the flesh. Now do not misunderstand me or read something into this. I am not talking about what is described here, but there are plenty of other desires in life. The list is long and every time I want something, I tend to leave God out of the equation, just as I have illustrated in other passages when God is left out of the equation. Let this be a lesson to us.

Believe me, there was a lot of conflict with these brothers. They did not have great parents if you analyze scripture. They had a kind of screwed up situation in their family. They did not go on national TV and say, "I am messed up this way because of what happened to me when I was a child." Well, grow up already! Are you a child anymore? Sooner or later you must stop and deal with the problem and move on. I am so tired of Psychology 101 being played out on TV. Grow up! If you will not lean on God's Word to get you through, then there are plenty of successful worldly programs in the flesh to deal with your problems. I still think the most successful is God's Word and it is really the true source to handle all our problems, but you need to get to a point in your life where you stop hanging onto the past. Even if you think, "Well, my mother or my father did this, or my brother or my sister did this, or my cousin did that, or my neighbor's friend." Whatever the situation, I am so sick of crybabies that cannot seem to understand that there are a lot of things that should not happen in a person's life. Sometimes it starts with childhood, but I have a healing God; not just for health but also for emotion to stabilize our mental capacity. Then we put those things in the past and move forward gathering strength and knowledge in His Word, understanding that the things of the past are in the past and now we are living a new life filled with grace and living it abundantly when it is taught right; not a woe is me attitude that seems to never get over what happened to them in the past. Get over it.

Some people just love to be miserable. They are not happy unless they are miserable. Believe me, in my lifetime I have come across people who have that attitude. I am not saying go around pretending to be happy day in and day out but learn the joy of the Lord and once you experience that joy those things of the past will not have much effect on your life in the future. I will admittedly tell you I cannot stand Christians trying to adopt some of the worldly psychological programs and combine it with God's Word. Nonsense! Pick one. I suggest you pick God's Word to get you through life's situations. If you need some help in understanding God's Word, then start listening. I have a lot of messages that are available on the website so if you want to get past what you are experiencing, start studying along with us. Sooner or later I will cover most subjects that are facing your life. I do not know how I got off on that, but maybe somebody

needed it. Returning to Genesis 30:3 we read again about Jacob and Rachel's Plan B,

“And she said, Behold my maid Bilhah, go in unto her; and she shall bear upon my knees, that I may also have children by her.

And she gave him Bilhah her handmaid to wife: and Jacob went in unto her.

And Bilhah conceived, and bare Jacob a son.

And Rachel said, God hath judged me, and hath also heard my voice....”

Now she is giving credit to God. That is fine and dandy, but she should give herself the credit because it was her plan, never God's. There is no record of Jacob or Rachel pleading together to God so she could bear children. There is only the record about how they acted and solved the problem using their own means, and now she is giving credit to God. I do not think God was a part of it. He allows us to do these things and does not interfere. Now He might turn something that we have done into something good later on, but along that path there will be lessons to learn. Believe me with these children there was plenty to learn.

“And Rachel said, God hath judged me, and hath also heard my voice, and hath given me a son: therefore called she his name Dan.”

His name means *judge* or *judging*. And that is pretty much the record on Dan. Next we see in Genesis 49 that they are in Egypt. We find Jacob at the end of his life giving a blessing to all his sons. We covered the first four sons, and in verse 16 we read,

“Dan shall judge his people, as one of the tribes of Israel.

Dan shall be a serpent by the way, an adder in the path, that biteth the horse heels, so that his rider shall fall backward.

I have waited for thy salvation, O LORD.”

This has implications as the tribes would move out of Israel, first into bondage and slavery and then as captives, and I believe they would go on to march across Europe. So, this has implications for that trek in the future where this lost tribe of Israel would march and eventually come to. It also has implications in another matter. This blessing states for spiritual reasons what their name, the name of Dan, would come to mean as they wore that stone on the breastplate, and that is what we will focus on. At this time, where they went as a lost tribe is not the focus, but instead three important verses to understand. We need to understand the meaning of the stone, why it was worn, and why they were chosen to be on that breastplate because it sends a message not only to us but to our enemy, Satan and his army. However, first we must break this verse down.

Verse 16 tells us that ***“Dan shall judge his people.”*** Most commentaries correctly say that Dan would have a judge. The most famous judge was Samson, even though he judged most of the time out of emotional reaction to his anger, he still was judge, so the promise was fulfilled for that purpose. However, most commentaries and scholars leave it right there, but that is wrong because in verse 17 we read, ***“Dan shall be a serpent....”*** This is an example where a serpent actually is a good thing, although usually everybody hates serpents or snakes. I hate them; I cannot stand snakes and spiders and I am not that fond of cockroaches either, but here a serpent

is a good thing. Most of us think of serpents as the serpent in the Garden of Eden, but that is not what it is referring to here. The entire verse reads,

“Dan shall be a serpent by the way, an adder in the path, that biteth the horse heels, so that his rider shall fall backward.”

The serpent referred to here is an Arrow Snake. An Arrow Snake is a horned snake. It is about 2.5 feet long and has horns sticking out of its head just above the eyes. I looked it up and let me just read what type of snake this was, but I am telling you it is a good snake when it refers to how we are to approach our spiritual enemy. This text tells us,

“One of the viperous poisonous snakes that inhabit Palestine, distinguished by a small pointed horn above each eye. Raymond Ditmars reports that the horned viper is found in N Africa from Algeria to Egypt and also in Arabia and S Palestine.

Because the venom of the horned viper is potent (though not usually fatal to humans), David fittingly speaks of violent men as having sharpened their tongue like ‘that of a serpent; the venom of the horned viper is under their lips.’ - Ps. 140:3.

Reaching a maximum length of about 0.8 m (2.5 feet), the horned viper is of a pale, sandy hue and thus conceals itself in sand, waiting for prey. The untrained eye finds it most difficult to spot a lurking horned viper. In his book Reptiles of the World, Raymond Ditmars describes some horned vipers he saw in captivity. ‘Like all desert vipers, they were continually seeking to throw sand over their backs, thus hiding their bodies. If the cage were to be provided with several inches of fine sand, nothing would be seen of the snakes during the day but the tops of their heads. [The two little horns popping out.] In shoveling sand the reptile flattens the body to such an extent, the lower edge acts as a scoop, then by a remarkable series of wave-like motions traveling the length of the body, on either side, the snake sinks into the sand or works this over its back.’

The horned viper, which is alert and strikes with great swiftness, has been known to attack horses; thus the comparison given at Genesis 49:17 of the tribe of Dan with the ‘horned snake’ is most fitting. There Jacob likened Dan to a serpent, a horned snake, ‘that bites the heels of the horse so that its rider falls backward.’ This was not to downgrade Dan, as if he were a vile snake in the grass fit only to be crushed under the heel. Rather, in the capacity of a snake, Dan would serve a great national purpose. By lying in wait like the horned viper, he could, in effect, bite the heels of the horse carrying an enemy warrior and cause it to rear up and dump its rider off backward. So, though small, Dan would be as dangerous as a horned viper to Israel's disturbers.”

That is easily understandable, but what about this horse and rider that verse 17 refers to? Obviously, the horse has a rider and this snake is there to come against Israel's attackers. So, this snake symbolizes in the breastplate through the tribe of Dan any of our enemies that come to attack us will be met by something that is capable to bring the enemy down, but not in our own strength or power. Let's look further. The horse with the rider mentioned here gets its heels bitten, so I looked through scripture to find examples of a horse and rider. A horse continuously represents swiftness and power under the control of the one wishing to carry out evil in this case towards the saints. In scripture we find an example of that is Exodus 15:1. Here, they have just crossed the Red Sea, and everybody is rejoicing. God delivered them and there is a consecration

of the firstborn just prior to that and now after the victory where God demolished the attacking enemy we read,

“Then sang Moses and the children of Israel this song unto the LORD, and spake, saying, I will sing unto the LORD, for he hath triumphed gloriously: the horse and his rider hath he thrown into the sea.”

This made sense to me. Here is a reference of the horse and rider. The horse was not there by itself, and the attacker is using an instrument of power through the horse which always represents power and swiftness in scripture. We also see here the Lord triumphed gloriously over the horse and rider.

Now go to Haggai 2 towards the end of your Old Testament for another example. This is where Haggai is appealing for the Israelites to rebuild the temple and he says in verse 22:

“And I will overthrow the throne of kingdoms, and I will destroy the strength of the kingdoms of the heathen; and I will overthrow the chariots, and those that ride in them; and the horses and their riders shall come down, every one by the sword of his brother.”

Haggai encouraged the people to rebuild the temple and tells them that they are enemies no matter what they are travelling in or what animal or beast they are using to attack the promised chosen ones. Their destruction will come to pass, and God will throw them down everyone by the sword.

There are other places in scripture that mentions horses are being used. For example, Jesus rides one in Revelation 19:11-14 where He is riding a white horse and so are, we along with Him. In that verse, Jesus comes back to judge and make war at the end of the tribulation period just before the millennium begins. The purpose is to make war against the saints' enemies, the ones in the flesh and the ones being controlled by spiritual forces because this truly is spiritual warfare we are experiencing and will be experienced. So, there are areas in scripture where the horse is used when it is controlled by God for His glory and what He wants to accomplish at that particular time. In contrast, through the verses I referenced and also in Genesis 49:16-18, it is really a promise that we have on the breastplate that God knows what our enemy is coming with. However, there is something in the breastplate that protects us against that horse and rider, against that powerful and swift enemy, that comes to make war against the saints. He is still protecting today and will continue protecting us all the way up to the millennium until the devil is thrown in the pit for 1,000 years. It will happen, but God has promised us that the horse and rider will be smitten; they will be thrown back, they will fall back because of their evil intentions against His chosen ones. That is the promise in the breastplate. When the devil and his army see that breastplate, he literally, no pun intended, says “Whoa!” That is why Satan does not want you to understand what this breastplate means and symbolizes because once you understand all of its implications you do not run with your tail between your legs in fear of what Satan can do. He is no match if you are living through Christ Jesus.

I have pointed out before in Jude that Michael knew his limitations when he left God out of the equation, but when he came in the name of the Lord, he knew he could overcome and take

Moses' body. If he did not come in the name of the Lord, he was no match for Satan at that time. But when he came in the name of the Lord, Satan was no match for him and that will be proven out at the end of time when he is thrown in that pit and chained up. Do you think Michael would come in his own power? No, he will not. He will come in the name of the Lord just as we come in the name of the Lord when we put on that breastplate when living through Christ being filled with the Holy Spirit. There is something else very interesting in Ecclesiastes 10:8 about the serpent. It reads,

“He that diggeth a pit shall fall into it; and whoso breaketh a hedge, a serpent shall bite him.”

This is another reference to a serpent and what he will do if that hedge is broken. Listen carefully so you can tie in what I have been saying. ***“He that diggeth a pit shall fall into it; and whoso breaketh a hedge, a serpent shall bite him.”*** In scripture, hedges are symbolic of God's boundaries for the purpose of a person's well-being. So, if the enemy comes and tries to tear down these protective boundaries, they will suffer a swift and sudden judgment delivered by God by any means He wants to deliver that judgment. It could be through a human or through spiritual means with forces He uses to deliver that judgment on spiritual beings trying to break down the protective boundary we have been given. That is why the spiritual armor that we wear is so important. You must keep on believing that you are imputed with God's righteousness. And righteousness is only given to the ones filled with the Holy Spirit, which then clothes you with righteousness with this spiritual armor. As I have said, the breastplate of righteousness is not just what people think righteousness is but what it also provides.

Here in scripture, ***“He that diggeth a pit shall fall into it; and whoso breaketh a hedge [or protective boundary that God has put around us], a serpent shall bite him.”*** In other words, trouble is coming to those who decide they will try to break through the boundary. It may not come through me, even though God might use me to deliver that trouble, but more than likely He will protect us using means outside the realm that we understand to deal with the spiritual enemy that is truly behind all the trouble.

Are you getting the idea? Do you understand the concept here how important this fifth stone is? All the stones are important. These names are etched on them to remind us of what God has clothed us with and how He goes about protecting us and how we should not live a life of fear because of what the enemy is always coming after us with. Instead, we should live a life of faith because we have more promises throughout these stones and tribes and what they symbolize than what unfortunately is being preached about in most churches. Most Christians run in fear and do not understand what true spiritual warfare is because they do not understand all that is available to come against the enemy. It saddens me, but that is why this series in Ephesians 6 will be important when it is all said. It is to equip the saints, so they are aware of all the wonderful promises God has given us through these tribes and other pieces of the armor to come against a wicked and evil enemy.

Now these good snakes in the Old Testament used to come against the horse and rider which represents the enemy are also in the New Testament. Matthew 10:16 is where Jesus tells the disciples that they should expect persecution. Christ tells them,

“Behold, I send you forth as sheep in the midst of wolves: be ye therefore wise [or prudent] as serpents, and harmless as doves.”

And this is where the misconception is. We just stay in one place, knowing trouble is coming and we try to avoid it. Then we think, “Oh my God, it has hit us,” and we try not to react to it; that we will just take it. In some cases, you might, if it is called for. But in other cases, you take probably more than you would like. We are commissioned to take a stand against the evil that is coming against us, but *harmless* is not what this verse says. Literally in the Greek the word is *simple and innocent*. So, this verse should say, ***“wise as serpents, and simple and innocent as doves.”***

Doves look like pigeons and most think that doves are pigeons because they look very similar, but they are not pigeons. Doves are more intelligent than pigeons, which is one of the biggest differences between a dove and a pigeon. Most get aggravated with pigeons. I lived in a house where pigeons decided to make a nest in the eave of the house. The house was an A-frame and the pigeons nested in that area and, of course, it was right next to the upstairs bedroom and all I heard was the constant cooing of the pigeons. It drove us crazy until we acted against it. We put a natural deterrent in the area so when the pigeon flew in it did not like it and fly away. It did work, I must admit. Pigeons are aggravating, a nuisance, messy and not smart, but doves are the opposite. They are more intelligent. That is the biggest difference from a dove. So be *simple and innocent*; in this case, intelligent; be wise or prudent and intelligent as doves. Another characteristic of doves is that they are not afraid of dark places. That is why they are used by magicians. Have you ever seen a magician put a dove under a top hat or cover the dove somehow? Doves are not afraid to be covered or be in dark places.

In summary, when we are put in these kinds of situations that require us to take or make a stand against evil, we are to do it quickly and with prudence to disrupt evil plots that come against us or other saints, the church. That is what Christ is saying here; not harmless, but simple and intelligent. Be wise and prudent as a serpent and simple and intelligent as doves. Do not be afraid of the darkness that might come your way, because doves are not, but understand that God is there, and He will be there in the blink of an eye when He sees your willingness to come up and stand against evil. Most people think these disciples were just easy targets. Paul stated continually especially when he could use the Roman citizenship as a weapon that we are not sitting ducks. Christ does not want wimps for Jesus, but too much of the church world has that mentality. I am not saying to go out and pick fights, but when the fight comes use your brains, use God's Word and understand no matter what dark places you are put in, the Word of God will instantly come to you in a simple way so you can understand it and not fear the darkness that you suddenly find yourself in. Be willing to be an instrument of God's righteousness to stand against these evil forces.

For one last example, go to Deuteronomy 33:22, where we see Moses' blessing on the tribe of Dan. Now, Moses also takes these tribes out of order so do not box me in just because the first night I started this I gave you the Gematria of a breastplate that shows another way where it gets the Word out through Jesus Christ. He is the repairer of the breach both in Hebrew and Greek. I could take any of these examples and preach through it. It is just wonderful that we have all these examples declaring the same message. Verse 22 begins,

“And of Dan he said, Dan is a lion's whelp: he shall leap from Bashan.”

If you remember what I preached in the Judah message, a lion's whelp is a young lion, meaning we will have the strength and the power of a young lion. It symbolizes here in this scripture strength and the ability to overcome its attackers. In the latter part of this scripture the phrase ***'leap from Bashan'*** means they will be fruitful. Another meaning is to make secure or put at ease. Because we are clothed with Christ's armor that He has fashioned for us, we are to exhibit boldness. That is the leaping part; boldness, leaping out against evil, and secure that the Lord will be with us against the enemy when he surfaces with his evil intentions. Scripture is saying it and it is a promise right there in the breastplate. That is why the name of Dan is scorched on that stone. Do you see what kind of weapons we have and what kind of promises we have!

Returning to Genesis 49:18, we are suddenly at the end of Jacob's blessing where we are told that Dan shall be a serpent, he shall deal with the horse and the rider, the rider shall fall backward. Then in verse 18 we read, ***“I have waited for thy salvation, O LORD.”*** Salvation here in the Hebrew is *I have waited for thy deliverance and victory, O LORD.*

To conclude this message, we need to go to Exodus 15:1 because I think this is an appropriate ending for this message on Dan.

“Then sang Moses and the children of Israel this song unto the LORD, and spake, saying, I will sing unto the LORD, for he hath triumphed gloriously: the horse and his rider hath he thrown into the sea”

Now let's look at verse 2 is the conclusion to this message.

“The LORD is my strength and song, and he is become my salvation:”

The same Hebrew word is used here for salvation. That is *'he has delivered to me my victory'* and our victory for the church also. He is the one who can deliver the victory from the spiritual enemy that engages us in this spiritual warfare.

“The LORD is my strength and song, and he is become my salvation: he is my God, and I will prepare him a habitation; my father's God, and I will exalt him.”

In the New Testament this habitation is you, me, us, and the church being prepared to exalt the Father over the enemy. That is why you cannot be a do-nothing Christian, a Christian couch potato. You must get engaged. There is no choice. You are chosen to be a soldier of Jesus Christ. You will endure the hardships and afflictions, but Christ will be there with you, so we must make ourselves a habitation to glorify the Father and exalt Him in this spiritual fight that we are in. The Lord is our strength and He is our salvation. He will give us deliverance and victory. Take that with you in the days, months and years to come until He comes back for the church or until He takes you home, knowing that Satan is very powerful, but we serve a powerful Lord in Jesus Christ and that is why Satan has literally buried it.

Someone wrote to me and said, "I do not know if anybody has ever preached on this series in Ephesians 6 on the spiritual armor because I really have not listened to others." I am telling you, try and listen to it. Some of you have listened to many other preachers. It has been a hidden message for too long. Yes, I know we are going to catch the heat for it, but I know who I serve, and He is a powerful God and through my Lord and Saviour, He has given me promises. I will continue to wear the breastplate and use the other instruments of our warfare to the pulling down of strongholds, because I trust and know what He has said will come to pass and His promises are forever, not for just a short period of time. It is forever and He will see me, He will see you, and He will see the church through no matter what.

Naphtali, the Sixth Son

Go to Ephesians 6:14, where I have been preaching through verses 10 to 14. Those who have been following this teaching could testify this route that I have taken is so much different than what is preached or written about in the Christian world, and I do not plan to change it until I am done. I will stay with it all the way through verse 18, preaching it the way I have been preaching, so you have the most complete spiritual warfare series on this subject in Ephesians for your benefit as you march through life fighting a spiritual enemy that has only one thing on his agenda, which is to destroy you and drive that wedge between you and God. I am convinced you will come out in the end victorious if you understand how to fight him; who gives you the tools to do it; who supplies the tools, the weapons and the instruments; who clothes you with His strength and righteousness, and gives you the understanding what his methods are and who you are also fighting. You will have victory in just about whatever you face in your life if you keep trusting with the knowledge of what spiritual warfare consists of and why it is important to know that we get our understanding through God's Word. I plan to stick with it until it is done.

“Stand therefore, having your loins girt about with truth, and having on the breastplate of righteousness;” We are at the latter part of this verse in Ephesians 6:14; ***“and having on the breastplate of righteousness.”***

We have taken a look at what this breastplate of righteousness looks like through God's eyes and what is available to us through Christ. We have also gone back to the High Priest's breastplate in Exodus 28:15, but in this chapter, we will go to verse 21 to answer some questions about the order of the breastplate and how each son of Jacob's twelve sons is placed on the breastplate. I have changed the order and there is a reason for it because I know what sources are out there. In fact, I have been working with 23 different sources and not just commentaries either to verify what I already knew from various studies I have already done. I dug so deep I did not leave any stone unturned, and I will raise the question about how many tribes there were. Most think there are 13, but are you sure? I will get there. With that, we will go to Exodus 28:15,

“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.”

Verse 17 continues describing the breastplate,

***“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.”***

The subject matter of this chapter is the diamond and the sixth son of Israel, also known as Jacob. The third row of the breastplate is described in verse 19. Then in verse 20, the naming of the stones ends with the fourth row of,

“... beryl, and an onyx and a jasper;; they shall be set in gold in their inclosings.”

Verse 21 goes on to say,

“And the stones shall be with the names of the children of Israel [The names are etched on these stones probably using a diamond which we will find out why], twelve, according to their names, like the engravings of a signet [or of a seal]; every one with his name shall they be according to the twelve tribes.”

No matter what Bible translation you read, there is not that much difference between translations on this verse. Sometimes just the wording is different and some of the modern translations try to put it in a different style, but for the most part it reads, **“And the stones shall be with the names of the children of Israel, twelve, according to their names....”** However, I will refer to the Hebrew and the Septuagint versions rather than show all the research that was involved when I first looked into this verse some time ago and then verified it recently. And still, there are Hebrew scholars that argue over this verse, especially when referring to the names of the children of Israel, what and who the tribes were, and how the Hebrew lays it out. So, first, let's take the Hebrew translation first,

“And the stones shall be with the names of the children of Israel, twelve...”

Twelve in Hebrew is *shenayim* and means *two or both*, however in the Hebrew version of this verse, this word *shenayim* comes after twelve, but we do not see that in the English translations. The Hebrew word *asar* used in the verse means *ten* even though some of modern translators say it means *teen*, as in teenager, but its root is *ten*. In addition, this word *asar* used here in verse 21 is usually used in combination with another number from eleven to nineteen. That means this verse should read according to the Hebrew version,

“And the stones shall be with the names of the children of Israel, *asar*, [ten] *shenayim* [two or both]”

Or, in English,

“And the stones shall be with the names of the children of Israel, ten and two...”

You may be wondering, “Well, ten and two adds up to 12. What is the problem?” And, so far, there is no problem.

Now to compare translations, we will read this verse from the Septuagint where scholars of that day took the Hebrew and translated the Bible into Greek, the English of their day. Dozens of scholars translated this word *twelve* as *deka duo*, and the verse reads, **“and the names of the children of Israel, *deka* [ten] *duo* [the two].”** The translators did not say which of the two, just **“the two”**. So, in this verse we have *ten* and *the two* in the Septuagint and in the Hebrew, we read *ten and two*. You may wonder what is wrong with this; they both say *twelve*, but let's continue reading.

“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.”

Now here is where it becomes tricky and scholars have argued about the later part of this verse. We know *asar* and *shenayim* is *ten and two* or *both* in the Hebrew. In the Septuagint, we read *ten and the two*, which does not change the verse; it still says *deka duo*, but translations have changed over time. If you think the Hebrew has never changed, I am telling you not only has it been changed, it has been changed more often than you could possibly have thought throughout the centuries and millenniums. However, look at some of the most ancient manuscripts available and you will see there is something unique that happens here that many of the modern scholars have not caught. Here the ancient manuscripts read, ***“his name shall be according to the twelve tribes,”*** but the text in Hebrew it says, ***“asar shenayim shenayim”***.

Let me repeat myself, and then you will know why I am teaching this way. When I first started teaching on this breastplate, I gave you a Gematria example showing how in row after row from right to left the names of the sons of Israel are engraved on each stone. By the way, some of the most modern scholars have placed names on these stones in their order, and I just gave you one example quoting how this Gematria lays it out. If you remember, the top row in Hebrew equals 755; Jesus Christ and the bottom row in Greek also totaled Christ Jesus. Then the middle totaled to be ‘the repairer of the breach.’ That was just one Gematria sample of the many ways, and that is why man literally has no excuse because no matter where we turn, God has covered it with the Gospel of the Good News of Jesus Christ. Like it or not, you cannot turn to any field whether it is science, or whatever field, without seeing how God laid down His handiwork with the message of the Gospel of the Good News of Jesus Christ.

So, I started with that and when I got to the third son, Levi, some of you on your Gematria scale, as I gave it as an example just for the purpose of giving you an example of the many different ways God's Word has been proclaiming the message of Jesus Christ, noticed it was not the pattern I was going to follow because it is not the pattern in Exodus 28 that God followed. As I said, God has changed which tribes are going to represent Him throughout history. I even told you that when we get to the Book of Revelation, God eliminates Ephraim and puts back Joseph and He eliminates Dan and puts back Levi out of the 12,000 from each tribe that were chosen in that 144,000 that will still declare the message through the Great Tribulation. Even Moses changed the order of the blessing to a completely different order than Jacob. In this series I have been laying down the pattern of both, Jacob first and Moses following him, because there is a significant reason for it.

However, some box themselves in that this is the way it was written, and it has to stay that way and it cannot change. God forbid that He would do anything that He wanted to do if He saw fit to do it without checking with you. Stop boxing God in. There is nothing worse than know-it-all Christians because they think they have the Bible memorized from front to back and know what it says. I would like to get some of them in front of me and quiz them about some of the doctrines of the Word of God throughout this book. Can they verify using the whole book to make their point just for the purpose of proving that they do not know as much as they think? I do not know everything either. I am a work in progress, but the one thing that God has given me

is the gift of not boxing Him in. I might have preached something two years ago and then find out that I have more information that changes the perspective of it a little. You will not see me with an ego that I will not change because God forbid the perspective change because knowledge has increased. Some people like to box God in and some have egos too big to change their thinking on a subject believing there is no possible way they did not know it all to start with because they read the book from Genesis to Revelation several times.

That is the reason for showing the Gematria during this series. It gives a perspective of what is available and there are several. In fact, there are several variations even in the Gematria. I am saying this because of the last part of this verse. It is also why I stuck with the original 12 sons of Jacob, which puts Levi and Joseph in the equation. In some of the oldest manuscripts I know most cannot possibly get their hands on because it is just not available, most have never had the luxury of seeing what was written millenniums ago by these scribes and scholars in some of these ancient manuscripts. In those manuscripts, this verse states, “*asar shenayim shenayim*”. This is important because when Jacob adopted Ephraim and Manasseh, there were no longer 12 tribes. Joseph would have a double portion of blessing added to his tribe through his two sons Ephraim and Manasseh which Jacob blessed, which is the 12 tribes, *shenayim shenayim*. The older manuscripts are preferable when it comes to this verse because it is verifiable. Some may have thought there were only 13 tribes because Levi would not have an inheritance, but he did have an inheritance which I already preached on. It was not an inheritance of land, but instead it was other blessings that you and I could not even have until Jesus came, and we all became part of the priesthood in the different capacities of that priesthood.

These scriptures are not for mental midgets that read the Bible through each year. You must dig deep, have an open mind, and not box God in. Believe what I say is true, because if you follow this ministry obviously, He has a message for me to get out and He is using my voice to make God's Word clearly understandable in the way that it has not been on certain subjects. I have said over and over, my mentor made faith clearer than most ever have. He made giving clear and he taught on other subjects. He even taught on the 13 tribes and where the lost tribes of Ephraim and Manasseh went. Yes, there were only 13 colonies here in the United States, not 14. Before the Revolution, those 13 colonies were owned and possessed by a mother country which makes 14. If you want to play with numbers, we could play all day long. Those 13 colonies eventually became part of the United States of America – 13 plus 1. How far do you want to go with it? You can justify anything by just being creative with the numbers. However, I believe that is significant, especially when it comes to the lost tribes, but I want to point out that I will go with the ancient manuscripts as a verifiable source. Returning to Exodus 28:21, we read at the end of the verse,

“every one with his name shall they be according to the asar shenayim shenayim [ten, two and another two].” The ‘other two’ are Ephraim and Manasseh. I will preach on Ephraim and Manasseh when I get to Joseph because Jacob said it would be his stone, his name, and his tribe will have a double portion added to it, and that double portion will be Ephraim and Manasseh. When I get to Joseph, not only will I teach on Joseph as part of that stone but also the added two, Ephraim and Manasseh.

Looking back to verse 18 we read,

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

The diamond is where we are now. This would become the sixth son of Jacob. Before I move to the sixth son, know that the sixth stone is a diamond. The diamond in Hebrew is ***yahalom*** and comes from the root word ***halam***. I remember when I was in college trying to figure out whether I was going to do a geology major and move to other arenas I took everything possible I could find related to geology. The first thing we had to learn was the hardness scale from one to ten; the diamond being number 10 on the hardness scale. This makes sense not only because of the diamond’s physical structure and how it is a stone you can literally write on other stones with or tear down other stones with it, but ***halam***, the root word of ***yahalom***, literally means *to hammer or strike down; to overcome*. This stone geologically is known for its hardness and if you take the Hebrew meaning, *to hammer or strike down to overcome*, you will know why the diamond was chosen for Naphtali, Jacob's sixth son, as a stone that was used here in scripture.

All you have to do is read through scripture to see Naphtali was one of the tribes that would eventually assist Deborah and Barak, Gideon, and David. Naphtali would come to their assistance without question to hammer down, to strike down, and to overcome the enemy throughout Old Testament history. I just gave three well know examples, but there are more. Those of you who have read the Bible through know about Deborah and Barak in Judges, Gideon following closely after that, and then everybody is familiar with David. This tribe was there consistently to assist other tribes that were facing an enemy, so it became known as the tribe that would come to strike down the enemy, to overcome it when it reared its ugly head. It is not by coincidence that this stone was chosen for Naphtali. When we read through scripture, especially when we get to Jacob's blessing and Moses' blessing, there is a short description of what their blessing would be, although it was different then Joseph’s or Judah's. One sentence is written about their, but it is a powerful blessing.

The diamond is also symbolic of a Christian. Just as Naphtali was symbolic of the tribe that always would come to strike down the enemy, to overcome it, the diamond is symbolic of the Christian in overcoming and conquering sin; for instance, the devil, the world and hell. This is not done in our own power or strength, but through the Lord Jesus Christ. The diamond is symbolic of a Christian overcoming the things I just mentioned; sin, devil, world, hell, and life in general when we face our enemy through the Lord Jesus Christ.

As an example, in I Corinthians 15 in both verses 55 and 57, it reads ***“...where is thy victory?”*** That is the latter part of this verse, but it begins with ***“O death, [I love this] where is thy sting?”*** Those of us who have our hope in eternal life can ask the same question, ***“O death, where is thy sting? O grave...”*** A better translation is, ***“O hell, where is thy victory?”*** Death will not sting us and hell will not have victory over us. Verse 57 tells us, ***“But thanks be to God, which giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.”*** I point these verses out so you realize where our victory comes from.

Once again to review, the diamond is a stone symbolic of a Christian's life overcoming sin, the devil, the world and hell through the Lord Jesus Christ as is also stated in the New Testament, which we see here in I Corinthians 15 with both verses 55 and 57. When that happens and

victory comes, then we shall overcome and have victory by and only through Jesus Christ our Lord and Saviour. This is the sixth stone. It is symbolic. Before I have said there is good meaning behind the number six. God first used it. It came to mean other things, and unfortunately more Christians dwell on how the number six is a bad number instead of how God used this number as part of His creation. Six is a very good number that is symbolic of the finishing work of God, the reproducing of the thing after its kind, and exercising God-given dominion over something.

We find that in Genesis 1 where the number six is used in a good way with a good definition and meaning behind it the way God purposed it originally before sin entered in. We begin reading in Genesis 1:23 where five days have passed,

***“And the evening and the morning were the fifth day. [The sixth day begins in verse 24.]
And God said, Let the earth bring forth the living creature after his kind, cattle, and creeping thing, and beast of the earth after his kind: and it was so.”***

Here we see the first thing that happened on the sixth day was a reproducing of a thing after its kind. We have it in scripture, ***“And God said, Let the earth bring forth the living creature after his kind.”*** Kind after kind was created. Verse 25 continues,

***“And God made the beast of the earth after his kind, and cattle after their kind, and every thing that creepeth upon the earth after his kind: and God saw that it was good.
And God said, Let us make man in our image, after our likeness: and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over the cattle, and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth.
So God created man in his own image, in the image of God created he him; male and female created he them.
And God blessed them, and God said unto them, Be fruitful, and multiply, and replenish the earth, and subdue it: and have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over every living thing that moveth upon the earth.
And God said, Behold, I have given you every herb bearing seed, which is upon the face of all the earth, and every tree, in the which is the fruit of the tree yielding seed, to you it shall be for meat.
And to every beast of the earth, and to every fowl of the air, and to every thing that creepeth upon the earth, wherein there is life, I have given every green herb for meat: and it was so.
And God saw every thing that he had made, and, behold, it was very good.”***

When you dig deep into verse 30, ***“And to every beast of the earth, and to every fowl of the air, and to every thing that creepeth upon the earth, wherein there is life....”*** The actual translation is, ***“every thing that creepeth upon the earth, wherein the living soul has life, I have given every green herb for meat: and it was so.”*** This may cause some to think that there is more of God's creation than Adam-like beings that have a soul. We will see when I get there.

So, in these verses we see that the number six is the symbolic number of the finishing work of God. When God was done, you read in chapter 2, verse 1:

“Thus the heavens and the earth were finished, and all the host of them.”

Then in verse 2 we come to the seventh day where God ended His work that He had made, and He rested. This is how we know that the number six is the symbolic number of the finishing work of God. To put a definition to the number, it is the reproducing of a thing after its kind. Finally, six is the exercising of God-given dominion over something. We lost that dominion when sin entered our lives and that dominion we gave back to Satan. Now it will change some day, but until that happens, he has dominion over it and that is why the number six came to be used as the number of man, but also the number that eventually would identify the spiritual enemy during the Great Tribulation.

God's intention for this number was always for a good purpose. In fact, He was well pleased in it, which we read in Genesis 1: 31, ***“And God saw every thing that he had made, and, behold, it was very good.”*** However, the original of this verse reads, ***“behold, it was exceedingly good,”*** and makes me think this day went beyond even God's expectations. Verse 31 concludes, ***“And the evening and the morning were the sixth day.”***

Some of you questioned me getting an 866-toll free number for this ministry, but the more I think about it, the more I want to rub this in the devil's face. This is what God intended to be exceedingly good, although sin caused the number six to have a different perspective and view by Adam-like beings. God knew what His original purpose was, and I am tired of traditional Christians living in a box. It is time to open that little door and step out and start understanding the deep riches of God's Word. Christians need to stop running with their tail between their legs because the devil is out there. We are given so much to come against the devil and his army through Jesus Christ to combat these evil forces. Do I respect their power? Obviously, but I know who is greater, and greater is He that is in me than he that is in this world. That includes anything I can see with my eyes, but more importantly everything I cannot see with my eyes. So do not run from the number six. In fact, change your perspective on it and put God's spectacles on about why He saw ***“it was exceedingly good.”***

With that little introduction marching towards the next stone on the breastplate, the sixth stone, the stone with the name Naphtali on it, Jacob's sixth son, let's go to Genesis 30. Here I will begin with some groundwork before we get to the blessings and the promises that are given to us and how God's righteousness goes before us. If we keep trusting, it is one heck of a breastplate to be worn by chosen ones. We covered Jacob's family record. We started towards the end of chapter 29 and now march through chapter 30 beginning here with verse 7,

“And Bilhah Rachel's maid conceived again, and bare Jacob a second son.”

Remember Rachel is competing with her sister Leah about who had the most children, who could get Jacob's attention the most, and who was loved by Jacob the most. We knew that Jacob loved Rachel the most, but Leah was winning the contest. Because Rachel could not have children up to this point, she got Jacob to produce children with her handmaid. She did not want to be left behind, so she took matters into her own hands. I reviewed verses 1 through 6 already, so this chapter begins with verse 7. Naphtali is the second son from Bilhah, but the sixth son so far that came from Jacob's loins. Verse 8 continues,

“And Rachel said, With great wrestlings have I wrestled with my sister...”

Here Rachel gets so super spiritual if you literally understand when in the original Rachel states, ***“And Rachel said wrestlings of God have I wrestled with my sister.”*** She is trying to bring God into the equation to justify Bilhah’s involvement in producing sons, but there was no word from the Lord. I have seen how Christian commentators try to clean this up. There was no word of the Lord that says, “Hey, you go into her, and you go into her, and you go into her Jacob. We will get to this number 12 somehow some way.” Remember this is the same God that made Sarah able to conceive at an elderly age. The only way to explain it was that it was a miracle that she conceived at such a later stage of her life. God could have produced children if that was His objective and if He wanted to get to the number 12, He would have gotten there somehow. Who knows, maybe God wanted to produce six children from Leah and six from Rachel and He decided Leah would go first. We do not know what was in God's mind, and we will never know now because Rachel decided to take it into her own hands and Jacob did not resist. He agrees to producing children with another woman. There was no record of Jacob resisting, and the only record we have is he got mad at Rachel because she was mad that she was not producing children. Who knows: maybe there was something not recorded between them of blaming Jacob because maybe he was not doing something right? Who knows what the scenario was? We could make up story after story and have fun with it, but it was not a matter that was presented to God; it was a matter that was taken up by man, and woman in this case, to produce something they wanted in their own timing without waiting and enduring until God had the last word on it the way He wanted it done because He knew what His plan was.

Let's get back to verse 8, ***“And Rachel said, With great wrestlings have I wrestled with my sister, and I have prevailed: and she called his name Naphtali.”***

The best translation for the name Naphtali is *my wrestling*. In comparison, the Christian life, no doubt, is like a wrestling match. We are told about that in Ephesians 6:12, ***“For we wrestle not against flesh and blood...”*** From previous messages, we know that Paul reversed it for some reason. He wrote, ***“For we wrestle not against blood and flesh,”*** although he could have written *flesh and blood*. That is normally how this is said, but that is not what Paul wrote. I am not going to go into all the meaning behind this scripture because I already preached a message on it, but Paul wrote is *blood and flesh*. From Christ dying on that cross until the present day, Satan wants us to wrestle against the blood; not our blood, but the blood that Christ spilled because he knows if he gets us to the position where we question what that blood did for us, if we are wrestling with it because we cannot grasp it, we cannot understand what it means for us in our life, then he has our flesh. He has got us where he wants us. There is no accident here. ***“For we wrestle [the Christian life is like a wrestling match] not against blood and flesh...”*** But if we wrestle against the blood of Christ, we will be wrestling with the flesh the rest of our life until we come to the understanding and get a grip on our life through the blood and what it provided, what our Saviour did on that cross to give us a second chance at eternal life. Our choice is whether we are going to wrestle with it or not.

I cannot believe how many Christians still cannot grasp the idea that Christ went to the cross and died. A lot of groups now want to diminish the importance of what He did on the cross and how

it fulfilled everything that God has promised throughout the whole Testament. He fulfilled it and because He fulfilled it, we do not live under the law anymore, but once we start wrestling with that blood, we put ourselves under the law of the Old Testament and not under the grace of the New. We do not live by the law anymore; we live covered and under the blood as free men and women because of the grace of God.

I understand the Christian life is a wrestling match. There is no doubt about it and I am not surprised that this sixth stone, this diamond stone, is a stone that we have to strike down the enemy's thoughts. First, we must overcome his evil thoughts planted in our brains and has us questioning. Some of you are beyond that, but there are a lot of new converts who listen to me that have never heard teaching like this before. This message is to you. You will keep wrestling, but understand, just like the name Naphtali means *wrestling* or *my wrestling*, Naphtali came to the point where he did not wrestle any longer with the call of God because he understood the blessings given to him by Jacob and Moses. We will get to those blessings, but remember, the Christian life is a wrestling match, but like Naphtali, that sixth stone of this breastplate, we have the tools through Christ Jesus to strike down and overcome any of the attacks and methods that he uses against us to bring in question what His blood did for us. When you quit wrestling against the blood, and you will quit wrestling against the flesh. Now, Satan will constantly try to bring those thoughts back into your life, but rebuke them, resist them in Jesus' name and move forward.

Now we come to Naphtali's blessings. This has all been teaching leading up to the blessings. In Genesis 49, Jacob gives blessings, but he switched the order of how he gives the blessings to his sons. The last son that I preached on was Dan, but Jacob skipped over Zebulun and another son of Jacob and went straight to Dan. Now here he goes from Dan to Gad, then to Asher, then finally to Naphtali so do not worry about how things get changed throughout God's Word. God has a purpose for it and eventually we will get there. Naphtali's blessing is in verse 21, which I love.

“Naphtali is a hind let loose: he giveth goodly words.”

That is the complete blessing that Jacob gives Naphtali. ***“Naphtali is a hind let loose: he giveth goodly words.”*** Even though this blessing is short, all these blessings have implications for the lost tribes and where they eventually went. But there is another application that applies just to the breastplate. As part of this I kept looking up different material about the hind and came across all kinds of things that might be interesting. To begin, a hind is a deer and more specific, it is a female deer. So, this verse could say, ***“Naphtali is like a female deer let loose: he giveth goodly words.”***

Here are other interesting facts about deer that we can also apply to this verse:

“Early bestiaries describe [the deer] as a relentless enemy of snakes. The [deer] was believed to pursue snakes into their holes or rock crevices, flush them out by flooding the hole with the breath or water from its mouth, and devour them.”

As the centuries went by everybody thought this was a fable, but listen closely:

“As fantastic as this seems, there is a deer-like animal, the pausen, in Afghanistan which hunts and eats snakes. Because the snake is associated with Satan, the [deer's] supposed war against the snake made it a symbol of Christ and the Christian in their battle against the evil one. The water used to flush out snakes became symbolic of [Christ]... the Gospel; and the water which flowed from his pierced side at Calvary. In the 42nd Psalm, David makes the deer a symbol of the soul's longing for God. He says, ‘As the deer pants after the water brooks, so pants my soul for You, O God.’ Because of this passage, the deer has become the symbol of ... the pursuit of union with God.”

Let's go to Psalms 42:1, where the King James states. ***“As the hart [Or deer. In some translations even hind.] panteth after the water brooks, so panteth my soul after thee, O God.”*** This verse reminded me of another popular animal in the Middle East, especially during these times and many centuries after, the camel. Yes, this verse says, ***“As the hart panteth after the water brooks, so panteth my soul after thee, O God,”*** but it is really saying, ***“As the deer panteth after the water brooks, so panteth my soul after thee, O God.”***

If a deer does not get water, it becomes desperate and there is a reason for it, but then I thought of another animal that is used quite often in scripture. It was the automobile of Jacob's day, and many centuries after, and that is the camel. If you really think about it, Christians are more like camels today than they are deer. Why? Camels are known to go up to three months without any water. In contrast, the deer referred to here in this verse needs water obviously on a regular basis because the deer's daily life is a fast-paced existence, but this is different for the camel. I know it stores water, but it can live up to three months without it, which made me think of how some Christians go months without God's Word. There is no panting after it, no panting at all. Some Christians who call themselves Christians only go to church on Christmas and Easter. Do you have to go to church to be a Christian? No, you do not, but for some their total involvement is only those two days in a year meaning some Christians go months without hearing God's Word. I have known Christians like that. I am not throwing stones, but scripture says we are supposed to be more like deer than camels, and yet around the world Christians today are more like camels, especially in this country, the United States of America. There is no panting in pursuit of God's Word. The Bible tells us that to whom much is given, much is required, they have taken the much is given. Even a poor person here is given much in comparison to other countries, especially when it comes to the Word of God. As a result, they have become as self-sufficient as a camel. The camel can make the trip using the water it has stored up, and too many Christians today store up what they think they know about God. Then they only remember God when they need Him badly because they screwed up their lives terribly, or when their conscience finally gets to them, they think they must be more religious on certain days of the year than others.

However, here scripture says, ***“As the hart panteth after the water brooks, so panteth my soul after thee, O God.”*** Become like the deer just as this author writes, ***“Because of this passage the deer has become the symbol of the pursuit of union with God.”*** Be more deer-like and less camel-like. Pursue God. Go back to the brook and refresh yourself. Go back to God's Word. That is why the name of this ministry comes from the verse in Romans that tells us, ***“faith cometh by hearing, and hearing the word of God.”*** In the Greek, this means we are hearing and hearing and hearing the Word of God. The Word of God is a continuous hearing process and is how faith

will not be forgotten in its application.

Then I read another interesting note:

“In Celtic mythology, the deer leads souls through the dark forests. The deer's actions as leader of the herd in the wild are reminders of Christ's role as the protector and guide of the church. The deer's antlers are symbolic of the tree of life.”

I thought that was interesting and did not want to quit at that point when I was looking up all this information on the deer, so I continued. What else have I got? Let me read it. I think you might enjoy it.

“The phrase ‘hinds' feet is used ... to [describe] an ability to overcome difficult challenges successfully ... [which will be able to make a person, or in this case a deer] move quickly and easily across the rocks of a mountain, leaping from one rock to another without ever losing its footing. Thus the biblical verse means that God has inspired his believers and empowered them to overcome the obstacles which confront them, doing things that would otherwise be difficult or impossible without divine aid.”

That means we can overcome difficult challenges successfully if we are equipped with hinds' feet as Naphtali was equipped with them as a hind let loose, and as a hind will have hinds' feet.

So, I said that is fine, but it was not enough for me, so I kept looking.

“A hind is a female deer that runs along the rocks of mountains.”

Their feet are equipped to run along rocks of mountain cliff sides, along the edge and climb these steep mountainsides.

“It was known also for its swiftness and grace when running on Rocky Mountains. Once we repent and surrender to Christ, we are let loose from our sins. The Lord gives us freedom to live graciously.

Believers should be ready to move swiftly to aid the cause that pleases God when the opportunity arises.

In the same way a hind can move across rocky hills and mountains gracefully without stumbling, saints have the God-given ability to walk through troublesome times with grace as we remain humble so God can order our steps.”

Okay, I have no problem with any of that. This next author states,

“It's true that the climb up to the high places is a bit more challenging than a level foot path in a valley.”

Some of you are in the valley and pray that you get out of valley. You long for the day to get out of the valley, without even realizing that God has given you hinds' feet to climb to that

mountaintop and reach the high places, but it will take work. It means that you will have to use God's implanted strength to accomplish the victory to get to that mountaintop. And because it looks more difficult than what you are willing to go through, you may start validating your valley. I have known Christians who will say that the valley does not look too bad after all. Then Satan has you camped out in the valley where he wants you. Valleys are just a stopping place. Scripture says we are just passing through them to get to those mountaintops. Yes, it will take some scaling; yes, it will take some work, and it will take balance. It will take a lot of things, but we are not destined for the valley, we are destined for the mountaintops and there is a reason for it.

“It is true that the climb up to the high places is a bit more challenging than a level foot path in a valley. But not if you’ve got those hinds' feet; the hinds' feet equip you for the roughest terrain.”

Yes, it will be rough to get up on that mountaintop, but He has given you the equipment to get there, so stop looking at the valley as the only place you will stay and start thinking that God has already given you the equipment to start climbing when He wants you to get out of that valley. Yes, it will take some sweat and some work, but God has never called any loafers into His kingdom. He calls people who are serious about their commitment. It does not matter what it will take, He will give you the strength to see you through, but you must take a step of faith to activate the process.

So that is what I got out of all of this and it is all good, but what else does scripture say about these hinds' feet. I began with Psalms 42:1, and verse 2 goes on to say,

“My soul thirsteth for God, for the living God: when shall I come and appear before God?”

When verse one states, ***“As the deer panteth after the water brooks,”*** I understand we must continuously come back to the water brook to be refreshed and that water brook is none other than God's Word. If you have the desire and you panteth for it because you know it will refresh you, it will bring you into closer relationship with God. But let's go to I Chronicles 12:8, where David is listing his personal army. What do armies do? Armies fight wars; armies are prepared for war whether it comes or not. Verse 8 begins,

“And of the Gadites there separated themselves unto David into the hold [or into the cave] to the wilderness men of might, and men of war fit for the battle, that could handle shield and buckler, whose faces the faces of lions, and were as swift as the roes upon the mountains.”

In the verse, David is listing his personal army. These are men of war fit for the battle. Are you fit for the battle? These ***‘men of war fit for the battle...could handle shield and buckler,’*** and had ***“the faces of lions.”*** They would scare anyone! They were ***“as swift as roes”***, literally, ***as the roes upon the mountains to make haste.*** These were men of might, men of war that David lists here as part of his personal army who could carry the shield and buckler. You would not want to look into their faces because they would scare everything out of you, but they were also like the roes or deer upon the mountains to make haste. In other words, these were men who were following David, and now they are also following the God of David, pursuing after Him.

Yes, David is their captain; and yes, they are ready to go into war. Well, Christ is our captain. Are we fit for the battle? Are we ready to go to war the moment we get up every morning until the moment we go to sleep and sometimes in between? Is there any doubt in your mind that you are a good soldier of Jesus Christ as scripture says in the New Testament? Do I have to make it any clearer?

As I teach on every stone, are you starting to understand that this is what scripture is intended to mean? It does not mean you will be a pansy for Jesus, but you are a controlled soldier of Jesus Christ prepared to go into battle when He calls you to do so. And when you do, you will be as swift as the roes upon the mountains to make haste. You will not drag your feet in other words. You know the battle is raging and you will say, “Yes, Lord, I am here.” That is what Naphtali did time after time as I said with Deborah and Barak, with Gideon, and with David. They did not have to convince Naphtali's at all. They said, “Is that what is happening? Sign me up! Is that what you need? I will be there.” Are you getting the message?

Habakkuk 3 has another verse that really excited me when I read it. Verse 19 tells us,

“The LORD God is my strength [Isn't that what Ephesians 6 says? Be strengthened the Lord!], and he will make my feet like hinds' [a female deer's] feet, and he will make me to walk upon mine high places.”

After reading this, I said to myself, it is back to the same thought again. ***Bamah*** is the Hebrew word for the phrase ***“upon mine high places.”*** Most of the time commentators like to use it to mean ‘*higher places of worship; higher in altitude level or funeral mounds,*’ but it has another meaning. It also means to ‘*walk upon my high mountains.*’ That is the theme throughout this hinds' feet message. He will give you the ability to walk in those high places, but it also has a different meaning and if you go by too quickly, you will miss it completely.

“The LORD God is my strength, and he will make my feet like hinds' feet, and he will make me to walk upon high battlefields.”

Oh, there will be some mountain climbing and there will be some battlefields, but the high battlefields symbolize ones that have gone through the war and are standing at the end high above it all at the highest point at that peak or mountain or field overlooking the conquest that it has overcome. Without the hinds' feet and without the strength of the Lord, we cannot claim that promise. We cannot understand why the devil fears that breastplate, not as a symbol, but what it represents. Christ was everything and then some symbolically and we are now just getting a glimpse through these names and Satan knows it. When we put on the breastplate, we are putting on Christ and all its meaning. Satan knows that now God also has given us hinds' feet through Christ not to dwell in the valleys because hinds' feet were designed to climb the peaks to reach the mountaintops and to view the battlefield from the highest position it conquered. Now in the flesh we cannot conquer the devil and his army, but through the Lord Jesus Christ he is no match.

That is what Psalms 18:33, a song of victory, tells us,

“He maketh my feet like hinds', and setteth me upon my high places.”

The same Hebrew word, **bamah**, is used here meaning 'mountaintops and battlefields.' The blessing bestowed on the breastplate with the name Naphtali on it tells us that no matter what we will go through and no matter what the enemy throws at us, God has given us hinds' feet, like I said, to overcome whatever we face and whatever the enemy throws at us. When it is all said and done, we will be able to go through the rough terrain to reach that mountaintop, but we will get there and we will stand at the highest point in the field of battle looking back at what Christ has overcome through you and to Him be the glory and the victory.

Go back to Genesis 49 and the second part to verse 21, "***Naphtali is a hind let loose: he giveth goodly words.***"

What are those goodly words? In Colossians 4:6 in the New Testament, Paul clearly says, "***Let your speech be always with grace....***"

As we look back now, goodly words are nothing more than the Gospel of the Good News of Jesus Christ. However, a better translation of this verse is, "***Let your speech be always rejoicing with grace.***" Because of God's grace, He allowed His Son to come here to die on that cross to give me a second chance. Yes, I will be rejoicing over the grace that I preach that was given to us, the unmerited favor, and there is nothing we can do to deserve it. It was given to us as a free gift to relieve me and get me out from under the bondage and the grip of Satan to be now a free man or a free woman in Christ. Claim it for yourself no matter who you are as free men, women and children in Christ rejoicing in the grace and knowledge of what Christ did for us.

"Let your speech be always with a rejoicing grace, seasoned with salt," which does not mean we are silly Christians going around loving everybody and doing the things Christians do trying to attract people who are not Christians to become like them. No! In fact, that makes me disinterested, just as when I first became a Christian. I did not want any part of it.

"Let your speech be always with a rejoicing grace, seasoned with salt [is salt that would rightly divide the Word of God which is preached through the Gospel of Jesus Christ correctly], that ye may know how ye ought to answer every man."

In this case, Naphtali was equipped with hinds' feet let loose to overcome the enemy no matter where and when he faced that enemy. In addition, he also would have the ability to use God's Word, the Gospel of the Good News of Jesus Christ, to answer any man's accusations, criticisms or whatever for us. We are not supposed to be Christians that just lie down and take it. Some Christians have become useless for God, martyrs for Jesus in the wrong way. No, we are to be ***"seasoned with salt, that ye may know how ye ought to answer every man."*** You answer every man with goodly words. Our goodly words are the instructions printed here in the Holy Bible, specifically in our day and age, the Good News of the Gospel of Jesus Christ. Whether they want to listen or not is not up to us. Whether they want to believe or not is not up to us. God does the sorting and calling including if He wants the worldly sinner man – and we are all sinner men – to come to the point of understanding that Christ should be their saviour or to even step in to bring reason into any situation. I have seen it happen in my life. Just as Naphtali, our speech is with goodly words, but goodly words seasoned with salt. My instruction does not come from this

world; it comes from the good news of this book and that is what Jacob was blessing Naphtali with.

I will finish with Moses in Deuteronomy 33:23. Here, Moses takes this blessing for Naphtali out of order from the way the sons were listed in Genesis 49. In verse 23 Moses says,

“And of Naphtali he said, O Naphtali, satisfied with favour, and full with the blessing of the LORD: possess thou the west and the south.”

We already knew he was satisfied with favour because he was a willing instrument to be used of God and most of the time the history we are given in scripture where Naphtali used by God to come to the defence and the aid of other tribes. Also, what Jacob or Israel blessed Naphtali with has not changed much so far, but here is something very key. No matter what commentator you come across, they will try to geographically locate this blessing and that is fine. I do not have a problem with it, but it is the milk part, not the meat. I understand this has implications for the lost tribe of Naphtali; that is really meat for another purpose. Read the blessing again,

“And of Naphtali he said, O Naphtali, satisfied with favour, and full with the blessing of the LORD...” This is not that much different than what Jacob said in the latter part of his blessing, but then here comes the confusing part of this blessing, ***“possess thou the west and the south.”***

This last part of the blessing is a geographical location. However, I was not satisfied because I think God's Word always has a deeper meaning than our first look or even our second, third, fourth, or fifth look at it. I prayed that God show me what He is saying here about this eventual tribe that is unique to this son of Jacob. And then it came to me. We could go to Matthew 16:2-3 or Mark 8:11-13, but instead we will go to Luke 12:54, where someone asked Jesus to discern the time, and this is what He said. As you read this, keep in mind Deuteronomy 33, ***“possess thou the west and the south,”*** and that there is a deeper meaning to His words.

“And he said also to the people, When ye see a cloud rise out of the west, straightway ye say, There cometh a shower; and so it is. And when ye see the south wind blow, ye say, There will be heat; and it cometh to pass. Ye hypocrites [You fakers.], ye can discern the face of the sky and of the earth; but how is it that ye do not discern this time?”

What does ***'discern this time'*** mean? They were to discern the time of Christ's coming to be the saviour of the world, the promise that was given in Isaiah 5, but they could not do this. They saw Jesus as the enemy, not as the saviour of the world. Jesus uses the illustration of a cloud rising out of the west and also of a south wind that blows meaning there will be rain or heat and it comes to pass. I thought that was significant to mention in relation to Naphtali and how he was so satisfied with favor and so full of the blessing of the Lord and we can too. As a result, that stone and the name of that tribe is on that breastplate and Satan sees us satisfied with favor given to us by the Lord Jesus Christ. We are full of the same blessings of all these 12 sons and more that has been given to us by the Lord Jesus Christ.

That is why I say over and over as I have been preaching through this series on the breastplate,

when Satan and his army sees us wearing that spiritual breastplate, he cringes like a vampire cringes in the movies when he sees a cross. He cringes because he knows all the symbolic meaning. He knows if he sees it that Christ then is in us and if Christ is in us, it is going to be that much harder for him to penetrate and accomplish the evil deeds that he wants done by him and his army assigned to work us for one purpose, to destroy us. The devil wants to bring that wedge between us and Christ and God. Jesus said, "You can discern the atmospheric conditions that come from the west and the south, but you can't discern me." Here in Deuteronomy 33:23, Naphtali is satisfied with favor and full of the blessings of the Lord because he could possess the west and the south. To understand what Naphtali possessed, the New Testament brings this to light. We are to discern the Lord Jesus Christ; discern what His shed blood did for us; discern the opportunity we have now to serve Him as servants and soldiers of Jesus Christ. If we can discern that time, whatever time that is in your life when you come to the knowledge of the truth of that fact, then you too will be satisfied with favor and full of blessings from the Lord. You will wear that because it is promised on the stone with the name Naphtali. Satan will know it, and if God be for us who can be against us. Christ is greater than anything that Satan can throw at us. We just have to keep wearing this armor given to us and fashioned for us as we go to war against our spiritual enemy. And because we are equipped with hinds' feet, when the battle is done and the victory is won, we will be in not only the high places, but on the high places of the battlefields and the mountaintops.

That is why it is important to understand what the names of the tribes of Israel mean on that breastplate. Satan knows it. He just wants to keep it hidden. I plan to keep exposing what God's Word intended to say all along and give us knowledge which will lead to us having favor and blessing with Him. I plan to possess the west and the south and I will keep discerning everything that He has done for me. You should go to communion on a daily basis if you can to remember what Christ has done for us. We do not need atmospheric conditions to remind us of that. All we need to remember is what He did on that cross. Not only did He die on that cross, but He resurrected and O grave, where is thy sting. O hell, where is thy sting? It does not apply to me anymore and I pray it will not apply to you either.

Gad: The Boldness of a Lion

Go to Ephesians 6:14, *“Stand therefore, having your loins girt about with truth, and having on the breastplate of righteousness.”*

I have covered verses 10 through 14 up to the halfway point of verse 14 as we look at the breastplate of righteousness. I am going to pick up where I left off about the breastplate of righteousness from all the different angles from New to Old Testaments but particularly in Exodus 28:15,

“And thou shalt make the breastplate of judgment [mishpat in the Hebrew] 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....”

This is where we are now. It goes on in verses 19 and 20 with other stones and we get to verse 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.”

I have been focusing on the names on these stones, although I emphasized briefly the stone itself, but up to this point I have been more interested with the names on the stones related to the twelve tribes.

In verse 19 we read, *“And the third row a ligure,”* the seventh stone, a ligure. In Hebrew, it is *leshem* from the root word *luwsh*, which means *to knead*. So, the ligure is *leshem* in Hebrew from the root word *luwsh* and is also a synonym of *laish*. What does all this mean and what is the application of it? Like I said, I have not spent that much time on the stone itself, but briefly I want to bring some meaning into this stone to show how it relates to this message. The three words we will focus on here are *leshem*, *luwsh* and *laish*. Simply, *laish* means *lion*, and refers to an act the lion was participating in, usually a crushing blow on its prey. In more cases than not with the application of what the stone means, ligure means *lion* and probably when it was attacking its prey. If you do not think that sounds very Christian-like, just hold on, I will get to it. In the New Testament, the ligure is jacinth and it is the eleventh foundational stone of the New Jerusalem in the Book of Revelation. Furthermore, since the name means lion, it comes with a certain attribute of a lion; strength and fierceness, but there is one other attribute in the Bible. I could give example after example, but let's just look at one example in Proverbs 28:1,

“The wicked flee when no man pursueth: but the righteous are bold as a lion.”

In scripture, one of the attributes that defines a lion is boldness, so the literal translation of this verse in the Hebrew is ‘*but the righteous are bold and secure as a lion.*’ Unfortunately, most Christians in today's world are about as bold and secure as a grasshopper facing a lion when coming against the spiritual enemy in a fight. They talk a good game, but when faced with true spiritual warfare, they melt.

“The wicked flee when no man pursueth: but the righteous are bold and secure as a lion.”

Because of this verse, one of the attributes that I will be focusing on in this chapter is the boldness of a lion. We see it here in Proverbs 28:1. That tells us that this stone symbolizes the power to crush and subdue the enemy with boldness, but that is not just an Old Testament thought. In the New Testament, Romans says the same thing, so before I even get to whose name is on the stone, it is important to cover what the stone itself means. Romans 16:17 tells us,

“Now I beseech you, brethren, mark them [or spy out] which cause divisions and offenses contrary to the doctrine which ye have learned; and avoid them.”

We are to *spy out* the enemy just as they were commanded by God under Joshua's commission as they went into the promise land. They also spied out what they were about to conquer.

“Now I beseech you, brethren, spy out them which cause divisions [literally *dissension*] and offenses [literally *traps*] contrary to the doctrine [of the Gospel of Jesus Christ that Paul was preaching] which ye have learned; and avoid them [literally *and turn them away, kick them out*].”

Those who cause the dissension are not friend or Christian brethren. Even though they come disguised as that, they are far from it. We are to spy out the ones who cause dissension and lay traps to bring you under their bondage. This is when spying comes as a commandment from Paul. Not a commandment like the Ten Commandments, but as something we should diligently seek out because it will destroy and poison the more gullible ones in any group, church or ministry when they are not grounded in the Word as others are.

“Now I beseech you, brethren, spy out them which cause divisions or dissensions and traps contrary to the doctrine which ye have learned; and turn them away.”

Verse 18 continues,

“For they that are such serve not our Lord Jesus Christ, but their own belly; and by good words and fair speeches deceive the hearts of the simple.”

So if they do not serve our Lord Jesus Christ, they are not for Christ, but against Him. In fact, they are worse than an atheist. In His gospels, Jesus dealt harshly with those who make it their goal to accomplish dissension and lay traps to trick you into believing that the gospel something

other than what it is. They only serve their own self-seeking ways. To hear their **“good words and fair speeches,”** just turn on the television and all day there is a very popular channel people watch that also starts with a 'T' that traps many into believing false doctrine because they sound good. Not only do they have **“good words and fair speeches,”** but these **“speeches deceive the hearts of the simple,”** or more literally, *of the harmless* who trust their words believing they are the words that God wants them to hear to bring Him glory and to build them up in Christ, but they are not. More accurately, instead of **“to deceive the hearts of the simple,”** this should say *‘to deceive the hearts of the harmless that trust these individuals that deceive.’* We go on to read in 19,

“For your obedience is come abroad unto all men. I am glad therefore on your behalf: but yet I would have you wise unto that which is good, and simple concerning evil.”

Simple in this verse is not the same Greek word used in verse 18 for *simple*. Literally this verse should say, **“but yet I would have you wise unto that which is good, and unmixed concerning evil.”** It is unmixed, is used here because these individuals who bring about these good words and fair speeches mix evil with some Gospel to achieve their own end in the flesh but do not edify Christ, which is truly evil. Now, verse 20 is where I wanted to get to. It tells us,

“And the God of peace shall bruise [Literally, *break in pieces to put Satan under foot and trample him, or to crush the opposition or the enemy, for us: Satan.*]

“And the God of peace shall crush in pieces, put Satan under foot and trample him to crush him shortly. The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you.”

Commentary after commentary and scholarly works from theological seminaries present this as something that will happen later in time. And yes, we know that once and for all Satan will be cast into the pit for 1,000 years, then he will be released for a little season where he will cause some havoc again and after that he will be thrown into the lake of fire. But that is not what this verse is saying here. Many Christians mix this up with what God's Word is saying and how we should apply it as we deal with our enemy Satan and the evil forces. You may think that I do not fear Satan; I do not. This is because in the spirit with Christ in me and my spiritual armor on, I do not fear Satan or his wicked army. I know exactly what they can do, and I have respect for it. I would be foolish if I believed otherwise, but I do not feel fear. There are too many ill taught Christians today who fear their own shadow thinking Satan might use it to get to them, and I have said many times over that Satan will use a lot of tactics, tricks and strategies, but I do not fear them. What I do fear is that I get out of line in what God wishes me to do, which is to please Him. I stay in line with what God wants when I faith and trust in Him even through the hardships, the afflictions, the troubles, the trials and tribulations knowing that if He is for me who can be against me. He will never leave me nor forsake me along with every other promise we can claim. Christians today fear what Satan can do to them, but I do not. I know what Satan can do to me and even if I stay in the faith, he will keep trying to break me down. However, there is one thing he cannot take from me if I stay in the faith, if I stay trusting in God's Word, understanding what Jesus did for me. He would not waste His life if He is not going to live up to what He promised. The only thing I fear from Satan is that I allow him to get to me to break my connection with Christ Jesus. Then he has access to my soul and eternal existence, but I do not

fear him or any of his spiritual army because I know who is dwelling inside of me and who has fitted me with armor that can take anything he throws at me if I stay connected to the vine. If you think that sounds overconfident, then you finally guessed something about me that is correct. You just stated something that is absolutely 100% correct. I am confident. I will give Satan his due respect, but I do not serve him. I serve someone greater than him! I get literally angry when Christians around me say, “You better not do that because Satan is going to get mad.” Well, great! If I am making Satan mad, then I know for sure that I am not doing something that pleases him but pleases the One who died for me. We have a Christian world that is supposed to be witnesses for Jesus – living, walking testimonies of how faith has changed their lives in Christ Jesus, yet scared of their own shadow, or better yet scared of Satan's shadow that he casts on their lives. I do not want you to get confused because it has nothing to do with the hardships, trials and afflictions from Satan. Those come with one intention, to break me down and break the connection with Christ that only happens if I break that connection, I stop pleasing Him, I stop trusting in His Word, I stop communing with Him, realizing without Him I am nothing. Without Christ, Satan can destroy anyone and there is nothing you can do about it, but a person filled with the Holy Spirit and Christ dwelling in us is now fitted with the spiritual armor for the spiritual fight and Satan is no match.

There are so many silly exorcisms we see on television, and it is all nonsense. There are some actual legitimate exorcisms where the spiritual enemy loses the battle, but if the spiritual enemy was all that powerful, when a legitimate exorcism takes place those exorcisms would not work. The real ones do work with trained men of God who understand the access that we have to God through His Word to deal with those types of situations, and they will be in a position and a place to assist and help that individual be delivered from the demonic spirit that possesses them. You will see a lot of silly exorcisms. Quite frankly, I am surprised more people who think they might be demonically possessed have not called for our assistance, but then again, I know why. Satan has blinded them from the truth because he knows where this ministry and I stand on this subject and he knows I have dealt with it before. I take it seriously and I trust every single passage in scripture that equips me to deal with a situation of that nature. So no, I do not fear the devil. I only fear if the devil is successful in breaking my connection with God. Then he has total access to my life with the faith shield and all the other parts of the armor no longer there useful to combat him. It is losing my connection to the Lord that I fear; but not the enemy.

Considering that, return to verse 20, which reads,

“And the God of peace shall bruise Satan under your feet shortly. The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you. Amen.

However, there are several corrections to make to this verse. First, the word *bruise* in this verse means, to *break in pieces to put Satan under foot to trample him, to crush him*, but not *shortly* as this verse says so that when all said and done, once and for all Satan will be put away and we will not have to worry about it anymore. Unfortunately, that is how most Christians including scholars preach about this verse, and they are dead wrong. The best translation of the word *shortly* to apply here is *quickly*, although some say *speedily*; either quickly or speedily is fine. Also, there is one important word missing that should be placed in this verse here if you read the King James. This word tells you how it will happen, and it is not something far in the future still

yet to happen after the millennium. No! This verse should read,

“And the God of peace shall bruise or break into pieces Satan under your feet quickly or speedily by the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ within you. Amen.” [Not *be with you*; *be* was added by the translators.]

And *Amen* should always be the faith statement to finish this verse. This is not something that will happen down the road. It is happening right now once you recognize that Satan has one place in your life, which is under your feet looking up as he sees someone spiritually fit for the battle, with Christ dwelling in them, and through God's armor keeping him trampled under their feet where he belongs. If Christ did not win the battle at the cross and was resurrected, we could not claim that, but He was the first goer that made it without sin, and He achieved and fulfilled all things. Now Satan does not have any choice, but Christians need to recognize their place in the now kingdom, not some kingdom in the future, that they have because of the gift of grace given to them that now dwells in them. Amen!

That is the New Testament and shows how this stone represents the attribute of boldness that I mentioned earlier in Proverbs. How much bolder can you be than what verse 20 is stating once you recognize what this verse is saying? How can you be any bolder than that! We are to be bold through Christ Jesus, not through our efforts or through anything we can do. He was the lion of Judah who came and now gave me this opportunity to put Satan in his proper place, but the key is not to lose the connection with Christ because once he is released, after he knows what you know from this day forward, you are a sitting duck with a gun right to your temple. Satan is so close he does not even have to be a sharpshooter. He will try to bring you down as fast as he can because he knows what you now know and he is looking for every opportunity to rub it in the heavenlies and tell the Lord, “See, your grace was not sufficient. They fell anyway and became disconnected from you and they did not keep faith in your word and your promises.” Do not let that happen. Stay connected to the vine and Satan will be broken in pieces, he will be crushed, he will be put under foot and trampled by ***“the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ within you. Amen.”***

Satan knows this and that is why he does not want you to know what the breastplate of righteousness is all about. He does not want you to know all the wonderful benefits and promises that we have and how we can equip ourselves when dealing with him and he has hidden it literally for 2,000 years. It is time he gets exposed, so we stop fearing him and instead fear the Lord Jesus Christ if you break the connection. I am not just talking about a stumble. I am talking about a deliberate connection being broken because you come to a point where you doubt, and bad Christian teachers and pastors are at fault. All they do is teach about the promises and when one is not fulfilled, you think God has deserted you or maybe the Bible is not true after all when it is just the opposite. Spiritual fools are behind pulpits and instead of building up the body of Christ they do not even realize how much they are tearing it down. I have said before, if you are going to a church that just preaches one or two messages a year on spiritual warfare, it is time to leave that church. I used to be more delicate with this subject matter, but the more I dive into it, I realize how important it is in the Christian life to know and understand. Get yourself away from that location and find somewhere that will stop and deal with matters of this nature.

So, this is where the New Testament tells us to be bold. The stone is the figure from the Hebrew

leshem, luwsh, and laish. It means *lion* this is more than likely crushing its prey with a blow for the purpose of defense. And that is what this stone represents. To go further, an attribute of the lion is boldness and how much bolder can you be than putting Satan under your feet through the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ that is within you. It is about as bold as you can get, and it is through Christ and Christ only. That is the only time boldness can work in your life. It can never come through your own efforts.

Let's go to Genesis 30 to learn about the name on that stone. We have already covered six of the sons of Jacob and now we are at the seventh. As we know, Leah was still competing with Rachel for who would have more children trying to please their husband Jacob. When Leah stopped having children at a certain point in her life, she gave Jacob her handmaid. He did not argue about it and she became pregnant in verse 9. Then we read in verse 10,

***“And Zilpah Leah's maid bare Jacob a son.
And Leah said, A troop cometh: and she called his name Gad.”***

This is only one verse, but it is loaded a lot of important information in the breastplate teaching. I am sure many of you have read this verse and gone right by it never stopping to realize what this verse implies. With the breastplate teaching, now you will find out why it is important that you know what God's Word is trying to communicate here.

“And Leah said, A troop cometh: and she called his name Gad.”

Gad was a troop himself. Short and simple, a troop is defined as, *to go on attack to distribute good fortune.* ***“And Leah said, A troop....”*** So, Leah is saying through naming this child that this child's destiny is to go on attack to distribute good fortune. Just as Gad was a troop, Christians today are troops unto God. Yes, we will lose some and win some. That is just the way battles go, but there will always be victory in the war. However, if you stay connected to Christ, there will always be victory in the war. You might not see it now or you might have to wait to see it at some time in the future when all is said and done, but there is no doubt that we will overcome and there will be victory. But the battles and the victories that God allows us to have here and now is just icing on the cake. He still expects us to go to war against our spiritual enemy that is controlling not only the spiritual unseen things, but the physical things that he uses to accomplish his will on man. We are God's troop, but we shall overcome just as Gad overcame many times over in the prophetic naming of this child that you see throughout the Old Testament. Even in the cave of Adullam, they were separated unto David, but that is not just in the Old Testament. We are also God's troop as promised to us in the New Testament in I John 5:4. I have been here before and it is worth repeating. It tells us,

“For whatsoever is born of God overcometh the world [meaning God's soldiers, Jesus Christ's soldiers, God's troops will overcome this world]: and this is the victory that overcometh the world, our faith.” Scratch out the word *even*; it was added by the translators, and the word *faith* can also be translated *our faithfulness*, so apply both so nothing escapes from what God expects from us. We shall be overcomers of this world and the victory is certain because of our faith. Verse 5 tells us about what our faith is in,

“Who is he that overcometh the world, but he that faithes [not believeth] that Jesus is the Son of God?”

Once you believe that Jesus is the Son of God, you will recognize that you are also a soldier of Jesus Christ as I have taken us before in the Timothy letters. Now that you are part of His army, you are a troop in His army. All Christians should consider themselves troops in God's army, soldiers of Jesus Christ and the promise comes with it, and that is that you will overcome not only here and now, but when all is said and done. God's troops will have the last laugh; not Satan's, but God's troops. Know that we are part of that band if we remain faithful.

To read further about Gad, go to Moses' prophesy in Deuteronomy 33:20, where Moses was blessing Israel before his departure.

“And of Gad he said, Blessed be he that enlargeth Gad: he dwelleth as a lion, and teareth the arm with the crown of the head.

And he provided the first part for himself, because there, in a portion of the lawgiver, was he seated; and he came with the heads of the people, he executed the justice of the LORD, and his judgments with Israel.”

There are two verses in Moses' prophesy about Gad and Jacob's blessing for Gad is in Genesis 49. Usually I cover Jacob's blessing first, but I want to show the record about the lion and what the stone represents. Now go back to Jacob's prophesy in Genesis 49:19,

“Gad, a troop shall overcome him: but he shall overcome at the last.”

This also tells us that we might win some and lose some, but just as I John 5:4-5 tells us, we must keep our eyes on the prize, which is having that place alongside Jesus Christ as part of His army ruling and reigning with Him throughout eternity because we overcame all the evil that came our way that wants to lead us astray and break our faith in Him. Do not let it happen, because, ***“Gad, a troop shall overcome him: but he shall overcome at the last.”*** We will also overcome if we keep our trust in Jesus Christ. We are not only God's troops, we are soldiers of Jesus Christ, hopefully ready to serve at a moment's notice what He wants us to accomplish.

Now, go back to Moses' prophesy in Deuteronomy, which will be the focus on for the rest of this chapter. Verse 20 states,

“And of Gad he said, Blessed be he that enlargeth Gad [Anyone who caused Gad to expand or increase is blessed.]: he dwelleth as a lion, and teareth the arm with the crown of the head.”

A lion does this, and the seventh stone represents a lion. The tribe of Gad is like a lion that pursues to conquer new prey and in doing that anyone helping him in any way will be blessed with benefits. Many people over my life have said that ever since they have known me things have turned out for the better in their lives, whether financial or other matters. I was not surprised by that and you should not be surprised when somebody tells you that because if they are assisting or helping you in any matter, or just saying I am on your side, they will receive a benefit from it. ***“Blessed be he that enlargeth Gad.”*** means that just by association alone, they

will receive a benefit from it. I have seen it more times than you can imagine where that benefit leads them to take a second look at the God that we serve, and how much more they will benefit once they realize He is the God that they should also be serving. ***“Blessed be he that enlargeth Gad:”***

Now let's look at the second part of verse 20,

“...he dwelleth as a lion, and teareth the arm with the crown of the head.”

Like a lion, the tribe of Gad is obviously pursuing new prey. It does not sleep 24 hours a day. It has to go after new prey, and we are supposed to have the boldness of a lion. If you look at its history, the tribe of Gad was known to be men of might and men of war fit for the battle. To see more about the tribe of Gad, go to I Chronicles 12:8, where they are listed as David's personal army.

“And of the Gadites there separated themselves unto David into the hold to the wilderness men of might [chayil, men of strength, in the Hebrew], men of war fit for the battle, that could handle shield and buckler, whose faces were like the faces of lions, and were as swift as the roes upon the mountains;”

The first part of this verse, ***“And of the Gadites there separated themselves...men of might [or strength], men of war,”*** literally should read, ***“... David into the hold to the wilderness men of might that go out to war in service for the battle.”*** Some translations say host; however, the tribe of Gad was known to be men of strength, men fit for the battle because that was their part of the service, they could offer David in this case. Their faces were like lions, refers to their fierceness to overcome their enemies. They literally brought fear once their enemies recognized that they had the strength of a lion. In our case, we have the strength of a lion coming from the one who came from the tribe of Judah, Jesus Christ Himself. The Gadites faces were like lions because of their fierceness to overcome their enemy.

This verse also lists roes and I have covered this small deer. Remember, the roe has the ability to move quickly on rough and steep terrain without falling or stumbling. Just the same, Christians are empowered with this ability. When we have on the armor of God, we have God's strength through Jesus Christ and can move through any terrain. I do not care what you are facing, hills, valleys, steep inclines or declines, whatever terrain that is presented, we have the same ability a roe has to be agile and conquer any terrain without falling or stumbling. These Gadites were also fierce and agile in the heat of the battle. There is no question about it because they were men of might willing to go out to war in service as scripture says.

Ask yourself if this verse describes you. Many people claim to have the breastplate on, but as soon as the battle comes, they do not want to fight. They claim to be a lover, not a fighter. If that is the case, then you are not a Christian. It is as simple as that. I could understand someone being a Christian without knowing the truth, but once we are presented with the truth, we have two choices; either deny it or accept it. I have shown the accuracy of God's Word many ways when dealing with this subject of spiritual warfare. Even my critics do not say that I am not Biblically based because I truly stick as close as possible to the Biblical concepts that I am preaching using

scripture. I do not use stories and other things to preach a message, I use God's Word. So, you need to accept that once the spiritual armor is on placed there by Christ through the Holy Spirit, He has fitted you for the battle. And if He has fitted you for the battle, He does not want you lying in a hammock enjoying a cool drink in the breezes all day long. I do not care if you are in a wheelchair. Satan will bring something at you so you must apply spiritual warfare concepts to overcome him in whatever fight you are presently in. It is just a given and that is just for your personal life. Then there is the other matter of how it relates to you and with the ministry or church that you belong to.

We are not designed for Club Med or a five-star resort from here to the rest of your life on this planet. Yes, we can take a rest; even God provides it on occasion to some. But to others He does not. I do not know why, but that is the way it has been in scripture. In this case, whatever time He provides for you or me take advantage of it, but do not let it control you. Remember to keep Christ involved even when you are at rest and do not break the connection. I have seen too many Christians go on two-week vacations and when they get back, they are not ready for a spiritual fight or renewed with energy from Christ. They come back tired and feeling worse than before they left. Their energy is gone but not because they were trying to do everything as fast as possible while they were on vacation. No. It is because they broke their connection and Christ was not a priority. It is hard to put Christ as a priority in your life when you are on vacation. I do not care who you are. We will be tempted and most of the time the temptation will win because we are involved in things that does not have God in it. Learn how to have fun but keep your priorities straight and what comes first every day in your life. I have had Christians tell me when they went on vacation, their prayer life and their daily communication with God was broken because of all the distractions of what a vacation brings to their lives. Keep that connection. For some reason, there are Christians for even twenty or thirty years following the Lord who forget that concept. I am telling you, do not let that happen.

Returning to scripture, we see s Gadite was fierce and agile in the heat of the battle. They were designed by God just by their very name from the one son to be God's troops ready for battle. We too must be ready for the spiritual battle against the devil by constantly remembering the spiritual armor is not to be taken off whether even while on vacation or at work or even before you go to sleep at night. We are to even sleep with that armor on. I know it is figuratively speaking, but apply it, give it application in your life. Even when resting make the statement of faith before going to sleep, "Into your hands, O Lord, while I am literally unconscious because I am resting, you still recognize I am ready 24 hours a day at a minute's notice day or night to spiritually fight against a very evil enemy." Satan is doing his best across this world to literally blind Christians to the truth that spiritual warfare teaching is necessary in their lives. We live in a day and age where everything is about you, everything is how to make you feel good and spiritual warfare does not do that if you are chasing your flesh instead of the things of God. I know it sounds hard and it hits some nerves, but that is just the way it is. The Gadites were men of strength ready to go out to war in service to face their physical enemy and be swift and agile no matter what the terrain. As Christians today, we must be ready, fit and agile to go against a spiritual enemy no matter what the terrain to come against it and overcome it, not to lie in defeat.

To continue, know that just as the roes were swift on the mountains, we should be swift to carry out or participate in what pleases God. Even if it is steep and rough, we must be prepared to

carry out God's assignments at a moment's notice. The key word is **prepared**.

One of the things in the history of the United States that fascinated me when I was growing up was the Minutemen during the period of the American Revolution. They were ready at a minute's notice. Some of them were part of the Sons of Liberty. Paul Revere would be the most famous Son of Liberty that you will probably remember if you studied United States history. These were men that trained and were ready at a minute's notice to come against the physical enemy; in this case, the British Empire. They were the Sons of Liberty. We are the sons and daughters of liberty. We have been given liberty through Christ Jesus. We should be Minutemen; men and women strengthened by God ready to go to war in service to liberate the ones still under bondage and controlled by the spiritual enemy with the message of the Good News of the Gospel of Jesus Christ. Like I said, not lazy Christians who look for the next hammock and cool drink. I know Christians that go from one day to another more concerned about how they can take a break than being engaged in the spiritual fight they have been called to fight. I am not against rest or vacations. What I am against is the attitude it brings.

My mentor used to be that way. When we went on any special assignments, we did not get the next day off when we got back no matter how short the time was because those assignments took us farther away from the heartbeat of the battle. We would be kind of lackadaisical because we were away from the heartbeat and forgot how critical and crucial it was to be prepared for the kind of heat we would receive once we were close enough to the inner heartbeat of the ministry and what that brings and tags along with it. The closer we get to the inner heartbeat of any ministry; the heat of the battle becomes more intense. If you are 3,000 miles away on an assignment, the intensity lessens. I have seen it and felt it. I have been there and done it not only in my personal life but seen it in others also. Get right back in the heat of the battle where the heartbeat is, it is a whole different type of intensity, even in your personal life. You can be involved in something that brings you to the point where it is nothing but an intense fight, but if you took yourself out of that intensity and location and plant yourself somewhere else where most people cannot get hold of you [even though you might be concerned how the battle is going back home], once you are separated from it there is a certain kind of feeling that it is not so bad here. If you did not come spiritually ready to be placed back into it with your armor on, you will be knocked around for a while until that spiritual armor is rightly fitted again and you are right back in the spiritual battle. Of course, you could go somewhere with the spiritual armor on, but man being what man is, once we get a little break from something, the flesh takes over. I do not care who you are.

This happened even to my mentor when we went to places like Lake Almanor. He would say the same thing to me and to others, and he took it from his own personal life. For instance, when he was preaching around the world at conventions or just travelling around the world preaching, it was a different type of intensity than pastoring a church because you get to leave those places. You are there for a day or two, maybe no more than a week, and then you get to leave to go somewhere else, so you never become deeply involved in the spiritual fight. You are there to give good news, encouragement, faith building messages, but you are not part of the intensity of the battle that those Christians are facing in that location. You get to leave and that applies to anywhere in life, in any place, in any person. When you are involved in the heartbeat of your life, you know the kind of intensity it brings and for the loved ones around you, and it is the same

thing with the ministry. That is why we must be constantly ready as Minutemen no matter where we are placed on assignment. We must be ready as Minutemen spiritually fit with our spiritual armor ready to do battle against a spiritual enemy that truly does not take any rest, vacations or breaks. He has a vast spiritual wicked army that is looking for any weaknesses we might have or that gets presented where he can take advantage.

That is why just as roes, we must move swiftly through these mountains of our lives. We should be swift not only in our personal lives but in the participation of what pleases God not only in your personal life, but in the ministry or church that you are involved in. No matter how steep or rough the terrain is, He has prepared us through His Word to carry out His assignment for your life. You just must be prepared, ready and willing as a true servant of God to go out to war in His service.

Let's continue with Deuteronomy 33:20.

“And of Gad he said, Blessed be he that enlargeth Gad: he dwelleth as a lion, and teareth the arm with the crown of the head.”

About this verse I will give two quick references, although there are many. First II Kings 17:36 tells us,

“But the LORD, who brought you up out of the land of Egypt with great power and a stretched out arm, him shall ye fear, and him shall ye worship, and to him shall ye do sacrifice.”

This is the Lord's power, but throughout scripture the arm symbolizes one's power and the crown of one's head symbolizes high status and authority.

The second verse is Job 19:9,

“He hath stripped me of my glory [that being high status and authority.] and taken the crown my head.”

The word *from* in this verse was added by the translators and here the crown of one's head symbolizes high status and authority and the arm symbolizes one's power and might. Returning to Deuteronomy 33:20 we read,

“And of Gad he said, Blessed be he that enlargeth Gad: he dwelleth as a lion, and teareth the arm with the crown of the head.”

Maybe now you know why I said I do not fear the devil. I fear what the devil can do to me if I break the connection with my Lord because the faith connection is broken, but I do not fear the devil himself or any of his wicked army because I have Christ living within me. He has trampled the devil and He has told me through Gad and through other scriptures in the Bible that through Christ, he will be torn apart and broken in pieces. I showed you in Romans that one of the definitions is *he breaks in pieces and he crushes*. Likewise, it says it here in the Old Testament through Gad the troop. That is why Christians, as soldiers of Jesus Christ, can make this same promise. It is there in the breastplate and tells us ***“he dwelleth as a lion, and teareth the arm***

with the crown of the head.” We will tear down his high status, authority and his stretched-out arm to do evil on us will be broken and he will not have any power or might over our lives. When Satan sees that breastplate, it reminds him of this. Maybe you will now have a better understanding why I do not fear Satan if I am in the Spirit, in faith, and I am pleasing God, and neither should you.

Verse 21 in that same chapter in Deuteronomy goes on to say,

“And he provided the first part for himself, because there, in a portion of the lawgiver, was he seated; and he came with the heads of the people, he executed the justice of the LORD, and his judgments with Israel.”

Now Gad, Reuben and half the tribe of Manasseh settled east of the Jordan River which was the first part of the land. Remember, God wanted them to cross the Jordan River and everything on the west was to be Israel. That is why I really do not have a problem if Israel gave back the Golan Heights, the northern part of Israel that was controlled by Syria. Go right ahead. God allowed it, because that was not His original design. He wanted Israel to settle west of the Jordan River, but half the tribe of Manasseh, Gad and Reuben [the Reubenites and the Gadites] settled east, but they just could not settle. The rest of their brethren still had a lot of conquering to do and if they wanted God's blessing on their lives, they could not put down their swords, spears and armor. They had to help their fellow brethren and cross that river, go west and be part of years of conquering that took place. Like I said, Gad, Reuben, and half the tribe of Manasseh settled east of the Jordan River, which was the first part of the land, although not God's original intention, even though they could do it and it was conquered. By helping the remainder of the tribes conquer the promise land – the original area that God wanted all the tribes to dwell in which was west of the Jordan River – they executed the justice of the Lord as it is stated in scripture, ***“and His judgments with Israel.”*** That is important to understand.

It applies to us today because we are called today by the Lord to execute His justice and judgment. Yes, even today, but it will not be accomplished by physical force. God will come back and we will be part of His army following Him. It will happen, but it is God who will do the fighting. We just get to be participators in viewing the event. We are not here to execute justice and judgment by physical force, but through the power and preaching of the Gospel that will bring justice and judgment. It is not us judging them, but God's Word, which will then bring them to conviction and salvation understanding what Christ has done for them and others who will take a look at what is being preached. That is how we exercise judgment and justice now. We do not judge the world; rather we bring conviction through the Word of God showing that without Christ they have a miserable eternal existence. In fact, miserable is understating it, but with Christ they understand because to be convicted by the Word, they are nothing without Him; they are the devil's possession, not Christ's.

If we do not participate in spreading the Gospel, by our inactivity we are handing over all the lost and confused to the devil without a fight; those without Christ that have no knowledge of what grace and salvation is truly all about. I want those of you who sit back and do nothing and never participate in any ministry or church to stop and think about that. Just because you joined a choir or go to Bible study thinking it fits the requirement, it does not. If anything, it only makes you

feel good. It edifies you and that is the problem in today's Christian world. You are constantly seeking ways to edify yourself. Yes, you have a personal relationship with Christ. Yes, you are growing in Christ and have the mind of Christ. Hopefully, you are involved under a teaching pastor who will make you understand what God's Word is truly and correctly saying without leading you into some false doctrine that will not get you closer to Christ, but actually confuses you into believing that you are following Christ, but you are none of His.

However, by our inactivity, not ready to go into service in the spiritual fight as the Gadites, we are guilty of handing over to the devil all the lost and confused individuals without a fight that do not have Christ in their life and have no knowledge of what grace and salvation is truly about. A lot of you need to ask yourself if Christianity and what you know about God's Word all about you only. It is a rhetorical question. Yes, it is about you; and yes, the relationship is with you and Christ. I cannot step into that and no one else can either. It is a personal relationship because He is the potter and you are the clay. He is molding and fitting you for the occasion, the opportunity and assignment that He wants you to carry out and that is your personal relationship with Him. He also has another relationship that you are to be part of; and that is the church. Find a group of out-called ones who are not just trying to babysit for Jesus and who have a real commission about what Christ wants from us and that is to participate in the capacity you were called to get His Word out. It is not just about you. It is also about others that have not heard the Word, or if they have heard it and are confused or lost, or maybe they are in a camp of those fair speeches and false doctrine preachers that have clouded their minds from the truth and all it would take is your participation and God's nudging to lead them to a place where they can find the truth. If it is this ministry then so let it be. If it is others, I hope somebody takes this message and preaches it and it hits somewhere across this world daily so it can be applied.

Now we have the boldness and strength of a lion; the lion of Judah, Jesus Christ. It is what that stone meant on the breastplate. That is why Ephesians 6:10 says we are to be literally empowered or strengthened by Jesus Christ. He is our lion. Through Him, Satan does not have a chance. We have agility as a roe no matter what the terrain. Whatever you face, God will get you through it. He has given you the capabilities to do it. You just have to trust and lean on Him to get you through. Our enemies do not stand a chance. We need to understand that God has called us to fulfil our destiny, which includes things in your personal life and things that pertain to the ministry of the Gospel.

We are God's troops and soldiers of Jesus Christ. Yes, we will have hardships; yes, we will have afflictions; yes, it will be tough. There will be trials and tribulations, but the benefit is eternal life and not just for ourselves. That is what this ministry is hopefully declaring around the world. It is not just for us, but for the benefit of others.

Jesus commanded His disciples to love others as you love yourself, and if you love yourself so much because you recognize what God's love has done for you that you are participating in what Christ has called you to do. By that action alone with faith in Him you cannot wait for the opportunity to share with others. You cannot demonstrate love until it hits the very nerve of your being. In most cases in today's world it is to support whatever ministry or church you are part of knowing that it will land on the ears of some individuals that God is nudging, and once they hear the truth, they are now part of the out-called ones of the church. The benefit of that is eternal life,

not just for you and me, but for others also.

Gadites were called to go to war in service and were promised boldness with strength and boldness as lions no matter what they faced. Because of what Christ has done for us as Christians today, and because of grace, we have the power to put Satan under our feet and keep him there. It does not mean he will stop trying to bring troubles, trials and afflictions through his wicked army, but he is defeated because no matter what happens to us, we will overcome in the end. We are overcomers now through the gift of grace through Christ Jesus. You just have to recognize it. It is not some distant future prophesy in Romans 16:20 that says, ***“And the God of peace shall bruise Satan under your feet quickly by the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ....”*** This verse means now because He is within you and He is within me. I am claiming that today.

I see through the breastplate through the tribe of Gad, even though we are sheep, we are to have the boldness of a lion ready to go to war against a spiritual enemy that is trying to keep souls literally out of heaven, the new earth and the New Jerusalem in the future. He wants them in the lake of fire with him and all the misery it brings throughout eternity. Gadites, people who know what this breastplate is all about, have a different outlook on it. They see Satan under their feet through the Lord Jesus Christ because He has given us grace and salvation within that keeps us under His feet and that is called the blood! The blood gives us the power. I said in the beginning of this series that the blood is the key that unlocks all the mystery that Satan has tried to keep secret through false doctrine. Well, not in this ministry. We will keep exposing him and keep preaching what his tactics are all about and what they are trying to accomplish. Do not look at how we can defeat him, but how Christ in us will defeat him. Through Christ we shall overcome and have victory because we have the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ within us. Amen!

Asher

Go to Ephesians 6:10 in the New Testament. I begin there because it will give a deeper meaning when we look at Jacob's son Asher.

“Finally, my brethren, be strong [endunamoo, be strengthened, in the Greek] in the Lord [or be empowered in the Lord], and in the power [kratos in the Greek, the force] of his ischus [his powerful might].”

We are to have God's strength through Christ, and His force and powerful might will flow through us if we faith and trust in His Word and in Him and be soldiers of Jesus Christ who put on this Christian armor listed here in Ephesians 6:10 through 18. Verse 11 goes on to say,

“Put on the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to stand against the wiles [the methodeia, the tricks, the strategies] of the devil.”

Specifically, I have been focusing on the latter part of verse 14, ***“and having on the breastplate of righteousness.”***

So far in this series we have looked at the High Priest and what he wore in the Old Testament as described in Exodus 28, but I want you to remember verse 10 here in Ephesians. It has been awhile since we looked at it to review what it says. Literally, this verse says,

“Finally, my brethren, be strengthened in the Lord, be empowered in the Lord, and in the force of his powerful might.”

Now let's go to Exodus 28:19. It has been our launching point on the breastplate that the High Priest wore. The description begins in verse 15, but we will start with verse 19,

“And the third row a ligure, an agate....” The agate is the stone that we are at in this message. Now, the agate represents a particular name of the children of Israel and this name was Asher.

Verse 21 tells us,

“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.”

We have taken a look at the sons of Jacob in Genesis 30 and have been there quite a bit as we looked at each particular son of Jacob. I will quickly go through this part because we have been here many times over. Genesis 30 details the competition between Leah and Rachel in producing sons. When they stopped producing for a time, or when they were certain they would not have any more children, they had their handmaids produce sons without Jacob resisting much. We have covered the sons from Reuben all the way to the last son Gad. Now in Genesis 30:13, we

come to:

“And Leah said, Happy am I, for the daughters will call me blessed: and she called his name Asher.”

Literally in the Hebrew this verse says, ***“And Leah said, In my happiness, the daughters will call me blessed: and she called his name Asher.”*** Some translators will translate this as happy, but it is the furthest thing from what the Hebrew says. Literally Asher’s name means *blessed*, ***“and she called his name blessed.”***

If you recall, in the Beatitudes Jesus described the things that were blessed. Some translators of the New Testament have made the mistake of translating blessed as *happy*. Once again, it is a bad translation. You should stay away from people who want to keep what Jesus was communicating that simple because He was describing the condition of being *fully satisfied*. Just the same, Asher's name means *fully satisfied* because he was blessed. Now the King James translators got this right in verse 13 because the word represented a whole different idea than it does today. At that time, blessed meant *fully satisfied*. For example, when you say, 'God bless you' literally you are saying 'God bathe you in the blood of Christ' and to be bathed in blood is to be blessed. The King James got it right because how much more satisfied can you get than to be bathed in the blood, to be baptized in the blood of Jesus Christ. Not literally, but spiritually baptized because you are now a joint heir through Christ reconciled back to the Father. We truly are blessed and fully satisfied all through the blood of Jesus Christ. So, Asher means *blessed, fully satisfied*.

In addition, the blessings given to Asher, not only by Jacob but by Moses, you will find out as we look why he was fully satisfied and why he prophetically was named blessed. Before we get to it, however, let us quickly look at this agate stone in Exodus 28:19. The agate is on the third row, and in the Hebrew, it is ***shebuw*** from a root word meaning *to flame or anything with a flame*. Flames are symbolic of God's power and God's presence.

Now go to Exodus 3:2, where the pre-incarnate Christ, not an angel, appears to Moses and gives him orders to go back to Egypt. Verse 2 says,

“And the angel of the LORD appeared unto him in a flame of fire out of the midst of a bush: and he looked, and, behold, the bush burned with fire, and the bush was not consumed.”

Another reference showing the flame as symbolic of God’s power is in Acts 2:3 in the New Testament.

“And there appeared unto them cloven tongues like as of fire [flames], and it sat upon each of them.”

These verses show the flame as symbolic of God's power and presence in the midst of this gathering, and His presence and power were shown to Moses as an individual where the church began. It was in the midst of others also; both flames, both fire, both symbolizing God's power and God's presence.

This stone also has bands of various colors. There is another type of this particular agate stone, but most of the time the stone has various bands of color through it. Now, the diversity of color in God's Word symbolizes one highly favored by God. All you must do is go back to the Joseph story in Genesis 37:3, where Joseph's father gave him a coat of colors. There are scholars who argue what this coat was exactly, but that is not the point. I have my own opinion, but I do not want to dwell on it. The important thing to remember here is there was a diversity of color, not just one color. Whatever this garment was, it was not just one color. It was a diversity of colors symbolizing Jacob's favoritism that was always distributed to Joseph and that is why his brothers were so jealous. Jacob probably loved Joseph more than any other child. It is obvious as you read scripture. Right or wrong that is what happened.

I will go to one more reference in II Samuel 13:18 as another illustration of being highly favored. In verse 18 it says,

“And she [Tamar] had a garment of divers colours upon her: for with such robes were the king's daughters that were virgins apparelled. Then his servant brought her out, and bolted the door after her.”

This was a king's daughter and because she was highly favored by the king, she had a garment of diver's colors; a variety of colors to separate her from the crowd.

Now what does this agate stone mean to us today? What does it symbolize? Why is it on the breastplate? Besides the name of the tribe of Asher, this agate stone demonstrates God's power and symbolizes God's power and presence in us because we are highly favored. As I have said many times over, when Satan sees this breastplate and this particular stone, he and his wicked army is reminded over and over that God's power and God's presence is in us through Christ because I am highly favored and you are highly favored. Christ brought us back into reconciliation with the Father and we are not looked on as outcasts controlled by Satan anymore. Rather, we are looked at as sons and daughters of the King and He highly favors us. If I did not preach anything besides that, it is a wonderful message just in being highly favored knowing that God's power and presence is in us through the Holy Spirit.

The agate is the eighth stone and this stone besides meaning new beginning symbolizes, especially in the Old Testament, cleansing and sanctification. This is where I differ with all the holier-than-thou preachers who explain our sanctification and cleansing. The priests in the Old Testament went through a ritual of cleansing to sanctify themselves when dealing with the offering whether offering turtledoves, lambs or something else. They had to symbolically prepare themselves to be used of God when presenting these offerings. Today we sanctify and cleanse ourselves as Paul said through the blood of Christ. As the priests were willing servants to go through the process of preparing themselves to present the offerings of the people and themselves, we are to go through the same process. But before we go through the same process, we are sanctified when we present ourselves as a living body and material sacrifice to God and a living testimony as God's soldier, Jesus Christ's soldier ready for service. That service is just not bodily service, but also through material things. Then you are cleansed and sanctified to be used of God in any direction He takes you however He wants you to participate. It is not difficult. Super spiritual scholarly-like individuals try to complicate it so that people cannot even

understand it. There are so many different explanations and people are confused about what is to be sanctified to God in our modern day.

You are cleansed because you have been bathed, fully satisfied, literally blessed because of Christ and what He did on the cross because you are telling God and Christ, “Use me in bodily and material service however you choose.” Do not complicate it like others have. Before I go any further, I want to define some words as we move from Jacob's and Moses' prophesy.

Fat: In God's Word, it always symbolizes the best of whatever is being described.

Bread: Is fellowship with others. Not just the type of fellowship as in, “How are you today? How has your day been? It has been bad. So, has mine.” It is the kind of fellowship defined more times in the New Testament than the kind of fellowship preachers you to believe such as courteous communication with each other that I just described. No. This fellowship is the giving of yourself for others. In this case, if you were eating bread to nourish, your giving nourishes someone else.

Brass: It can withstand fire and judgment upon sin.

Iron: Throughout the Old and New Testaments, iron symbolizes bondage, imprisonment and torture. For example, in the Book of Revelation, creatures fly out of the pit wearing a breastplate of iron to do harm to and destroy mankind in any way they can.

I will be referring to these four important words and definitions throughout the rest of this message. With that, go to Genesis 49:20, where Jacob gives blessings to all his sons. About Asher it tells us,

“Out of Asher his bread shall be fat, and he shall yield royal dainties.”

I have read just about everything under the sun that tries to explain what this verse means and it is ridiculous how people convince themselves what God's Word says. Do the research yourself and read the silly commentaries.

This verse in Genesis begins with, ***“Out of Asher...”*** The words 'Out of' is not in the original so scratch it out completely because this verse starts with the name Asher. In just about every manuscript, Asher is the beginning of that sentence. So, this sentence should really say, ***“Asher his bread shall be fat, and he shall yield royal dainties.”***

The tribe of Asher was located approximately around the border areas of present Northern Israel and Southern Lebanon. It was on the western Mediterranean Coast so the tribe of Asher would receive good agricultural land. There is no doubt about that. This verse is saying the land was choice and would yield food fit for a king. If I was Asher and Jacob was my father, I would be thinking that this was a fine blessing, but some of these other brothers got some pretty good blessings. I would wonder why this was my blessing and could I have more than that. In any case, the tribe of Asher was promised and blessed with good agricultural land which would yield food fit for a king.

“Asher his bread shall be fat....” Remember 'the best' part of the animal was where the fat came from. In this case, the bread shall be fat and the yield of it to produce some wonderful tasting food that you would not be ashamed of and proud to present to a king. Without going into where the lost tribes of Israel wound up and why they went there, if any of you have ever done any serious studies on the lost tribes of Israel and their migration especially and how these tribes from certain areas migrated to Western Europe, they are not lost. As the minor prophet said, they would be forgotten, but God did not forget where He put them. Anyone who does any serious study on the lost tribes of Israel would know that migration took this tribe to France and that is where they settled for the most part. Just think about where the best food and culinary mastery of any kind or any nation in the world comes from. Talk about a blessing if you understand the tribe's migration and where it went to be fulfilled. I know it is just a small part of what God's Word really says, but everywhere you turn He verifies and controls not only what has happened in history but also what will happen in the future. If you trust in Him, it will give you confidence knowing everything that God said would happen has happened. If that is settled in your mind, then you really would not worry that much about the future because He has that under control too. That is also where Moses goes with his blessing when we get there. It is common knowledge that the best food and culinary mastery of any kind of any nation is in France. You might not like their food, but it is the reputation that has been established and not just in recent times. France is known for the best food and best chefs; food fit for a king. That is the physical aspect of this prophesy and blessing, but how do we relate it in spiritual terms? Jesus put it in perspective when He came and we also have physical verification of God's Word where He planted the tribe of Asher and how it came to pass, but there is also a spiritual application to that verse we need to look at.

Go to John 6:32 in the New Testament. I have been here before, and as we march through scripture with these different subjects, you can see there are some foundational scriptures that I use quite often; not just for one message, but for many messages. This is where Jesus is talking about everlasting food and that He is the bread of life. Verse 32 begins,

“Then Jesus said unto them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Moses gave you not that bread from heaven; but my Father giveth you the true bread from heaven.

For the bread of God is he [Jesus] which cometh down from heaven, and giveth life unto the world.

Then said they unto him, Lord, evermore give us this bread.

And Jesus said unto them, I am the bread of life: he that cometh to me shall never hunger;”

If you want a promise that you can remember, a good one to start with is ***“I am the bread of life.”*** He is our everything; He is our spiritual food and here is the King distributing His spiritual food to sinners for our benefit. Yes, we are sinners, but sinners saved by grace. Before that happened, He became the instrument, that bread from heaven, to give eternal life or we would still be sinners not saved by grace. We know that because verse 33 tells us,

“For the bread of God is he which cometh down from heaven....”

And verse 35 continues,

“And Jesus said unto them, I am the bread of life: he that cometh to me shall never hunger; and he that believeth on me shall never thirst.”

In the original this says,

“... he shall never hunger. And he that believeth on me shall never thirst, shall never, never.”

There is a period after the word hunger and He repeats the word never, and some manuscripts even repeat the word never a third time. Jesus was emphatic that we will never be hungry and will never thirst. We can go without food a lot longer than we can go without water. So, Jesus made the point that we shall never, never, never thirst! If you want to circle a promise, circle that one. Those are God's words through His Son Jesus Christ, and He does not just say that in this verse, He says it in other passages a little differently, but the same principle applies. In John 6:47 He says again,

“Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that believeth [faitheth, pisteuo] on me hath everlasting life. I am that bread of life. [Not someone else, not someone who will come after me. That is why we go to the table of the Lord to remember what He has done for us and what He is still doing for us.]

Your fathers did eat manna in the wilderness, and are dead.

This is the bread which cometh down from heaven, that a man may eat thereof, and not die. [Spiritual food gives eternal life, but temporary food, no matter how good, will not give eternal life.]

I am the living bread which came down from heaven: if any man eat of this bread, he shall live for ever: and the bread that I will give is my flesh, which I will give for the life of the world.”

Can you see those disciples just scratching their heads thinking, “What the heck is He saying? Are we going to be cannibals and start eating away on our master?” Just think what some of them were thinking. Put yourself in their shoes. Believe me, at this point, they still did not think He was going to the cross or dying. And they still did not quite understand it when He did go to the cross or when He resurrected and showed Himself to them. That is why I say doubting Thomas was unjustly criticized. They were all doubters, but at least doubting Thomas went on with his business and did not go into hiding. He demonstrated more courage and the church world got it all wrong in their portrayal of Thomas. I am not saying he was better than the rest. I am just saying they were wrong when they labelled him a doubting Thomas. Verse 52 continues to tell us,

“The Jews therefore strove among themselves, saying, How can this man give us his flesh to eat?”

Then Jesus said unto them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Except ye eat the flesh of the Son of man, and drink his blood, ye have no life in you.”

That is why you can never go to the table of the Lord too often. Go to the table of the Lord and do what He said; do it in remembrance of Him. A lot of times we go to the table of the Lord if we

need healing, if we are sick, or whatever. Why not go to the table of the Lord to remember what He has done for you? He has asked us to do it. In verse 54 we read,

“Whoso eateth my flesh, and drinketh my blood, hath eternal life; and I will raise him up at the last day.

For my flesh is meat indeed, and my blood is drink indeed.

He that eateth my flesh, and drinketh my blood, dwelleth in me, and I in him.

As the living Father hath sent me, and I live by the Father; so he that eateth me, even he shall live by me.

This is that bread [and there is no fatter or better bread] which came down from heaven: not as your fathers did eat manna, and are dead: he that eateth of this bread shall live for ever.”

Returning to Genesis 49,

“Asher his bread shall be fat,”

Spiritually this pointed Him who will present the best manna from heaven, the true bread of life that gives eternal life. This is not just a temporary physical need for our bodies, but the spiritual aspect that does give eternal life. Jesus Christ was the best that possibly could be provided, and He came here, and He is food fit for the king that He was willing to share with sinners even before they are saved by grace. How better after the fact, but even before, sinners that needed it because without that bread of life there would be no eternal life, only eternal death.

“... and he shall yield royal dainties.”

Literally this is, ‘*and he shall yield royal or kingly food.*’ Christ delivered kingly food to give eternal life to be a joint heir with Him throughout eternity. If you remember only one thing the next time you go to the table of the Lord, remember that. It is all you need.

Now let's move to Moses' blessing in Deuteronomy 33:24. This is probably the hardest message I am going to preach because like I said earlier, I have to add some things which a small portion of you who listen to me have been taught. I am not trying to come against what you have been taught, only add to it. By the way, when Moses blessed Israel, Asher was not the last son born, but the last son or tribe that he gave a blessing to. What a way for Moses to complete his blessings. He was led by God to give us hope and promises to hang on to. There is a reason why this was the last tribe to be blessed by Moses. You can read right through these scriptures and never see it, but it is there. Let's look at it. Asher's blessing begins in verse 24,

“And of Asher he said, Let Asher be blessed with children; let him be acceptable [A better Hebrew translation is *let him find favor and grace.*] to his brethren, and let him dip his foot in oil.”

In the Hebrew, most of the time the phrase '*let him dip*' was used when you were dipping something in blood. This was a blessing for Asher, but when this was written it was also a blessing for the future and for our time, so apply it to yourself today.

My mentor used the verse in II Corinthians 1:20, ***“For all the promises of God in him are yea, and in him Amen, unto the glory of God by us”*** as a launching point to go to scriptures, including this particular scripture, to claim the promises in these scriptures. We need to do that, but let's clearly understand what the promise and the blessing is saying so we know how to accurately apply it. I am not saying he was inaccurate. I am saying he had a different definition of this verse. I have told the story many times over that I am the one who packed and unpacked his library for a long, long time. I remember him telling me that he wished he had the library he had in the last ten years of his life when he got into the different languages. It was unfortunate he did not because especially in the last five or six years was when he dove into the languages. There were some references of some material that he had from studies of the language both in Hebrew and Greek, but they were limited. I organized his library many times over and I knew what he had. He did not have the information especially when he first put this message together. I do not remember if he ever shared it with anybody on the air, but when he came out of college, he had this message come to him. He was preaching this message back in the early 60's and late 50's, but he did not have the necessary information available to us today to analyze this using God's Word.

I just do not take anybody's word for it, and what is preached must be verifiable in God's Word or I will not believe it. It does not matter what commentator or scholar whether language, divinity or theology, I am not taking their word for it. I am not interested in theories. I am interested in verifiable information coming from one source and one source only, God's Word. If your information comes from that, then I am interested in what you have to say. There is nothing like adding new knowledge upon old knowledge. You can never exhaust God's Word because it is continual spiritual growth to have the mind of Christ. There is no dead end to it. Returning to Moses' blessing in Deuteronomy, we read,

“And of Asher he said, Let Asher be blessed with children; let him be acceptable [or have found favor and grace to his brethren] and let him dip [literally dip in blood; a prophetic message here] his foot in oil.”

Maybe some of you have researched some of the basic commentaries. They will that say not so long ago the Middle East's major pipeline first came from Iraq and travelled west all the way through Israel and out to the Mediterranean Coast for accessibility through trade agreements. The phrase, *'his foot in oil'* is the fulfilment of this prophesy. The oil was transported in a pipeline, but not coming from Israel. You would be surprised how many written commentaries refer to this as a possibility and some go beyond referring to it as a possibility and make it a fact, but they are dead wrong. This is a promise to Asher; not to Iraq who benefited mostly out of that deal. Just because it looks scholarly in a book does not mean it is scholarly; just because it comes from a theological seminary, does not mean that it truly has insight about God's Word is saying. This verse tells us,

“And of Asher he said, Let Asher be blessed with children; let him find favor and grace to his brethren, and let him dip in blood [literally baptized in blood] his foot in oil.”

Remember what I told you about oil. Oil is defined as the Holy Spirit anointing on our life. It is brought on when we start Trusting in God because when we start trusting, we start pleasing God,

and when we please God, He will surround both the inner and outer being of our existence with His Holy Spirit. We can claim this promise ***“and let us be baptized in blood”*** today. In the Old Testament and in the New, the way someone would be anointed with oil, not just for priestly reasons or as an individual, was usually from head to toe covering the whole body. It was not just a drop on the forehead. The poured oil would cover you from head to toe. Symbolically this means that Asher is blessed, fully satisfied, and finds favor and grace with his brethren. To us it should be the church. Unfortunately, that is not what it has become.

“... let him find favour and grace to his brethren, and let him be dipped in blood and covered with the Holy Spirit” is what it is saying. This promise is for Asher and also for anyone wearing the breastplate. Then Satan sees that we are covered by God's Holy Spirit because of what Christ has done for us. We have a baptism not of water, but a baptism of His blood. Water could not save anyone, although what they were delivered from is symbolic in the Old Testament like the Red Sea and the Jordan River. In the New Testament, it is not water that saves us; it is the blood of Jesus Christ and we are baptized in it, anointed and covered with God's Holy Spirit. That is what *'his foot in oil'* means. It is not some stupid oil pipeline that represents materialism, instead of God. This is a powerful scripture that we need to claim for ourselves because any of these tribes and stones are promises for us as well.

When II Corinthians tells us that all the promises are yea in Him, that means all the promises that apply to the breastplate, to the spiritual armor, to God's armor that we wear, all the tribes and all the stones. So I am claiming this promise and hopefully you are claiming it along with me saying, “Satan, let it be known to you that you might bring in confusion at times and you want to put me in a position where I think that maybe God really does not want me.” I know younger Christians especially that are new in following the Lord will have these thoughts more than the ones who have been following the Lord and trusting what God has established in the His Word. Even though you might slip here and there, they come less and less because Satan knows that is not an area, he can use on you anymore so he will find something else. You younger Christians, not in age but experience, do not let Satan even put a thought in your brain that God will not watch out for you. He does! It is a promise because His Son fulfilled every jot and tittle to bring us this benefit. He died on that cross, and we are bathed in His blood and covered by God's Holy Spirit which represents the oil and sends a message to Satan that he will have to find a different technique because you truly trust and believe what God's Word says. When you are the point in your life when you recognize it is not through your own efforts and work that will keep you covered in His Holy Spirit, but it is trust and faith in God's Word, Satan also recognizes that he has to find a different tactic to bring you down. Do not be fooled. He will keep trying, but there are a lot of promises in God's Word which we will cover throughout my years here in ministry to give us the foundation to counterattack Satan's assault with all his methods, his tricks, his strategies, his tactics. They are all defeated in Jesus' name if we keep that armor on.

Go to the next verse in Deuteronomy which has confused some. It tells us,

“Thy shoes shall be iron and brass; and as thy days, so shall thy strength be.”

There are several problems with this verse. You say you have been claiming this, and you will keep claim it and keep claiming it, but I am going to show how to claim it. ***“Thy shoes shall be***

iron and brass;” is not what it says. Think about it. Remember what the definition for iron was? Verify it for yourself if you do not believe me. In scripture from Old to New Testaments, iron always represents imprisonment, bondage, torture, and pain. Why would God have us wear shoes of iron? Furthermore, as they were travelling around each day in their walk of faith, why should they be weighed down by such a heavy substance? Iron shoes would slow down a journey. I know the super spiritual ones may say, “Well, He just wants you to slow down so you can stop and recognize His control of your life.” Hogwash. There are other ways He does that.

“Thy shoes shall be iron and brass;”

There are two statements in this verse. Let's just deal with the first one, iron. These are spiritual shoes and they are not iron and brass. In fact, we are given instructions what those shoes were or ought to be in our lives if you really think about it. In Ephesians 6:15 we are told, ***“And your feet shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace....”*** How does this footwear in the New Testament, ***“the preparation of the gospel of peace;”*** allow you to put on shoes representing bondage, imprisonment and pain? It is like night and day, black and white. They are so opposite it is unbelievable when you take a look at it. It does not make any sense.

If you are going to be confused about scripture, then this is a good place to get confused. Why is ***“Thy shoes shall be iron and brass;”*** something in the Old Testament that I should hang on to because the trip is going to be tough? In fact, one of my mentor's singers wrote a song 'Tough Shoes for a Tough Trip.' I still like the song, and He does give you shoes to make the trip, but not shoes of iron and brass because that is not what the original says. In fact, the original says ***‘Under thy shoes’***, not the shoes themselves, but what is underneath those shoes. ***“Under thy shoes shall be iron...”*** Some manuscripts do not even have the word brass. In the Old Testament, brass is used quite often and literally means *copper* because most of the time brass was 90% copper anyway, so it is not really brass. Brass is made mostly of copper and zinc, the two major elements, but mostly copper. Additionally, you may wonder how to verify the phrase ***‘Under thy shoes shall be iron’*** from the ancient manuscripts or where in God's Word can we possibly find scriptures to base this on. Well, the ancient manuscripts differ a little here and there; in fact, some of the newer translators who re-translate the Bible in the last 50 years make it almost idiotic. Here are some alternate translations for the 26 Translations Bible just to see what others have said about this particular verse, ***“Thy shoes shall be iron and brass;”***

“Iron and brass shall be thy sandals.” Okay.

“The bars shall be iron and brass.” The bars that were attached to iron gates, meaning they were not shoes at all with some translators. Instead, gates are being described here which is totally ridiculous.

“May your doorbolts be iron and copper.” At least they got the metal right.

“Be your bolts of iron and bronze.”

“Basalt and bronze ward you from harm.”

These are some examples of other translators, but the verse does not say, ***“Thy shoes shall be iron and brass.”*** My shoes that I wear today are not iron and brass. I do not want to be in prison, in bondage, or in pain. Now if Christ puts me there that is one thing, but I do not want to be there through my own efforts, and neither should you. The verse says, ***“Under thy shoes shall be iron...”***

What does Deuteronomy 8:9 say?

“A land wherein thou shalt eat bread without scarceness, thou shalt not lack any thing in it; a land [the properties underneath the foot or shoe] whose stones are iron, and out of whose hills thou mayest dig brass [A better translation is copper].”

“... a land whose stones are iron, and out of whose hills thou mayest dig brass” means that God will not weigh us down with the things of this world. Why would He weigh us down with what is spiritually defined as nothing but bondage, imprisonment and pain? As I said, brass can withstand fire, and I can see it if you want to make that your argument. For instance, brass was used in the tabernacle on the brass basin and also in the altar of burnt offering and is the one time that brass or copper was used in the tabernacle. Just about all the other elements consisted of wood covered by gold. But God will not weigh us down with the things of this world. He is just not going to do it. If He does, then all the promises that I have do not apply. When reading this verse the King James Version it sounds wonderful, but when understanding it through God's Word as the explanation that God was saying, then it is not so wonderful. ***“Thy shoes shall be iron and brass;”*** No. This verse is what it says in Deuteronomy 8:9, ***“Under thy shoes shall be iron...”*** He is describing what they would be walking on, not what they would be wearing.

Moving on to the last part of the verse we read, ***“...and as thy days, so shall thy strength be,”*** which is also not what this verse says. Now a very small portion of you know why I was struggling to preach this message because I knew I was going to disappoint some. Maybe some of you will leave but do the research and dig deep because you will have to dig deep. In this case, know the verifiable facts.

“Thy shoes shall be iron and brass; and as thy days, so shall thy strength be.” Strength is not the right translation here. The Hebrew word is *dobe*, and rarely is this word ever used for strength. In fact, most translators have a problem with this word because there are different kinds of strengths that God describes in the Old Testament, but this is not one of them. So, what is it saying here? The reason why we have 'strength' here is when the then scholars were putting the Septuagint together, they rendered it strength, but ***“as thy days, so thy strength be”*** is not accurate. There is a better promise than that here in the latter part of this verse. Let me tell you what it says,

“as thy days [whatever day you are facing], so shall thy rest be.”

I want you to stop and think about ***“so shall thy rest be.”*** God telling us that no matter what we went through today by the time we lie down, if given the opportunity to do so, God will give us enough rest because, as my mentor used to say, He is the God of the forefront. He is already handling tomorrow's daily activities whether good or bad before you even get there. He knows

what strength we will need to tackle tomorrow's problems, or to put another way, what rest we will need to tackle tomorrow's problems. My mentor would also say from an illustration from his dad that if you get up feeling tired, sick, feeling weak, or whatever, not much will happen that day, but I always had a problem with that. If I woke up so tired at times because of only a few hours of sleep, I was literally a walking dead person as far as strength goes. I was sure, because I hung on to that for years, that not much would happen that day and more times than not all hell broke loose. I struggled in my spirit with this scripture in the way I was taught. However, my struggles brought me to a point where I had to dig and dig deep, so I thank God for my struggles because it gave me new insight into what God's Word really says and what to expect.

"... as thy days, so shall thy rest be" period!

God knows what you will face tomorrow, and you will get through today because He is already planning on tomorrow. When tomorrow comes and then tomorrow is today and by the time you get to tonight, He will apply enough rest again for the next day after that. God's promises are simple. That is why it says in Ephesians 6:10 to be strengthened. You will not make it through any day – forget tomorrow – if you are not strengthened by His force and His mighty power. That is true strength; the strength that He will impute in us if we faith and are covered by the Holy Spirit ready to do battle with our spiritual armor.

For many years, I hung on to II Corinthians 12:9 as I struggled with these scriptures, as Paul struggled with whatever his thorn in the flesh was, and I forgot the verse on purpose for the longest time because, ***"My grace is sufficient for thee: for my strength is made complete [not perfect] in weakness."*** I hung onto this promise and I still hang onto it, but I know through studies I have done that verifies God's Word ***"as my day, so shall my rest be"*** because God knows what I went through today, He brought me through it, and He will provide enough rest for tonight because He knows what I am facing tomorrow. He does not want me to worry about it.

Go to Matthew 6:33. I have been here so many times you should have it marked by now. Here Christ says not to worry about how you will be clothed or how you will be fed; not to worry about any of the things of life. Put Him first is what He is saying. In verse 34 it says,

"Take therefore no thought for the morrow: for the morrow shall take thought for the things of itself."

It is God's promise through Asher and Satan knows it. He knows as he is throwing everything at us and more that God will get us through. He also knows through that stone, through the name of the tribe on that stone, that God also promised to give us enough rest because He knows, even if we do not, what is facing us tomorrow and He will give enough rest to strengthen us for the next day's activities. But He does not want us concerned about it because when we start being concerned how we will make it through that day we put our eyes on ourselves and away from God and the source given to us through His spiritual food. I do not want that to happen and I am sure you do not want it to happen.

So, when you read ***"Under thy shoes shall be iron and brass;"*** Go back to it in Deuteronomy 8:9, understanding it is not the shoes being described here, but what they are walking on, what

the terrain is like. This verse does not promise an easy road or a casual walk. It promises that whatever is underneath it, or whatever your day will be like, He already knows about it and He does not want you to worry about how He will get you through the day. He will get you through the day and He will give you enough rest because He is already working on tomorrow and He has already handled it. We just must keep our eyes focused on Him.

There is one other point and I will end here. If you look through legends and myths throughout the millenniums about this agate stone, the legends date back thousands of years. There are three important legends or myths about this stone which I really do not think are that much of a myth. People have been basing the collection of these stones for these three reasons:

1. People who needed increased stamina and energy would collect these stones.
2. People who suffered from insomnia. People having trouble sleeping at night, most of the time usually concerns about what will happen in the future.
3. To enhance personal courage and to protect one in personal danger.

Here in the blessing, I am not to worry about tomorrow, He has given me the perfect cure for insomnia, He has promised me rest for tonight that I will need for tomorrow and He will give us enough rest. You might say you have to get your eight hours, but God is not on your clock. He knows what you need. When I thought only one hour of rest would do me in, I found out the next day not only did I make it through the whole day, it was hard for me to go to sleep the night after that. God knows what you need. Stop thinking what you think you need is best; God has it under control. He will give us the increased stamina and energy. As I read in this legend, how much more this applies, and it is there in the blessing of Asher.

Obviously personal courage and protection comes with any of the names of the tribes and our energy for stamina. Well, Satan, you might think I am down, but look at my breastplate. It does not say, “... *as thy days, so shall thy strength be.*” It says, “... *as thy days, so shall my rest be,*” because tomorrow is a new day Satan and I will be right here, or wherever God wants me to be, as a soldier of Jesus Christ to confront you in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and He will be the victor, not you, Satan.

That is what this blessing both in Jacob and in Moses symbolizes; not only the physical attributes of it, but also the spiritual attributes. I am not trying to take anything away from my mentor. I am just adding to it to see what God's Word truly says by verifying His Word. If anything, it added the promise to it and verifies in God's Word both in Old and New Testament “*as my days, so shall my rest be*” because God wants me back at my post soldiering against a wicked enemy that will be defeated and He will use us in the process to bring on that defeat. I plan to line up and say, “Yes sir, I will be at my post tomorrow morning and whatever rest you give me will be sufficient.” If you do not think that is enough, His grace is enough more than anything else so either claim it or resist it. The choice is yours.

Issachar

We are at the latter part of Ephesians 6:14, ***“and having on the breastplate of righteousness.”*** The breastplate has been our launching point and we have been looking at this breastplate of righteousness through the Old Testament. I have also gone back to Exodus 28 as a second launching point in this particular part of this series on the breastplate starting with verse 15.

“And thou shalt make the breastplate of judgment [the mishpat] with cunning work; after the work of the ephod...” Then the verses go on to describe the colors and material used in the making of this breastplate. Then in verse 17 the stones are described; the settings of stones, each of the four rows of stones, and the kind of stone itself. I have not concentrated much on the stones, but instead have concentrated on the names of the children of Israel, the tribe etched on each stone, what it symbolizes in the breastplate, what the devil sees, what it reminds him of that he faces and what he has to deal with when he sees us wearing the breastplate if we are in Christ, now having on that spiritual armor through Christ.

We are now in verse 19, ***“And the third row a ligure, an agate, and an amethyst.”*** Amethyst is where we are in this verse.

Verse 21 tells us, ***“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.”***

These are the names of the 12 tribes we have been reading about in scripture. I will spend a few moments in verse 19 on the stone again and the symbolism and what it means and then we will move to the name of the tribe on that stone.

Verse 19, ***“And the third row a ligure, an agate, and an amethyst.”***

The ninth stone in the third row on the breastplate is amethyst. The Hebrew is ***achlamah***. This ***achlamah*** or amethyst is a purple stone in its appearance. It is also the twelfth foundational stone in the Book of Revelation of a city yet to come where we will dwell in the New Jerusalem. When I go back to these stones in the future, I will not only teach on these particular stones in a more in-depth way and how it applies here in the Old Testament, I will also take us to the New Testament and the foundational stones in the Book of Revelation and the symbolism there in the New Jerusalem. The English word we get from this stone comes from the Greek word ***amethustos*** which comes from the root word ***methuo*** meaning *to be drunk*, which comes from another Greek word ***methe***. So, we have three words: ***amethustos***, ***methuo***, and ***methe***. To understand the meaning of each word it is necessary to combine all these words together because they all tie in together to this particular stone in the New Testament and in the Old Testament through the word ***achlamah***. This purple stone literally means *intoxication*. ***Methe*** means *intoxication* and when all these Greek words are put together, it is intoxication or drunkenness. The amethyst stone itself here in the Hebrew and in the New Testament in the Greek is ***amethustos***. When the 'a' is put in front, it means the opposite or without, so in this case, ***methustos*** is drunkenness. This drunkenness can be anything that takes over your life and

becomes an obsession. You become so drunk that it drives you and you cannot go on living without it. Alcohol is used both here in the Old and specifically in the New Testament – *amethustos* – but it goes beyond that as well. It goes to anything that becomes an obsession. Too bad people do not pursue God that way. We would have a whole different world, but now because of sin in our nature, we put our mind and eyes on the things of this world and not on the things that are not part of this world. It is why we do not have a pursuit of God and the passion to follow Him that we should have.

Once you understand what these words mean, you will understand that when Satan sees this stone he knows this is a person not drunk with the things of this world, whether alcohol or anything that becomes an obsession, but a person filled and intoxicated with the Holy Spirit. In other words, we should not allow anything that puts us in an altered state of consciousness. That is what Paul declared in the New Testament just before he wrote about the fruit of the Spirit in Galatians 5:22. Do not allow yourself to come to the point where you have an altered state of consciousness. That does not mean you cannot have a glass of wine! Have one, two, three; whatever point you can take it without having an altered state of consciousness. I will have a glass of wine or a cold beer on a hot day, but I know where my point is where I release the ability to have something else take over. In this case, it is the satanic army looking for any opportunity to penetrate my inner being and to influence my mind. We should not allow anything that puts us in an altered state of consciousness. If we do, we are allowing Satan and his army to have control of our mind. Have you ever seen someone just stumbling around so drunk and out of it? That is what I am talking about and it is what Paul was talking about in the New Testament. Do not bring yourself to the point where the Holy Spirit is no longer in control and the flesh has completely taken over and now it is an opportunity for Satan and his army to move in and literally alter your mind and take possession of it. Satan wants to possess one thing and that is your mind because once he has your mind, he knows he has you, so do not give Satan and his army any control over it by putting yourself in an altered state of consciousness.

We are to be continuously aware of what is happening around us just as Gideon and his 300 were. When the 300 were in battle, they did not just dive in the water because they were dying of thirst and sucked in water without any awareness of what was happening around them. The 300 were lapping and looking, making sure they were aware of all their surroundings because they did not know when the enemy was going to attack, and they were not going to be surprised by it. They would not have something else blind them of their surroundings; they were not going to let themselves be put in the position of being defeated by the enemy. We are to be like that. We are to be aware of what is happening around us and not in a state of altered consciousness that takes us beyond the control that the Holy Spirit has over our mind. Some of you reading this, in the future, or whenever, may have drinking problems or addictions to drugs or alcohol and become addicted to the temporary feel good high achieved by overindulging in these substances. Every time that happens, you are literally handing Satan your mind and grieving the Holy Spirit. Some of you do not like to hear it. I am not saying you cannot drink. Some of you take prescribed medications. Just do not overmedicate because it brings a certain feeling into your being.

I struggle with that constantly; not me personally, but I have a family member with Alzheimer's. Anyone who knows about this disease knows that agitation, anxiousness, anxiety, confusion comes and goes. What the world tries to do is overmedicate to keep it under control. In my spirit

I face daily how much is too much because even if that person can remember God and remember to say a prayer because they are not overmedicated, even though it might be suffering to me now and to that person, to still have communication with God that person would be better off. These are sensitive subjects and the Bible deals with them, but it is not the subject matter of this chapter.

The point is, we are to make ourselves aware of what is happening around us which will not happen control of the mind is given over to Satan because he will cloud it up with misinformation, doubts and fears, and everything else that he can implant in the mind to literally knock you off course and break the connection with God. That is what you are doing when you take it too far and you enter that altered state of consciousness. Like I said, we are to be aware of what is happening around us.

It is not just an Old Testament declaration about that stone and what it symbolizes. In I Peter 5:7 Peter tells us, ***“Casting all your care upon him; for he careth for you.”*** Then in verse 8 he begins by saying, ***“Be sober....”*** The Greek word is *nepho* and literally means *to be free from the influence of intoxicants and collected by the Spirit in you*. In other words, do not be influenced. Be free of that and let the Holy Spirit literally possess your life and being from these outside substances.

“Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, [to rip us and our minds apart], walketh about, seeking whom he may devour:”

The devil cannot wait for the opening; he is already there ready to pounce on us to devour us up any time we become addicted to anything. If you are prescribed certain drugs, stay within your prescription because a lot of those things are addicting. Some may think more is better, but more just brings us under the bondage of needing more. If more was better, then why was it not prescribed that way, and more never really satisfies the euphoria of wellness we are looking for. It just gets us further and deeper into the pit. I have seen it happen with many, whether alcohol or drugs. However, this stone is there to say the ones suited with the armor of Christ wearing this breastplate is a person not drunk with the intoxicating things of the world, including alcohol and drugs and everything else you might be obsessed with, but they are intoxicated literally with the Holy Spirit. Satan sees that from the beginning along with other stones. Peter tells us to ***“Be sober...”*** Literally *be free from the influence of intoxicants and collected or filled with the Holy Spirit*. If you are drunk on anything, be drunk with the Holy Spirit. If you overdo anything, let the Holy Spirit be the gift you overdo that God has sent us to comfort, to nourish and to be there to watch over our growth as we grow in the mind of Christ.

For instance, concerning drugs in the New Testament, the Greek word is *pharmakeia*, and is where we get our English word pharmacy. What is *pharmakeia*? Galatians 5:20 lists the things that do not bring you into Christian liberty, but into worldly bondage. Paul lists all these things before he gets to the fruit of the Spirit which I have already taught on in 5:22 through 5:26. The list is in Galatians 5:19-21,

“Now the works of the flesh are manifest, which are these; Adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lasciviousness,

***Idolatry, witchcraft, hatred, variance, emulations, wrath, strife...
Envyings, murders, drunkenness, revelings....”***

Witchcraft here is *pharmakeia*. This is not just the use, but the ministering of drugs; things that lead to the altered state of consciousness, and that is where we get our English word pharmacy. *Pharmakeus* is also used in Revelation 21:8,

“But the fearful, and unbelieving, and the abominable, and murderers, and whoremongers, and sorcerers, and idolaters, and all liars, shall have their part in the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone: which is the second death.”

There is another place in the Book of Revelation warning that the end times would be saturated with drugs that influence mankind to the point that it brings devastation to more people than can be hardly imagined. You say you cannot understand it, but why not? Do you really believe the wrath of God is coming, especially in the last three-and-a-half years of the Great Tribulation? What do you think this world without Christ is going to turn to in order to forget about the problems, forget the sufferings that will take place, forget the torturing, or to cope with the torturing of beings that will go on that you cannot even imagine is going to be released from the pit upon mankind for one purpose, to hurt and to kill them. The world turns to that already with Christ. Now take the church out of the equation, what do you think they will turn to? God's Word declares they will turn to things that alter the state of consciousness, and what is more accessible than drugs and alcohol. In the minds of the people who are left behind, hopefully it will give them some relief from what they will experience during the Great Tribulation and they will see it as their only way they can cope with what is happening.

Some of you are so boxed in with what you think is going to happen, and what already is starting to take place, that you are missing the importance of making people understand through God's Word why you should not be brought under bondage to anything that brings you to the altered state of consciousness where Christ and the Holy Spirit are out of the equation. Now, through the devil's manipulating secretive ways, he slips things of the unseen into your mind using those substances. Some of you work in hospitals, some of you are counsellors and psychiatrists, and some of you are or have been police officers. You see what those intoxicants can do to an individual and how they can destroy lives. During the Great Tribulation, they are already going to have an opinion that their life is not worth living because of all the suffering that will take place, so why not take something that will just make you forget about those present-day problems.

This amethyst stone goes out of its way to declare to Satan that this is a soldier of Jesus Christ with its spiritual armor, not drunk with the things of this world, but the things not of this world and by His Spirit. I am telling you to be drunk with the Spirit of God because thus saith the Lord. Now, I did not plan to go that far because it is a whole study, but it is good to understand in this series what this stone symbolizes as a stone and that is just part of it. God wants us drunk with His Spirit, not with what the things of this world provides. So, know your limitations.

I had a mentor who collected wines and not just one or two bottles, but hundreds. He would taste some of these wines, but he knew what his limitations were. Especially as young interns back in

the 1970s, he taught us how to taste wine, but not to have an altered state of consciousness. Taste and enjoy but know your limits because he knew very well what God's Word says. He would never let himself be brought to an altered state of consciousness. I remember one time someone related to the preacher world asked him if he ever got drunk. You might think this was a self-righteous answer, but I knew he was telling the truth. He said he would not allow the devil to have control over his mind. It made a big impact on me. I think I was 19 or 20 years old and it stuck with me and I went to search the scriptures. I did my own study because he would not touch on those subjects too much during his live broadcasts and I found out for myself, not just through scriptures I gave you, what God's Word says about it. God's Word has declared to Satan through this breastplate and through this stone, "Hands off! They are not your possession. They are mine. They are filled with my Spirit, not yours. They are not drunk with the things of this world. They are drunk with the things that are part of me." That is the state of consciousness you need to stay in. I am not talking about works here. This has nothing to do with works. It is about knowing who you serve and if you serve your Lord and Master, you want to be under His control and not give control to the enemy. Enough said about that for now.

Returning to the amethyst, this stone is purple in color which symbolizes royalty and prosperity. Because it is the ninth stone, it also represents the manifestation of the Holy Spirit that dwells in us. I said the color purple symbolizes royalty and prosperity, but how do we get that royal position with God that this stone declares just in its presence and what is shining forth from it on the breastplate? We see that in I Peter 2:9,

"But ye are a chosen generation [chosen by Jesus Christ], a royal priesthood..."

We get this royal position because in Romans 12:1 we are told that Christ has chosen us to participate in worship and praise to Him individually and also as a living sacrifice in a bodily service of yourself and your material things to proclaim the Word of God to others.

"But ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation [A group of people set apart.], a peculiar people;"

Scholars will interpret this word *peculiar* differently. The most basic meaning of this word is, "You are a purchased group of people chosen by me. I purchased you; I purchased everyone, but I am going to choose the ones that I want to and the ones I choose sit as a royal priest in the family of God." In the priesthood, there are different capacities of what needs to be done; those in the ministries and those outside the ministries, but nevertheless everyone is part of the priesthood. ***"But ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a peculiar people;"*** purchased by His blood which now gave Him the right and the capacity to choose you because He paid the price to carry out what He has for you as an assignment because we are to labor as a servant of Jesus Christ before we obtain our rest. Through Jesus Christ, we obtain royalty and there is no other way to obtain it. It is only through Jesus Christ.

With that introduction on the stone, let's go to Genesis 30:14. Issachar is the tribe's name on the ninth stone, the amethyst, but before we get there let's see what happens starting with verse 14.

"And Reuben went in the days of wheat harvest, and found mandrakes in the field, and

brought them unto his mother Leah. Then Rachel said to Leah, Give me, I pray thee, of thy son's mandrakes.

Remember Leah and Rachel are in competition with each other about who can have more sons through their own womb and through the womb of their handmaids. In verse 9 we read, ***“When Leah saw that she had left bearing*** [came to the conclusion that she could not have any more children], ***she took Zilpah her maid, and gave her Jacob to wife.***” Now we see Leah again obviously in some type of communication which is strange. I guess maybe not in some families, but at least in mine. I cannot imagine my wife asking my son – because I have a wife and a son – for mandrakes. A mandrake was a fruit-bearing plant, but a fruit-bearing plant that had qualities about it as an aphrodisiac. In other words, hopefully it would stimulate the one taking it – how can I really say this – to get some action. The rest of the world that probably does not understand English that well, or the slang we use here and are probably scratching their heads right now. They were hoping to get some action! Obviously, Jacob for some reason was not that interested in Leah anymore because obviously she could not bear children and she was not his favorite wife anyway. He is beyond Leah and now with her handmaid and Rachel as well. But Leah is looking for something and she was desperate to get his attention again. In those days, the way to get your husband's attention was to be able to still produce children. With that understanding, return to verse 14,

“And Reuben went in the days of wheat harvest, and found mandrakes [aphrodisiacs] in the field, and brought them unto his mother Leah. Then Rachel said to Leah [Rachel found out about it], Give me, I pray thee, of thy son's mandrakes.

And she said unto her, Is it a small matter that thou hast taken my husband? [She is blaming Rachel now for not having intimate relations with Jacob.] and wouldest thou take away my son's mandrakes also? And Rachel said, Therefore he shall lie with thee tonight for thy son's mandrakes.”

Remember at this point, Rachel had no children of her own yet. Obviously, Jacob was going from tent to tent to tent, so maybe he needed some aphrodisiacs to keep up the strength for producing all these sons, and daughters too by the way. So, in their own eyes, these women were desperate to get Jacob's attention and get him stimulated enough and interested in them so they could have him keep trying to produce children. Verse 15 continues,

“And she said unto her, Is it a small matter that thou hast taken my husband? and wouldest thou take away my son's mandrakes also? And Rachel said, Therefore he shall lie with thee tonight for thy son's mandrakes.”

In this verse a deal was made that Leah would have Jacob visit her tent that night, but there was a condition. She needed to give Rachel the mandrakes for the next time Jacob was with her. Then in verse 16 we read,

“And Jacob came out of the field in the evening, and Leah went out to meet him, and said, Thou must come in unto me; for surely I have hired thee with my son's mandrakes. And he lay with her that night.”

Leah was telling Jacob that she had paid the price for him to lie with her that night. She gave up something so she could get him to have sex with her. Don't become upset by what I am saying here. Hopefully I am going through the scriptures in Genesis 30 without offending too many, especially those in the Bible belt. I am not saying it, God's Word is. And how else would you communicate what is about ready to be said and declared here? You must understand that these two women were constantly at each other. They were conniving and here they are deal makers, and we never see Jacob arguing about anything when it comes to who he was going to lie with. That is one thing you will see over and over in chapter 30. He does not argue. Just point him in the direction he needed to go and if there was a woman in the tent, he was there. Yes, he was a great patriarch, but he was also a patriarch who had flesh and blood and desires. It is amazing how God, through all of it, still achieved His purposes using mankind to achieve it.

The key point is in verse 17 in the King James,

“And God hearkened unto Leah, and she conceived, and bare Jacob the fifth son.”

Up to this point Leah is making a deal with Rachel for the mandrakes. Somewhere between when she gave up the mandrakes or the aphrodisiac plant and her lying with Jacob, there is no doubt in my mind that she did some praying and pleading with the God before her first child was born after chapter 29:21 when Jacob married her. We see this in verse 31, ***“And when the LORD saw that Leah was hated, he opened her womb: but Rachel was barren. And Leah conceived, and bare a son; and she called his name Reuben.”*** Leah conceived again and again, but it came to the point in chapter 30, verse 9 that Leah visibly saw she had left bearing and she took matters into her own hands. This is what happens to all of us no matter what the circumstances we are facing. We take matters into our own hands and we really upset the plan that God had for us. We almost need to return to a starting point once again to move forward and we lose time because we decided to do it our way instead of God's way. When Leah saw in verse 9 that she had left bearing, she took her handmaid and gave her to Jacob to wife. It does not say she went to the Lord with the same passion she had when she first married Jacob to conceive children because she was hated and God seeing that she was hated opened her womb. No! Time has passed, many children have been born and now she thought she left bearing, so she took matters into her own hands and she gave Jacob her handmaid. But it is obvious that even though she gave Jacob her handmaid she still did not give up on the possibility of having more children with Jacob through her own womb. So, she made a plan to have her son go and look for these aphrodisiac fruit-bearing plants hoping that Jacob would lie with her to bear children once again, to be loved by Jacob once again, but this time verse 17 takes a different route. She made a deal with Rachel, but in making the deal with Rachel, she gave up what was in her possession and under her control that she thought was the best plan to produce children and lie with Jacob and handed it over to Rachel. Once she recognized that she no longer could produce children, she just handed it over to Rachel. In a sense, it was an act of saying, “Well, I have been trying to do this my way, but let me go back to the Lord and see what His intentions are and see how He can help me.” We see what happened because of that in verse 17,

“And God hearkened...” No, God did not hearken. Literally in the Hebrew *and God heard attentively*. If God is hearing something, then someone must be saying something which is often missed completely here in the King James Version. I checked other versions too and it does not

make the same impact as the Hebrew. For God to be listening, someone has to be talking or communicating to Him; and not only was He listening, He was listening attentively. He was listening closely, and He heard Leah. This was now a different Leah in this verse than in verse 9. It was not the Leah who gave up and then decided to take a different route, do what the world would do and come up with a plan in the hands of flesh once again. This is a Leah saying, “No more handmaids, no more tricks, no more fruit-bearing plants to get my husband in my tent.” None of that! Between the time Leah gave up the mandrakes and the time Jacob laid with her, there was some communicating from Leah going on in God's ears. The Hebrew makes it very clear that she was once again she is acting in faith,

“And God heard attentively unto Leah, and she conceived, and bare Jacob the fifth son. And Leah said, God hath given me my hire, because I have given my maiden to my husband: and she called his name Issachar.”

Leah stopped trying to connive and put it in God's hands. God did what He did, and He gave Leah another son ***“and she called his name Issachar.”*** Now Issachar has two different meanings: *there is hire and there is reward*. ***“God hath given me my hire [my Issachar] and she called his name Issachar”*** or *my hire and my reward*.

So now we are to the point where Issachar is born and we know that his name means *there is hire*, in other words, there is a laborer and also *there is reward*. Let's move forward to Jacob's ninth son in Genesis 49:14. In Deuteronomy, Moses combines Issachar and Zebulun in his blessing so this blessing applies to both sons, but we will begin with Jacob's blessing in Genesis 49. Keep in mind that Issachar name means – *there is hire and there is reward* – so in other words, there will be a laborer and there will be reward for that laborer. In Genesis 49:14 Jacob blesses his sons before his death,

“Issachar is a strong ass couching down between two burdens: And he saw that rest was good, and the land that it was pleasant; and bowed his shoulder to bear, and became a servant unto tribute.”

Jacob's blessing is ***“became a servant unto tribute.”*** Beginning with the first part of this blessing, ***“Issachar is a strong ass couching down between two burdens:”*** a better translation for couching would be *lying down*. Because of this scripture, people who try to locate the tribe of Issachar in the lost tribes of Israel have made some really huge blunders. There are all kinds of theories where the migrations took place. I like to stick with the archeological evidence and evidence that is coming out almost monthly now about where the migrations took these tribes.

“Issachar is a strong ass lying down between two burdens.” What do asses carry? They carry a load or loads. I am an ass. You are an ass. Now I am going to have some Christians really mad at me thinking I am cursing or cussing in God's name, but I am reading scripture. This tribe, this son of Jacob, is etched on a stone on the breastplate and we are to wear this breastplate. We become identified with these sons and what they symbolize, what they mean, and how it shows what God's righteousness looks like. This is nothing that we can produce. I am a strong ass! You might not feel like a strong ass; you might be frail, but in the Spirit, you are a strong ass! I am a strong ass! We are a bunch of asses! I am not trying to be funny, even though it sounds funny. We

are strong asses lying down between two burdens.

Asses carry heavy loads because of their strength. I am not just talking about physical strength here. I am also talking about the strength that God promised we would have if we put the spiritual armor on. Ephesians 6:10 begins with, ***“be strengthened by the Lord.”*** He is the one who gives us the strength to carry the load. Asses, like us, need God's strength to carry the load. You might think the load is your own personal problems and things of that nature. That is not what it is saying or what it means. We are to carry a heavy load. There is no Easy Street for Christians, no featherbeds, no vacation in what the world thinks is paradise. And because they do not want to leave that paradise, they live the rest of their lives in this make-believe paradise, this fantasy world they created. No, we are chosen. We covered that with the stone. We are a peculiar people. Yes, we are a bunch of asses, but not just asses, we are strong asses that carry a heavy load. Asses sometimes can be stubborn, but they are reliable. Take a look at yourself. I look at myself when I study these scriptures. God is looking for obedience and obedience produces reliability.

Not only is this a strong ass, but this strong ass has enough strength to carry two loads or burdens. Unfortunately, in the King James it is translated as burdens, but literally this word is *sheepfolds*. If you remember in Exodus 28:15 the breastplate of *mishpat*, but there is another word with the same spelling, but a little bit different meaning and that is where this word sheepfold comes from. This tribe would have the burden, the two loads, to carry out God's righteousness in the New Testament through Christ, not through any of our righteousness, but through Christ. So, what is a sheepfold? A sheepfold was usually the holding pen where livestock – sheep, cattle, or whatever – would be placed at night for their own protection. The two sheepfolds here symbolize that its meaning is to the Jews and Gentiles. To truly appreciate or understand this scripture I will bring Zebulun into the picture, another son of Jacob, which we will get to in the next chapter. These two sons will carry out a certain commission given to them by God and it would be a heavy load.

“Issachar is a strong ass lying down between two sheepfolds:” In other words, this blessing will be commissioned to go to the Jews and Gentiles.

Verse 15 continues,

“And he saw that rest [or literally, the resting place] was good, and the land that it was pleasant; and bowed his shoulder to bear, and became a servant unto tribute.”

What resting place? Is it talking about something here and now? No, it is not. ***“And he saw that the resting place was good, and the land that it was pleasant;”*** Whatever this resting place was, whatever land is being talked about here, it was good and pleasant. There is not some spiritual meaning behind this; not some physical place here in this world. This is a time that is still yet to come and because we could foresee it was good and pleasant, this land will have rest some day and we will bow our shoulder to bear the heavy load, the Great Commission in the New Testament that we have been assigned to.

“And he saw that the resting place was good, and the land that it was pleasant [Literally

beautiful!];”

Now there are some beautiful things about this earth, but that is not what Joseph is talking about because no matter how beautiful a resting place might be here on this earth, it still comes with a price. It does not stay beautiful all on its own. I have seen Christians that misapply this and say, “Well, I finally purchased a house, and this is where God has allowed me to rest here in this world. I so enjoy it and I think it is so beautiful that it is now fulfilled scripture in me, and God's Word is true.” That is the most ridiculous thing I ever heard! My Bible says this world is not my home. If this world is not my home, where am I going to find rest in it? Not just rest, but it is beautiful. This land where I will be some day is beautiful, whether it is the heavens or the New Jerusalem. It is not made by the hands of man; it is made by the hands of Christ and we will have mansions in it that probably go beyond any of the scripture that we see as mansions here on this planet in this present day. Christ is the ultimate designer. I have a pretty good imagination and I bet my imagination falls way short on what He is designing for us.

“And he saw that the resting place was good, and the land that it was beautiful [and because of this]; bowed his shoulder to bear, and became a servant [Literally, a laborer] unto tribute.”

This part of the verse should read, “... *and the land that it was beautiful; and bowed his shoulder.*” At this point you may be thinking, “All right! I know what the end result is going to be. Where is it? Give me that heavy sack! Let me carry the load with anticipation and enthusiasm. Let's go!” Not just, “Okay, I will do this. Here we go again today.” Some Christians have the kind of attitude of another day another dollar, or some have that attitude in whatever they are involved in the world. You might not like your job or your life the way the world provides for it through your labor, but when it comes to the things of God and the commission that we have all been called to participate in, we are to eagerly with anticipation and joy bow down our shoulder to lift up the load that we are assigned to carry. That is because we are laborers, asses that have been chosen by Christ to fulfil the commission of getting others to the point of understanding what Christ did for them. Without asses to carry the load, it will not get done.

Jesus did not come in a time period where He could use technology to spread His word. He came in at a time where man still had to get involved. Even though today men, women and children still must joyfully with anticipation and excitement get involved in the work of the Lord to carry it forth to the world. In fact, once we get done with the load we are carrying, we cannot wait to get back to pick up the next load. How many Christians have that type of attitude? That is what is pleasing to God, not complaining about how you cannot believe he is asking you to write five or ten emails a day, or how he sure does not know your heavy load. I keep telling you, I will fail as a preacher of God's Word if you do not come to a point of recognizing you were called for two reasons and two purposes to be fulfilled for your life: one, in your personal relationship with God and how you worship, praise and grow in the mind of Christ; and two, in your involvement in this load that we carry together. If not this ministry, then find one you can share the load with. If it seems ridiculous asking you to send in some emails or some support, then you are truly missing what God's Word has said even in our present day and age for what you should be involved in. Some do not like that there is no prosperity in my messages. But I have said, if the prosperity gospel was correct, then I am not going to follow God's Word anymore because I have

12 apostles after Christ that did not live up to it. Prosperity in your eyes is defined by things you can obtain in this world; prosperity in their eyes was how many individuals they turn the lights on about what Christ did for them and also what they put up in their bank of heaven in God's treasury for future prosperity laying up the treasures in heaven to be distributed by God the way He sees fit for us to prosper.

“...and the land that it was beautiful; and bowed his shoulder to bear, and became a laborer unto tribute [really unto reward].” Issachar could not wait to bear the load! Also, in this verse, to use a phrase that the world uses, there was light at the end of the tunnel and this light was the reward, which is what God has promised us throughout eternity. The present reward is seeing lives changed because of our willingness and joyfulness in carrying the load to get the message out and fulfil the Great Commission. That is how we apply it today.

Go to Hebrews 3. I am not going to go to Deuteronomy and Moses' blessing on Issachar until I get to Zebulun and there is a purpose for it, but I want to finish by going to Hebrews 3:12.

“Take heed, brethren, lest there be in any of you an evil heart of unbelief....” This is to those who will not see what God's Word says in our present day of age, or who believe that it really cannot mean that, or that I am just putting my own twist on it. Have I not proven over and over on each stone and each tribe on the stone that this is what God's Word says throughout His book? I am not making this up. This verse is saying that you will not change the unbelievers because they have a pernicious heart of unbelief.

**“Take heed, brethren, lest there be in any of you an evil heart of unbelief, in departing from the living God [or withdraw from the living God].
But exhort one another daily, while it is called To day; lest any of you be hardened through the deceitfulness of sin.
For we are made partakers of Christ, if we hold the beginning of our confidence steadfast [literally, the firm foundation of God's Word] unto the end;
While it is said, To day if ye will hear his voice, harden not your hearts, as in the provocation.”**

When you hear His voice, stop resisting your calling and the reason you were chosen to be part of God's family in carrying this load. The devil does not want you to carry the load because he knows that if God finds and chooses another load carrying ass to get the job done, a willing laborer with the right attitude, more people will get the true message of the Gospel implemented in their life because the message is being carried forth by caring individuals. You are literally telling Satan on that breast stone, “I care, and I want to be involved in carrying this load. You might try to distract my mind to become obsessed with other things, including the intoxicating things that I talked about, but Christ wants me to be filled with the Holy Spirit so I do not lose my focus and keep my mind on the things of God, and put things in the right perspective and priority with God being first.” No matter what you are involved in or what you do in your life, there is nothing more important than to keep God first. And to keep God first is what is involved in your personal relationship with Him. Whether you stubborn asses like it or not, He has called you to be willing participants in churches and ministries to get the job done. If you do not break that stubbornness in your spirit, you will be departing whether you realize it or not into a state of unbelief and not holding to the firm foundation, and you will not be steadfast until the end. Quit

guarding your hearts, recognize your responsibility and say from this day forward, “I will be the ass that God is looking for and I will pick up the load and carry it.” Verse 16 in Hebrews 3 goes on to say,

“For some, when they had heard, did provoke: howbeit not all that came out of Egypt by Moses.

But with whom was he grieved forty years? was it not with them that had sinned, whose carcasses fell in the wilderness?

And to whom sware he that they should not enter into his rest, but to them that believed not?

[Literally, *ones that refused to be obedient.*]

So, we see that they could not enter in because of unbelief [or apistis].

Paul continues in chapter 4:1,

“Let us therefore fear, lest, a promise being left us of entering into his rest, any of you should seem to come short of it.”

This is the right placement of the word fear. As I told you, do not fear the devil; you have the spiritual armor on to come against him. Not only that, you are strengthened by Christ and greater is He that is in us than he that is in the world.

Verse 11 tells us,

“Let us labour [just as Issachar; *to be hired* and when you are hired you are a laborer. There are no exceptions] **therefore to enter into that rest** [the saints' everlasting rest in the previous verses], **lest any man fall after the same example of unbelief.**”

Our reward is that beautiful land that gives us complete and perfect rest. That is why when Satan sees this stone and the name on this stone, he recognizes a laborer of Christ; a soldier of Jesus Christ willing to pick up the load; not just one load, but both loads to Jews and Gentiles alike. There are no exclusions whatsoever to carry out the work of the Lord. As I often say, Christianity is just not about you. Unfortunately, as Christians, we often make it all about us and we slip into that dangerous point in our lives where we think that Christ is just concerned about us, and He is! Do not misunderstand me; He is! But He is also concerned that you are concerned about others. There is no demonstration of love that can demonstrate it better than the concern for the ones who still need to hear the message. Even if they heard some type of doctrine of Christianity, they need to hear the ***epignosis***, *the precise and correct knowledge of God's Word*. Do you think the Great Commission is fulfilled when everyone hears the name of Jesus? No! The Great Commission becomes fulfilled when everyone hears the ***epignosis***, *the precise and correct knowledge of the Word of God*.

We will not enter into that rest which is still yet to come in that beautiful land Christ is preparing for us until our labor is done. While we still have breath, we are to continue laboring in the name of Jesus Christ to get His work done. So, stop thinking that Christianity is all about you. It is about you and others. I am determined to get that message across to a confused Christian world that is all about me, me, me. Even in forgiveness, you truly do not have forgiveness until you ask

the Father not to hold what they sinned against you to their charge. It is not about you when it comes to the Great Commission. It is about others. There is a place about you and God in the relationship you have with Him, but when you put on the spiritual warfare, it is a combination of both and too many Christians have left out the latter and made it all about them. I will not enter into my rest until my laboring is done here on earth and neither will you if your perspective is right. If you keep your perspective right, you will not fall into a state of unbelief. You will keep pressing toward the mark. You will keep putting the blows on Satan's chin declaring that you are a child of God. I have been chosen. I might be an ass, but I have been chosen to be an ass that is a soldier of Jesus Christ to carry out the commission God has given me in the capacity He has chosen me to be in.

That is all I am going to say about Issachar. There will be everlasting rest, saints. It is not here and now. It is still yet to come and that is why Issachar is both meanings; *there is a hire*, we are it, and *there is a reward* that is still yet to come and that is what I am hanging onto. Hopefully you will be too.

The Prophecy of Zebulun and Issachar

Ephesians 6:14, ***“Stand therefore, having your loins girt about with truth, and having on the breastplate of righteousness;”***

We are in the latter half of this verse about the breastplate of righteousness and have been looking at what this breastplate of righteousness consists of through Exodus 28 that describes the High Priest's breastplate that would be worn by the High Priest and designed in Moses' day. Exodus 28:15 tells us,

“And thou shalt make the breastplate of judgment [or mishpat] 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.”

In previous chapters we already covered all the colors in the breastplate and the spectrum of light. Verse 16 continues,

“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.”

Then in verse 20 we read,

“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 [this is Jacob's 12 sons and the tribes that came out of those 12 sons], twelve, according to their names, like the engravings of a signet; every one with his name shall they be according to the twelve tribes.”

I have only briefly covered the stones and the symbolic reason these stones were chosen. I will do that again in this chapter, but will probably have to start another series just on these stones alone without the names of the tribes on the stones because I have been concentrating on the names of the children of Israel engraved onto these stones which represents the 12 tribes. The last message on the breastplate concerned the ninth stone and the name on that stone was Issachar. In Jacob's prophecy, Issachar was an ass or a hired servant that could carry a heavy load or burden. For us this means that in this spiritual war we are involved in, God has a commission for us, but He will give us and equip us with the necessary strength and tools to accomplish the mission. Issachar was an ass or hired servant that could carry a heavy load or burden. Now, asses might be stubborn at times, but they are reliable and strong. When we put on Christ's armor, He will give us the strength to complete the task that He has given us. He is our strength. We are His hired servants and He provides the strength to complete the task no matter

what it is. We might think it is too large and the burden too heavy, but He will provide enough strength for us to complete that task.

I did not finish the teaching on the ninth stone because it is also identified with the tenth stone on the breastplate. As I said, certain tribes through history are identified with each other. Simeon and Levi took matters into their own hands because of the rape of their sister and they were disciplined through Jacob, so to speak, what their future would be like. It took Moses, under God's control, to reverse that a little bit and change direction, but they would be linked together forever. Another example is Issachar and Zebulun. They were linked together by Moses once again and there is a reason for it. You must understand the history behind the events that God has been in control of since the beginning of time until now and even in the future to see how they are linked. God never forgot what was prophesied. You will see by the end of this message that they are linked together for a purpose. They would begin the spreading of the Gospel that the eleventh stone after these ninth and tenth stones through Joseph and his sons, Manasseh and Ephraim would open this world up in these last days to hear the message. If you find three brothers closely linked together that would include five family members, you will see it in Issachar and Zebulun, Joseph and Manasseh, and Ephraim through Joseph. That might not make any sense now, but wait until the end of this message as I tie this together and show how God has been in control of history and the events that have taken place and will still take place not only now but in the millennium.

This tenth stone is beryl. In Hebrew it is *tarshiysh* and is formed by combining beryllium and aluminum, which produces a quality of great hardness in the stone. This stone also occurs in a hexagonal prism with six sides and six angles. Some of you have the luxury of having a museum where you live, and you should take advantage of it. I know here in downtown Los Angeles there is a museum with an entire section just for gemstones, stones and minerals. You should take advantage of it if you are in the Los Angeles area. I am sure they have this in New York, Chicago, and major cities, and there might even be one in smaller cities or towns. If they do, or if you are near a city, you should take the time especially after all the teaching I have done on these stones. Even though I have not covered much on each stone itself, you should take a look at these stones with the names of the tribes etched on them and all the symbolism, meaning and teaching that has come from the scriptures about these stones, the names of the tribes and how it relates to the breastplate. If you have the luxury of having a museum where you can view these precious stones, take advantage of it with the frame of mind that you can only get through scripture and how God has used these for our example and for laying down a curriculum of knowledge that we can relate to, things that we can touch, feel and see. It is beautiful.

However, regarding the stone beryl, prisms come in either solid figures or transparent figures. That means a transparent figure allows light to be dispersed into the spectrum of light that I have already briefly covered. A transparent figure allows this light to be dispersed into the spectrum. I go as far to say that I believe this transparent figure – this stone being used here – allows light to be dispersed not only in the visual spectrum of light, but also the invisible spectrum of light. That is not only things that can be seen, but the unseen things, which go hand in hand with spiritual warfare. Paul says we do not fight against blood and flesh, but an unseen power of entities that are pulling the strings and controlling things using humans as agents to get done what they want. These entities have been successful, but the clock is ticking, and their time is running out. If you

are a transparent figure with Christ's light dispersing from your being, you are sending a message to the visible and invisible light spectrum that exists. Now substitute the light spectrum with beings and that is why as I said our war really is with the unseen beings that are out to do us in. Now, you will either disperse light or you will not disperse light; either you are a solid figure or a transparent figure. There are only two choices in the matter. Either you will be a person that disperses light or you will not disperse any light whatsoever and that is where most of the world is categorized, and they do not know that they are not dispersing light.

A transparent stone of this nature also comes in various colors: green, blue, aquamarine, pink, and many different shades of yellow, and it also can be colorless. There is nothing excluded. Everything is included in this stone in the colors of the light spectrum with many different shades of certain colors. Whether you will be able to disperse the light from those colors is another factor all together. This has spiritual meaning, not just the physical element of the stone and what it produces. It goes beyond that and this is why the stone is used.

Beryl or *tarshiysh* is first mentioned in Genesis 10:1 in Noah's family record which begins,

“Now these are the generations of the sons of Noah, Shem, Ham, and Japheth: and unto them were sons born after the flood.

The sons of Japheth; Gomer, and Magog, and Madai, and Javan, and Tubal...”⁴

Verse 3 lists the sons of Gomer and in verse 4 we read,

“And the sons of Javan...” Tarshish was a son of Javan. Do you see the connection? One of the sons of Japheth was Javan and one of the sons of Javan was Tarshish. This is the first mention of Tarshish in the Old Testament.

Verse 5 continues,

“By these were the isles of the Gentiles divided in their lands; every one after his tongue, after their families, in their nations.”

Verse 6 lists the sons of Ham, but we are concentrating on Tarshish, a son of Javan, who was a son of Japheth. You will see as interesting picture that shows where the possible location of some of the *isles of the Gentiles* were and how they *were divided in their lands everyone after his tongue* and the nations of the world produced from that. Because we often hear so much about Gomer, Tubal and Magog, many think they know the general area where the sons of Japheth inhabited, but there are more than just those areas. These sons also went west as I will show in this chapter.

Although Genesis 10 is the first time Tarshish is mentioned here in scripture, later in history the name of Tarshish is given a geographical location. Go to Jonah 1:1 towards the end of the Old Testament.

“Now the word of the LORD came unto Jonah...”

Arise, go to Nineveh, that great city, and cry [literally go proclaim and preach] against it; for

their wickedness is come up before me.”

The Lord is saying to Jonah, “Get up and get yourself in the direction of Nineveh because their wickedness has finally brought me to the point where I am not going to allow it to go by any longer without dealing with it.” Of course, Jonah being Jonah did not want any part of it and verse 3 tells us what he did.

“But Jonah rose up to flee unto Tarshish from the presence of the LORD....”

At that time, Tarshish was the furthest place he could have gone. For instance, if he was in Palestine or Israel, Tarshish was the furthest place west he could have gone and that is where he was heading. Jonah paid the fee and was going on a ship to Tarshish running from the presence of God; really from the will of God, but God caught up with him. You know the rest of the story, but where is this place of Tarshish located?

Through archeological digs, we know Tarshish is closer to the Portuguese border with Spain than it is with the Straits of Gibraltar. Tarshish was a mining town situated on the western extremities of the trade routes of that time and mostly controlled by the Phoenicians, but not just the Phoenicians. It was as far west as a person could have gone in those days and that is where Jonah wanted to go. He wanted to run from the calling God put on him. He did not want to do the assignment and he was thinking that if he could go far enough away from Israel, God would probably choose someone else.

Tarshish literally means *refinery or smelting plant*. It comes from a root word in the Hebrew *to be smelted*. Some of you may think that I am returning to the subject of refining again. Well, we are a work in progress, and I cannot preach about it enough, but that is not the subject matter. The purpose of this is to give some of the history of this word and this location. Tarshish was a mining place and with refineries and smelting plants. This tenth stone comes from the root word meaning *smelted* and literally means *refinery or smelting plant*. Being the tenth stone, the number 10 means law and government, but is also used in scripture for trials and testing. Here comes that refining. We need to be tried by fire so we can come out more precious than gold.

Over the time that these precious stones were excavated from these mines, the people of Tarshish became associated with the idea of that which is *precious* or *delightful*. As a result, *delightful* was added to the meaning of Tarshish. Incidentally, this stone is also the eighth foundational stone of the New Jerusalem where there will not be any more refining taking place because He will complete us there. This stone symbolizes Christ's refining of His saints to be transparent figures so that the light can be dispersed to both the visible spectrum and invisible spectrum. There is no getting around it.

With that, go to Genesis 30 to make the trek through Genesis and Deuteronomy concerning the prophecies and blessings given to Zebulun, and also Zebulun and Issachar together, because in the Book of Deuteronomy Moses combines both of Jacob's sons and tribes into one blessing. In Genesis 30, Leah and Rachel compete with each other for Jacob's affection and approval by producing children – sons. Let's start with verse 18,

“And Leah said, God hath given me my hire, because I have given my maiden to my husband:

*and she called his name Issachar [or a hired servant].
And Leah conceived again, and bare Jacob the sixth son.
And Leah said, God hath endued me with a good dowry; now will my husband dwell with me,
because I have born him six sons: and she called his name Zebulun.”*

Zebulun means *dwelling*, and Leah names her son Zebulun a dwelling because she knew Jacob would be content to dwell with her because she bore him six sons. No matter who you are, the message is all Christians should desire that Christ dwell in us, just as Jacob was happy to dwell with her because the seed he deposited in her produced children. That might offend some today, but that is the way it was at that time; the more children the better and specifically sons. Because the seed he deposited in her produced children, he was happy to dwell with her and because Zebulun was the sixth son – and it is amazing that she could even produce six sons, not to mention daughters – she concluded Jacob would now be content dwelling with her; and he was. In turn, to apply this message in our own lives today, Christ is pleased to dwell within us when we have faith in Him and His Word. He also deposits something in us when we have faith in His Word and that is the Holy Spirit; the Holy Spirit is deposited in us. That is the connection here. I want to move to Genesis 49 where Jacob is giving his blessing to all his sons, and in verse 14 we read,

*“Issachar is a strong ass couching down between two burdens:
And he saw that rest was good, and the land that it was pleasant; and bowed his shoulder to bear, and became a servant unto tribute.”*

Although this chapter is about Zebulun and Issachar, verse 13 is only about Zebulun,

“Zebulun shall dwell at the haven of the sea; and he shall be for a haven of ships; and his border shall be unto Zidon.”

There are many short-sighted controversies about where all these borders are located, and scholars have made the mistake of putting a permanent physical border in the promise land of both the tribes of Zebulun and Issachar. Yes, that is where they would start and they will come back to that location once more, but in the meantime throughout history these tribes expanded and went west. Both Issachar and Zebulun were dispersed and both tribes went west. In Deuteronomy 33:18, Moses combined these two tribes in his blessing as I said and they went west. Now let's take a closer look at the scriptures. In Genesis 49:13 we read,

“Zebulun shall dwell at the haven...”

The word *haven* comes from the root word which means *to cover or a place of safety*. Interestingly, there is a geographical location that does provide that, especially ships coming to and fro. In a spiritual sense, because of its meaning of *a covering and a place of safety* with Christ in us, He is our haven, He is our covering, and He is our place of safety. Although we have that available to us today, in those days they did not, but we do now, and you will see it throughout scripture. In addition, I will even show how Old Testament saints had that promise of covering and safety through the Book of Psalms and all through the Old Testament, and I will give scriptures through the Book of Psalms that you can claim for yourself through Christ.

However, in this scripture, the sea is symbolic of individuals dealing with the uncertainties of life's trials that come with this seen world and also the unseen world. Our difficulties and trials of life with all the uncertainties that go with life are truly dictated by an unseen world that uses the seen world to try to tear us down. Also, in this scripture, ships are symbolic of people passing through life in this world in all the spiritual warfare battles that will take place, but there is good news as well that we have all through the New Testament. There is even good news for these Old Testament saints who came after this event, after this blessing was laid down before Christ. Christ is our haven, thank God, but these Old Testament saints were given it time after time through the psalms. Let's go through them. You can claim some today through Christ in your life. Psalms 27 is one of my favorite psalms, and we will begin with verse 5,

“For in the time of trouble he shall hide me in his pavilion [or covering]: in the secret of his tabernacle shall he hide me; he shall set me up upon a rock.”

In the New Testament, Jesus called himself the rock that the church would be built upon, not Peter, which is *petros*. *Petra* is how Jesus referred himself to in the Greek. He is the rock, not Peter. It is Him that we have available not only to set us up upon Him, knowing that He could take care of anything that we will ever come up against, but in the midst of those troubles He also provides a covering and a place of safety for us.

Psalms 32:7 uses the same wording,

“Thou art my hiding place; thou shalt preserve me from trouble; thou shalt compass me about with songs of deliverance.”

Because of these verses, this is a promise that I claim daily; ***“Thou art my hiding place;”*** Christ is our covering. He is our place of safety. I can claim this through Christ because He provides all the benefits of the Old with the added benefits of the New.

Psalms 61:4 tells us,

“I will abide in thy tabernacle for ever: I will trust in the covert of thy wings.”

This is the covering and protection that only God and now Christ can provide.

Psalms 91:1 tells us,

“He that dwelleth in the secret place of the most High shall abide under the shadow of the Almighty.”

Literally this is, *shall lodge under the shadow of the Almighty*. I might have the unseen and the seen worlds attacking me on a daily basis, but I will claim this for myself, and you should claim this for yourself that no matter what comes against us, we will be in His secret place that the Most High has provided. That is Christ and we ***“shall abide under the shadow of the Almighty.”*** I know where I am going to be lodging. Claim for yourself that you will lodge under His wings,

under His protection, under His covering, which is a place of safety. Christ in us is our haven or covering and our place of safety. There is no question about it.

I will conclude these examples with Psalms 140:13,

“Surely the righteous shall give thanks unto thy name: the upright shall dwell in thy presence.”

The righteous include those with the breastplate of righteousness on. Furthermore, when we are dwelling in God's presence and in Christ's presence, we are dwelling in a place that provides safety. Even if you wonder about safety because things may happen to you all the time, this verse is speaking of something much bigger than what is here and now. It is your eternal soul and your eternal salvation that you should be more concerned about than anything here and now. Here and now is just temporary; forever is a long time and He will provide us with that safety. He will cover us and complete us forever if we stay faithful, trusting in His Word, imputed with righteousness, wearing the spiritual armor now. But know that someday we will take it off and dwell in His presence without any of this warfare that goes on now. That is a promise.

We are chosen to dwell in Him and because we are chosen to dwell in Him, and He is our haven. Understand that and never forget it. Never let it leave your remembrance when things are going wrong for you. He is there and He knows how to get that ship through the storms, but it does not end there. It is great to claim and hold on to those promises because that is what Jesus provides for us. There is nothing wrong in it, but that is only half the equation. He wants us to direct others to Him because there are plenty of ships being tossed around by the waves of the sea and those ships are looking for a safe place to dock. This goes back to what I have been saying. It is not just about you. There are a lot of other ships out there being tossed around or shipwrecked and they need that safe place to dock. It is that blessing given to Zebulun in scripture, so we must be lighthouses in the harbor flashing Christ's light, the Good News. They need to be brought into the covering and safety that we are enjoying and are promised. That is our commission and that is why I keep repeating it.

About this, Matthew 5:16 tells us,

“Let your light so shine [literally radiate] before men [Or ships looking for a haven], that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven.”

Again, Christians have taken this out of context thinking that *good works* is doing good things for mankind. No, the Hebrew for the phrase *good works* is *kalos ergon* meaning *they may see your precious employment of the Word*. Our precious employment of the Word should glorify the Father which is in heaven. It does not glorify you. It is part of the Commission that Christ expects us to be involved in and I have told you ways that you are called to be involved. I am not going to review them, but our precious employment of the Word is to glorify the Father. We are to be lighthouses radiating out the Good News or at least participate with a ministry which does that day in day out and is a lighthouse if you are not called to preach. Then you will be rewarded and part of the Commission living the commandment that Jesus gave of loving one another, not just yourself.

That is enough for Jacob's blessing and prophesy. Now let's move to Deuteronomy 33 and Moses' blessings to Israel and the tribes, but in verse 18 Moses he combines the two brothers, Issachar and Zebulun,

“And of Zebulun he said, Rejoice, Zebulun, in thy going out; and, Issachar, in thy tents [or in the pitching of tents].”

Zebulun is told that whether coming or going he is to rejoice, because whether they realized it or not, they would begin the global effort of spreading the Good News of the Gospel of Jesus Christ. In this verse, both Zebulun and Issachar are mentioned together. Verse 19 continues the blessing,

“They shall call the people unto the mountain; there they shall offer sacrifices of righteousness: for they shall suck of the abundance of the seas, and of treasures hid in the sand.”

Both Zebulun, a dwelling, and Issachar, a hired servant, are told by Moses that they would share the same blessing here. Whether they are on land or at sea, these two tribes obviously would prosper and fulfil the commission that God had purposed them to fulfil whether they realized it or not. These two tribes would eventually dwell around the world, but also become permanent out of two main geographical locations throughout most of history.

As a result of this prophecy, these two tribes are Spain and the small country of Portugal. I have already said Tarshish was close to the border of Spain and Portugal. Portugal would become Issachar and Spain would become Zebulun. These were two seafaring nations that would lead the way and begin in the last days the spreading of the Good News. Interestingly, if you draw a line from just north of Lisbon, Portugal all the way to approximately the southern portions of Spain and the southern locations of Portugal this is where most of the mining areas were located. Once again, Issachar being Portugal and Spain being Zebulun would begin in the last days the spreading of the Good News. Through their explorations, they would draw out people who God considers hidden treasures, which is promised in Genesis 22:17. You know the story about how God tests Abraham when he is asked to sacrifice his only son. Abraham goes through the motions and he is about ready to do it, but the angel of the Lord, who was really the pre-incarnated Jesus Christ, appears in verse 11,

“And the angel of the LORD called unto him out of heaven, and said, Abraham, Abraham: and he said, Here am I.

And he said, Lay not thine hand upon the lad, neither do thou any thing unto him: for now I know that thou fearest God, seeing thou has not withheld thy son, thine only son from me. And Abraham lifted up his eyes, and looked, and behold behind him a ram caught in a thicket by his horns: and Abraham went and took the ram, and offered him up for a burnt offering in the stead of his son.

And Abraham called the name of that place Jehovahjireh [meaning The Lord will provide or the Lord will see to it.]: as it is said to this day, In the mount of the LORD it shall be seen [projecting further into the future].”

The name Jehovah-jireh meant that there would be a provision provided by the Lord. This event here with Abraham and Isaac was a prelude to Calvary. Unfortunately, as a result, the name Jehovah-jireh has been used by every Christian under the sun claiming everything they want to claim that they think God needs to provide to them. However, when this was written, the only thing being promised here was a better sacrifice which would come in the future in the name of Jesus Christ, the Son of God, who would come down and provide the only sacrifice that could fulfil all of God's requirements. That is the perfect unblemished lamb sacrificed for our benefit. Yes, the Lord will provide, but a better translation is *the Lord will see to it*, and what He provided was that His only begotten Son in the form of human flesh to die on that cross, bleed for you and me so we could have the opportunity of eternal life and salvation. That is what is being said in verse 14. Verse 15 continues,

“And the angel of the LORD called unto Abraham out of heaven the second time, And said, By myself have I sworn, saith the LORD, for because thou hast done this thing, and hast not withheld thy son, thine only son:”

When was the last time you saw an angel say something like that? They usually do not call out from the heavens, and they do not say, ***“By myself have I sworn, saith the LORD.”*** This was not an angel; this was the pre-incarnated Christ telling Abraham, even though Abraham probably did not know at the time, “I will be the provision; I will be what God will offer as the complete and perfect sacrifice in the future.” That was all to lead up to verse 17 where the Lord says,

“That in blessing I will bless thee, and in multiplying I will multiply thy seed...”

A small portion of you have heard my mentor's teaching on the lost tribes, which can be applied here in the physical sense, but this also has spiritual application that I will focus on.

“That in blessing I will bless thee, and in multiplying I will multiply thy seed [the physical aspect of children] as the stars of the heaven, and as the sand which is upon the seashore; and thy seed shall possess the gate of his enemies;”

In this verse, we know the Lord is promising Abraham to raise his son Isaac from the dead because of the faith that he showed when he sacrificed Isaac. However, most of you have thought He is giving two examples here how He will multiply to make the point, but that is not what is happening. The Lord states, ***“I will multiply thy seed as the stars of the heaven, and as the sand...”*** The application here is that sand represents Abraham's spiritual children. Sea and sand in scripture are usually defined as multiples of people who are either on God's side or not on God's side. You will see it in Joshua where they were not on God's side, but it defines them as a multitude of people. There are two types of people described here in this verse. ***“I will multiply thy seed as the stars of the heaven, and as the sand [the spiritual children] which is upon the seashore;”*** I know it is spiritual children because the word seashore was not translated correctly. The word translated in the Hebrew is *lip* or *lips*, the instrument used for vocal expression that was also part of a tongue. What the Lord is saying is that Abraham will have children as the stars of heaven and out of those children there will be sand, which is the spiritual application of children here, ***“which is upon their lips”***.

In the physical application, that can be put that in different areas around the world, but in the spiritual application we must go back to Matthew 16:13 and listen to Jesus as He asked His disciples, ***“Whom do men say that I am?”*** In verse 16 Peter answers, ***“Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God.”*** He actually got it right and Jesus' responded to Peter in verse 18, ***“And I say also unto thee, That thou art Peter [Petros], and upon this rock [Petra, meaning Christ, the foundational rock; not petros, a stone] I will build my ekklesia [The church; the gathering of Christians called out into assembly, not the kind of church you see today]; and the gates of hell [or hades] shall not prevail against it.”*** Christ is not talking about friends. He is talking about enemies here. These gates that the enemy's control shall not prevail against us, and not against Christ because He overcame all that. What is being promised here is also being promised in the Old Testament to Abraham in Genesis 22:17, ***“And thy seed [which Jesus came from], shall possess the gate of his enemies;”*** Christ possessed the gates of His enemy, and He said it would not prevail against us because He has overcome the enemy.

So, if you read the scripture correctly, the sand, which is us, is upon our lips. We are instruments of God to be used some by lips, some by just participating with the one doing the vocal expression of the Good News as instruments of God and there is nothing that will come against us; nothing in hell, nothing in the unseen world that will have victory. We will have victory over our enemies; our enemies will not have victory over us. When we understand that we are Christ's dwelling place and we are His hired servants, then we will jump at every opportunity that Christ gives us to call others to Him. Our priority should be to spread the Good News. I have been saying for months now, we are equipped to participate in it and we just have to get busy in doing it.

I want to go now into some history and why I know where Zebulun and Issachar are located and why God put His hands-on history and controls it. As I said in Deuteronomy 33:18 we are told, ***“And of Zebulun he said, Rejoice, Zebulun, in thy going out; and, Issachar, in thy tents.”*** Then, I took us to Genesis because it also mentions in verse 19 that these two tribes would be involved in sucking out ***“the abundance of the seas, and of treasures hid in the sand.”*** This is not some treasure hunting prophesy or blessing described here. Think in the spiritual application of scripture and not the material application. This verse is talking about spiritual children, who are the hidden treasures in the sand. In Genesis 22:17, those hidden treasures are described as the sand that would be voices to proclaim and participate in the proclamation of the one coming. We know that because prior to these scriptures, it talks about Jesus Christ himself that would be the provision and be provided as the perfect sacrifice to proclaim the one that was coming and the one that did come, and to keep proclaiming the Good News to bring out the hidden treasures; the ones that have not heard about Christ yet and what He did for them. These are the multitudes of people, the people in general, being defined in Genesis 22:17 and then a select group from the multitude of people, who would be His proclaimers of the provision He would provide; and that is Jesus himself.

Returning to Deuteronomy 33, we know that Tarshish is none other than the beryl stone that is mentioned in Exodus as a part of the breastplate. That is what it is and we have the location where it came from which is close to the border of Spain and Portugal in the southwestern part of that just outside the Straits of Gibraltar. The heaviest location of the mining towns and the

minerals and precious stones would come from this area in the general southern portion between the two countries and would eventually provide enough finances for the globalization of this world. The two nations of Spain and Portugal started this. In contrast, there were plenty of other opportunities with the Romans, Italians, Grecians, African countries, including the Far East, all these locations, to send a global expedition throughout the world, mostly for material gain, but also to be used of God to establish a foothold in these last days to get the Word out to all ears that have ears to hear the Good News of the Gospel of Jesus Christ. However, Zebulun and Issachar began what eventually would happen through the sons of Joseph, the next stone, and the message to go out so rapidly like it did through Manasseh and Ephraim. That is why I said these five family members are all tied together to announce the Good News and eventually to announce what will happen in the millennium.

Before I go there, I want to give some history about the country of Portugal. I chose Portugal. I could have chosen Spain, but Portugal began this even before Spain because they were in competition with each other in those days. The age of discovery came through the small country of Portugal at that time. The reason I decided to do that is I come from a Portuguese descent. My ancestors were from the areas of Lisbon and just north of Lisbon, so I found it interesting and that is why it is my prerogative to start with Portugal and you will see why in a minute. Let me just give some of the history of Issachar.

“The beginning of Portugal's pioneering role in world exploration may be traced back to as far as 1279, when King Diniz set out to improve Portugal's emerging navy. He invited a Genoese sea captain to Portugal and placed him in charge of developing the mercantile and navy fleets. He also ordered the Atlantic coastline planted with trees to provide timber for the ocean-going fleets he envisioned in Portugal's future. In 1341, a fleet of three vessels sailed from Lisbon and explored the Canary Islands, off the northwestern coast of Africa.”

Some of this might not be interesting, but I am getting to a certain point in the history of Portugal's past and why suddenly it came on the scene with such enthusiasm to make it a smaller world mostly because of material gain, not realizing why they were driven, in my opinion by God, to reach out to the most furthest distance they could sail to and explore. To continue,

“Although the expedition showed no profit and Castile later gained control of the islands [Castile being part of Spain], this voyage was the first official exploring expedition by a European state. Portuguese captains soon became the best in Europe, sailing the most maneuverable ships and applying the latest innovations in the fields of navigation and cartography [map making].

For many centuries there had been three main trade routes from the east to the Mediterranean and Europe – a long overland journey from China across Central Asia to the Black Sea, by ship from India to the Persian Gulf, and then overland over Bagdad or Damascus to Mediterranean ports. Once goods reached these ports, they were then monopolized by the northern Italian city-states....”

That is, if they reached their destination because they could be killed or robbed along the way. It was risky business taking the overland route so that is why they were interested in trying to find

a route that they could sail to and increase the speed of getting the products to and fro, but also for safety reasons.

“...especially Venice or Genoa, which distributed the products throughout Europe. Spices were more a necessity than a luxury to the Europeans. During the winter, they had to eat meat from animals that had been slaughtered in the fall. Much of this meat was spoiled by the time it was consumed, and spices, especially pepper, could disguise the taste and smell.”

Imagine coming to dinner knowing that your meat has been around for a while. It might stink and if not for these spices you probably could not even eat it. We get mad if we leave hamburger meat in the refrigerator for a couple of days because we did not get to it. We have come a long way.

“Prices in Europe for these goods were high, and profits were good. The Portuguese hoped they could find their own route to the Indies and break the Venetian stranglehold. Because of their ignorance of the large size of the African continent, the Portuguese were obsessed with conquering Morocco in North Africa, which they saw as a steppingstone to control the gold trade. As a result, Prince Henry the Navigator laid plans to conquer the Moroccan trading port of Ceuta. A fleet of two hundred vessels landed troops outside the walls of the city, and it fell to the Portuguese in 1415 after just one day of fighting. From here on, Prince Henry the Navigator set Portugal on its course towards overseas expansion. He established a center for study of navigation, naval architecture, and astronomy at Sagres in southern Portugal, where they developed a powerful ship called the caravel. Its advantage over the older ships was its triangular sail, which could be trimmed to allow the ship to proceed in either cross or head winds. Prince Henry began dispatching ships into the Atlantic with orders to proceed as far as possible, map the coast or any islands sighted, and return. Soon, one of his captains came across the islands of Madeira and Azores.

When Prince Henry died in 1460, some 1500 miles of African coastline had been discovered and partially mapped, and the Azores and Madeira Islands were active colonies. In the next two decades, Portuguese captains made more progress, venturing down the northwestern coast of Africa past present-day Sierra Leone and Liberia into the Gulf of Guinea. At this time, the Portuguese were enjoying a tremendous advantage over other European nations in both ship design and navigation. They had been able to determine their latitude by sighting the North Star through an Astrolabe and measuring the apparent distance of the star from the horizon. Eventually, they were also able to explore waters south of the equator where the North Star was not visible. These improvements in navigational instruments and methods led to refinements in the field of cartography. Portuguese maps of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries were the best in Europe, and foreign spies in Lisbon often attempted to buy or steal them. As a result, the Portuguese had to safeguard their maps by giving them the status of state secrets. A royal decree forbade the circulation of maps showing the sailing routes south of the Congo River in Africa.

In 1487 Bartholomeu Dias sailed from Lisbon with two caravels and a supply ship and became the first to round the African continent. He sailed on for a few days, but fearful of running out of food and exhausted by the freezing weather, he turned back. He arrived in Lisbon in December of 1488 and told King John's court of his marking of the southern

extent of Africa. Among those present was a Genoese navigator – Christopher Columbus.”

What was he doing in Portugal? There are still debates today whether Christopher Columbus was Italian, Spanish or Portuguese. There is more and more evidence that he comes from Portuguese descent and there is a reason for it. Do the research yourself.

“Columbus was disheartened to hear the news because he had come to the king to present his own proposal for reaching the Indies by sailing west. The king did hear him and established a committee consisting of geographers, mathematicians and cartographers to look into it. There was reason to believe there were undiscovered islands to the west, since from time to time, various unknown objects drifted onto the shores of the Azores, other islands, and even mainland Europe. It was well known by educated men that the earth was round, so land to the west was a certainty, but no one knew how far it was. The width of Asia, which Columbus proposed to reach, was unknown so there was a strong possibility that he would sail off into the setting sun, never to be seen again. The king rejected Columbus for this reason, and also because he had already invested a good deal of money in the African route to the Indies.”

You may wonder what the big deal about this is. The king, and the court of the king, rejected Columbus because obviously the king was spending a lot of money in other explorations and other navigators that wanted to go exploring in different areas for material gain obviously, but he rejected Columbus. Columbus just did not stay in Portugal for a few weeks or months. If you know your history, he was there for years, which leads some historians today to believe he came from a Portuguese descent and lived in Portugal, only spending part of his time in Italy; in some cases, even in Spain. However, Columbus spent most of his time there because he wanted to learn all the navigational skills that were necessary from the best at the time and also handling the ships that were really modern for their time given the ability to go longer and farther in their explorations.

Why is it important that the king of Portugal at this time rejected Columbus' proposal to go west towards China? It was important that this happened because of the blessing. Issachar and Zebulun go hand in hand with Deuteronomy 33. Their going out and coming in would have to be in unison with each other. He was rejected because Spain [Zebulun] could not be left out of the promise in Deuteronomy 33:18, **“And of Zebulun he said, Rejoice, Zebulun, in thy going out; and, Issachar, in thy [pitching of the] tents.”** You are coming in and going out. Whatever direction, you are going to take place in these blessings and promise of prophesy that would **“suck the abundance of the seas, and treasures hid in the sand.”** And they both did that. In fact, they became so good at it, Spain and Portugal decided to divide the world into two parts, and they drew a line.

“The width of Asia, which Columbus proposed to reach, was unknown so there was a strong possibility that he would sail off into the setting sun.... The king rejected Columbus for this reason....”

God was controlling this king who was a Christian king because God knew that Zebulun could not be left out. Every other country rejected Columbus including the Italians because God was in

control of history. He knew exactly what had to take place. He knew Issachar and Zebulun go hand in hand with each other. Even though they would compete against each other, it does not matter. All these brothers did by the way. Manasseh and Ephraim would have a war against each other and Ephraim would have a war with its own kind eventually here in the United States, so competition was not a far conclusion to come to when you read the scripture references about these brothers and how they did not get along in some cases. The point is, the king rejected Columbus because God was in control of this king whether he knew it or not. Yes, he might have used the excuse of money being spent with no surety that what Columbus proposed would actually work so he rejected him. And being rejected after spending many years in Portugal learning the trade and hoping for his shot, Columbus went to Zebulun, to Spain. Columbus also had some demands. It is funny to read,

“Dissipation of royal resources would be dangerous and demands by Columbus to be made the Admiral of the Ocean Sea and be given the hereditary title of viceroy of all lands he discovered as well as one-tenth of the profits....”

Whatever Columbus discovered; he was demanding he also get one-tenth of it. On top of that, he wanted to be viceroy of all the lands which also the king was not happy about. This was another reason why he disapproved of Columbus' expedition or proposal of this expedition. He would not supply him with the necessary ships or the means to go exploring in that direction.

“Columbus went off to seek his fortunes in Spain, where he got the support he wanted. Columbus' first voyage brought him to San Salvador Island in the Bahamas, part of several island groups later referred to as the West Indies, which he took to be the outer reaches of Asia. On his return to Europe, Columbus rushed to Lisbon....”

Think about this. On his return to Europe after checking in with the Spanish court, he rushed to Lisbon, which gives further credence to where his heart was because maybe it was the location of his birth.

“Columbus rushed to Lisbon, where he told the fantastically embellished story of jewels and gold-roofed houses he found, which would have been put in Portugal's hands if only the king had believed him. The king believed little of what Columbus claimed beyond the fact that new islands had been discovered.

In 1494, Portugal and Spain signed [a treaty], which divided the world into Portuguese and Spanish hemispheres along the north-south line of 370 degrees west of the Canaries. An earlier draft had set the line 270 leagues from the islands, but Portugal insisted on a more distant line. This has led scholars to speculate that Portugal must have some knowledge of the geography of South America, perhaps as a result of the voyage prior to Columbus', because the new line later drawn put Brazil into its possession.”

This was before they even supposedly discovered Brazil. Is this a coincidence? I do not think so.

“The Portuguese king then chose Vasco da Gama to lead the first Portuguese expedition around Africa to India. After a prayer service in Lisbon on the banks of the Tagus River, Da Gama's fleet of four vessels set sail on July 7, 1497. One of the ships carried supplies

for three years, and the crew consisted of 168 men, including convicts assigned to especially dangerous work.”

They went around St. Helena Bay and sighted a new coastline on Christmas Day, and they gave it the name Natal which is Christmas in Portuguese.

“He reached Calicut on May 14, 1498, and spices were taken on board. As disease and accidents began to take a toll on his men, Da Gama set sail for Portugal on August 29, 1498. He reached Lisbon in September 1499, concluding a voyage of two year and two months. This historic voyage drastically changed Europe and the course of world history.”

The globalization of the world took place and the beginning of what would come to be known as the last days spreading of the Good News of the Gospel of Jesus Christ. If the purpose was only in those days to spread the Good News, it probably never would have been done. Remember these lost tribes did not even know where they came from because eventually, they were hidden, but God knew where they were and God knew He wanted both included, Zebulun and Issachar together, in that kick start of the globalization of this world. Yes, there were other Norsemen of Northern Europe sailing around the northern hemisphere of North America landing in the extreme northern parts of Canada and so forth, but it really did not make the impact. It did not sink in or drive anything. It should have, but it did not because they were not given the assignment through the blessing and prophesies that these two brothers would eventually receive through not only Jacob but also through Moses.

“The Portuguese king, Manuel I, proclaimed Da Gama's discoveries throughout Europe and immediately took for himself the grand title of Lord of Conquest, Navigation, and Commerce of Ethiopia, Arabia, Persia, and India. Lisbon's harbor became one of the busiest in Europe during his rein, as spices such as pepper, ginger, cinnamon, and saffron were prized commodities in the India-Europe trade. King Manuel was referred to as ‘Manuel the Fortunate’ because his rein finally saw the creation of the Asian empire for which his predecessors had long labored. The wealthy king delighted in exotic pleasures. He was the first Christian king to own an elephant and a rhinoceros, and paraded in the company of an Iranian retainer, who rode with a leopard perched on his horse. There were also great achievements in architecture during his reign. A new style emerged, named after the king – Manueline Architecture. This is seen today in Lisbon's Jeronimos Monastery [and churches] around the country.

Just six months after Da Gama's return, Pedro Alveres Cabral set out from Lisbon with the largest fleet yet assembled, piloted by the best navigators in Portugal. The departure was an occasion of grand and solemn ceremony. Cabral followed the same route as Da Gama, but a storm caused him to touch land somewhere else -”

He followed the same route down the coast of Africa supposedly, but a storm hit, and it took him off course. Where did it take him? Let's read it.

“South America or more precisely, the area of today's Brazil. Historians are still debating, however, whether Cabral truly discovered Brazil, or whether Portugal already knew of its existence. [Because of competition with its brother Zebulun.] There's a possibility that

Cabral merely conducted an official mission of “discovery” to assert a proper claim. One ship was ordered to return to Lisbon with the news, and Cabral set sail for India. Once in India, Cabral took on cargo and headed home. Only six ships out of the original thirteen returned to Lisbon, but the rich cargo of spices more than paid for the lost vessels. Later, the Portuguese were the first Europeans to visit Japan, arriving accidentally in 1543 when a storm drove a trading ship onto the island of Tanegashima. The Japanese were fascinated by the Portuguese, and in particular by the moustaches, odd clothes, and unoriental size of their noses. Buttons, which were unheard of in Japan, also attracted their attention. Japanese paintings from about this time, now in Lisbon's Ancient Art Museum, emphasized these ‘oddities.’ The Portuguese later sold Chinese silk for Japanese silver, since the two great Asian powers could not bear to deal with each other. The Portuguese also gathered pepper from Malabar and Indonesia; maze and nutmeg from Banda Islands; cloves from the Moluccas, cinnamon from Ceylon; horses from Arabia; among other precious commodities. From Brazil to Japan, stately covered vessels voyaged to distant ports to gather exotic goods for the warehouses of Lisbon. Although Portugal's monopoly came to an end in the seventeenth century, Portugal still had a foothold in India until the 1960s and in Africa until the 1970s. The first European empire lived to be the last, and Portugal will forever be known as the Land of Discovery.”

Someone gave me a news article about some ancient language discoveries at Almodovar, Portugal.

“When archeologists on a dig in southern Portugal last year flipped over a heavy chunk of slate and saw writing not used in more than 2,500 years, they were elated.”

It was some type of *“...Iberian language called Southwest Script.”*

“For more than two centuries, scientists have tried to decipher Southwest Script, believed to be the peninsula's oldest written tongue.... The stone tablet features 86 characters and provides the longest-running text of the Iron Age language ever found. About 90 slate tablets bearing the ancient inscriptions have been recovered, most of them incomplete. Almost all were scattered across southern Portugal, though a handful turned up in the neighboring Spanish region of Andalucia.

Some of the letters look like squiggles. Others are like crossed sticks. One resembles the number four and another recalls a bow tie. They were carefully scored into the slate. The text is always a running script, with unseparated words which usually read from right to left.”

Does that sound familiar? Let me read it again, *“They were carefully scored into the slate. The text is always a running script, with unseparated words which usually read from right to left.”* Not as we would read from left to right, but right to left. This sounds like Hebrew or at least the structure of how we would read the Hebrew writings and alphabet. Is this a coincidence? We will see.

“The first attempts to interpret this writing date from the 18th century. It aroused the

curiosity of a bishop whose diocese encompassed this region where the earth keeps coughing up new fragments.

Almodovar, a rural town of some 3,500 people amid a gentle landscape of meadows punctuated by whitewashed towns, sits at the heart of the Southwest Script region. It created a museum two years ago where 20 of the engraved tablets are on show.

Though the evidence is gradually building as new tablets are found, researchers are handicapped because they are peering deep into a period of history about which they know little, says professor Pierre Swiggers, a Southwest Script specialist at the University of Leuven, Belgium. Scientists have few original documents and hardly any parallel texts from the same time and place in readable languages.

'We hardly know anything about (the people's) daily habits or religious beliefs,' he says. Southwest Script is one of just a handful of ancient languages about which little is known, according to Swiggers. The obscurity has provided fertile ground for competing theories about who wrote these words.

Most experts have concluded they were authored by the people called Tartessians....”

If you know your history, the Tartessians came from one area and that is Tarshish or the southern borders of Spain and Portugal.

“...a tribe of Mediterranean traders who mined for metal in these parts – one of Europe's largest copper mines is nearby – but disappeared after a few centuries. Some scientists have proposed that the composers were other pre-Roman tribes, such as the Conii or the Cynetes, or maybe even Celts who roamed this far south.

Another translation difficulty is that the writing is not standardized. It seems certain that it was adapted from the Phoenician....”

If you recall, I mentioned the place where the Phoenicians came from and the captains of the ships that were in the trade business with the area of Tarshish that Jonah was sailing with but was not successful in reaching the furthest location that he could go away from God's will.

“...and Greek alphabets because it copied some of their written conventions. However, it also tweaked some of those rules and invented new ones.

Some stones also featured crudely rendered figures, such as a warrior carrying what appears to be spears.”

I have seen those figures. If anything, they resemble more of what a High Priest might have looked like in the era that I am reading about in Deuteronomy 33. It is very interesting and there is new material coming out on this archeological evidence as we speak. Not too long ago, a museum opened in Portugal containing some of the most interesting Egyptian artifacts that came out of Egypt and are somehow in Portuguese hands and being displayed. And what they show is just a small number of artifacts they are displaying. They have literally hundreds. Boy, would I like to get my hands on them or at least take a peek at what they have and how I could tie it in with His Word. God's Word keeps proving itself.

This Tarshish area, where the Phoenicians had a trade route because of the precious stones and copper that was mined were trading with the Mediterranean world including Israel where Jonah

wanted to go to run away from God. And His will is none other than the area of Zebulun and Issachar because they had a commission. In Deuteronomy 33:19, it says, ***“They shall call the people unto the mountain;”*** Remember that! This verse is speaking of Zebulun and Issachar. They are the ones who will call. ***“They shall call the people unto the mountain; there they shall offer sacrifices of righteousness: for they shall suck of the abundance of the seas, and treasures hid in the sand.”*** Zebulun and Issachar are the ones who would begin the exploration of the rest of the world where the sons of Joseph from the tribe of Joseph would come from that would expand it to a point that no one will have the excuse that they never heard the name of Jesus. I know there are still some areas that have never heard the name of Jesus Christ, but they are few and far between. Zebulun and Issachar would begin the globalization of the Good News being spread. Whether they realized it or not, they were granted that blessing and prophesy and where in history can you find that these brothers would call the people unto the mountain. But what mountain is this verse talking about?

I will finish in Isaiah 2. I know I have covered a lot of information and you will probably have to go back and review, but I just wanted to lay down everything I can to give insight to where I am eventually going in the future with some of this teaching, especially when we get to the lost tribes.

Isaiah 2:2 tells us,

“And it shall come to pass in the last days, the mountain of the LORD'S house shall be established [or be prepared] in the top of the mountains, and shall be exalted above the hills; and all nations shall flow unto it.”

This verse is talking about true peace at a future time where Satan is put away in the pit for a millennium. This is the last days in the beginning of the millennium. The key point is in verse 3 that begins, ***“And many people....”*** But really this is a certain type of chosen people given the blessing for the purpose of doing this commission that God has put on them. This verse should read,

“A certain chosen people [not and many people] shall go and say, Come ye, and let us go up to the mountain of the LORD....”

Compare this to Deuteronomy 33, ***“They shall call the people unto the mountain;”*** I have already covered that 'they' are Zebulun and Issachar.

“A certain chosen people shall go and say, Come ye, and let us go up to the mountain of the LORD [This is none other than Issachar and Zebulun announcing where everyone should go.], to the house of the God of Jacob; and he will teach us of his ways, and we will walk in his paths: for out of Zion shall go forth the law, and the word of the LORD from Jerusalem. [The Jerusalem in the millennium before the New Jerusalem] And he shall judge among the nations, and shall rebuke many people: and they shall beat their swords into plowshares, and their spears into pruninghooks: nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more.”

This is during the millennium when people that were called and chosen to do it to make the

announcement that they will go up to the mountain of the Lord to get instruction to learn about His ways. Remember, there will be a group of people here during the millennium. Not everyone is going to die in Armageddon. We are coming back, but there will be a group of people here that will need to be instructed. They will need to know the ways of God that they rejected for far too long and Zebulun and Issachar will make that announcement. They will begin the millennium by bringing people to the mountain of the Lord, just as they started the Good News globalization around the world. Zebulun and Issachar go hand in hand with each other. They were just laying the groundwork for the next stone to come in and expand it in such a way that has never been duplicated since and will not be until the end of days and the new period when the millennium starts and where Zebulun and Issachar will call people to the mountain just as it is described and defined here in Deuteronomy 33 and instructed by Christ Himself or any representative He chooses. That is up to Him.

The beauty of all this is there will not be any need for war anymore. ***“neither shall they learn war any more.”*** Not just the physical sense of war, but also what we have been battling all these years – the spiritual warfare that goes on because Satan will be put in his place; his fallen angels, demons and watchers will all be put in their place, and there will be no contention. There will be no troublemaker, instigator, or deceiver. Yes, he will be loosed at the end of that millennia for a little season and he will cause trouble, but then he will be thrown in the lake of fire forever.

There is a time coming. It might be tough now; you might not think you are going to make it, but all you have to do is hang on in faith because the time is coming where we will not have to deal with physical or spiritual warfare any longer. You just have to have enduring, faith and trust in God's Word to make it through. There is no doubt that God is in control of history. God knew where he was going, and He had everything under control.

Spain and Portugal are the areas of Issachar and Zebulun, and we need to understand that we are Christ's dwelling place. We are His hired servants and we need to start recognizing and jump at the opportunity, just as Zebulun and Issachar. Even though they were competing, they jumped at the opportunity for the discovery of the new way mostly because of material gain. Ours is not for material gain, but for treasures in heaven. Not only the rewards we will receive there because we have not made the treasures of this earth our priority, but we are looking for the hidden treasures in the sand because we are voices and lips that proclaim the message of the Good News that was promised to Abraham in Genesis. This is not just a physical number, but also a physical number that would be a representative of a people that He would choose to fulfil His purposes to keep proclaiming His Word. We are equipped to participate in it. This breastplate lets Satan and the spiritual enemy that we deal with know that we are His hired servants. He dwells in us because of the faith and trust we have in Him because He dwells in a container of righteousness. He dwells in us and He works through us to fulfil His purposes just like He worked through Issachar and Zebulun to give everyone around the world an opportunity eventually to hear the Good News. That is what happened, and it was the starting point. It started with Portugal, it moved over to Spain and then from there it expanded dramatically when Manasseh and Ephraim came into the picture, which is the next stone.

Joseph, the Fruitful Bough

I have been in Ephesians 6 preaching through verse 10 to eventually verse 18. The beginning of the chapter talks about children, their parents, servants and masters. Then it gets to the Christian armor in verse 10 and I am now in verse 14. In this chapter, we are going back to the breastplate and the eleventh stone on the breastplate, the onyx stone. We will begin with verse 10, part of verse 14 and then go back to Exodus again as the launching point to the next stone.

“Finally, my brethren, be strong [endunamoo, be strengthened, be empowered] in the Lord, and in the power [or force] of his might. Put on the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to stand against the wiles [or the methods] of the devil.”

Verse 12 tells us who we are really fighting against. Verse 13 reminds us to withstand in the evil day having done all to stand and then we get to verse 14,

“Stand therefore, having your loins girt about with truth, and having on the breastplate of righteousness;”

We have been looking at this breastplate of righteousness. It is not some soldier's breastplate worn in battle but has a greater meaning than anything earthly beings could wear when we go to war. Why should we compare this war to an earthly armor when we are dealing with spiritual wicked demons more powerful than all the armies combined?

“and having on the breastplate of righteousness;” We have been looking at the breastplate of righteousness through the Old Testament. I took us to Hebrews when we first started, and we have been looking at the oracle also known as the breastplate of righteousness. I will read through Exodus 28:15 as we launch into the eleventh stone.

“And thou shalt make the breastplate of judgment [or mishpat] 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.”

We have covered all the colors and the fine twined linen. Verse 17 continues,

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

The rows are described one row at a time in verses 17, 18, and 19. Now we are in verse 20, the onyx.

“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 [Jacob's sons], like the engravings of a signet; every one with his name shall they be

according to the twelve tribes.”

That is where we are now. The eleventh stone, onyx, is etched with the name of Joseph. In Hebrew onyx is **shoham**, which literally means *to blanch*. When referring to an object, it means that this object has become whitened, paled or has been blanched. So, get that picture in your mind. It means literally *to blanch something* using an object and, in this case, a stone. It is taken from the root **shub** in the Hebrew, which means *to turn* and also the word **ham** meaning *hot*, so it literally means to turn hot. What does that mean? Well, the word onyx used here in this verse to describe this stone is describing the process of blanching when an object is either scalded in water or steamed to whiten or blanch it to make it become white.

Another characteristic about this onyx stone is it has contrasting layers of colors, but these contrasting layers are arranged in parallel lines across the stone. The unique thing about these parallel bands is the colors are usually predominately black and white; the bands on the stone turns from black to white. Blanching it from black to white is how we get **shoham** for onyx. The onyx stone also has another form, but we will not see the other form until we get to the Book of Revelation. There it will become the fifth foundational stone in the New Jerusalem and that color would be red, but it is not part of this teaching. The way the bands on the stone change from black to white or appear white or pale, being blanched from black to white, spiritually symbolizes our conversion from sinfulness to righteousness through Jesus Christ.

Because this teaching is on the breastplate of righteousness, some have asked over and over what the definition is for righteousness. I have been giving a definition of righteousness from one stone to another. However, when I am done with all the stones, I promised I will summarize all the attributes and characteristics of righteousness through God's Word the way God sees it, not man, that is given to us in this breastplate but by no way is it a complete definition of righteousness. It is a never-ending definition. You could line up all the great preachers and great prophets of time to explain what righteousness looks like the way God sees it and no one possibly would actually have enough time to define it. It is a never-ending subject, but we have a glimpse of how it concerns us and what we should be aware of through God's Word through this breastplate of righteousness. It spiritually symbolizes our conversion of being blanched from black to white. In this case, we were not blanched with hot steamy water or scalded water, we were blanched by the blood of Jesus Christ. That is why our conversion from sinfulness to righteousness can only happen through Jesus Christ. He calls us out of darkness into His marvellous light as Peter says. Even though we are living in darkness, all covered in black because of our sins, now we have been blanched by the blood of Jesus Christ and we are as white as snow through Jesus and the blood that He spilled. Like it or not Satan, you might keep me under condemnation, you might try to put me under guilt, you might make me appear rotten as rotten can be – and you are right if I stay in the flesh – but if God's Spirit, the Holy Spirit, the comforter is in me that was promised by Jesus Christ, I have been blanched because of faith in Him. I have been blanched with the blood of Jesus Christ. I no longer live in darkness and sinfulness is not my destiny. My destiny is righteousness through Jesus Christ by faith.

Let me read what I Peter 2:9 says, **“But ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people [or a purchased people; we are purchased, we are Christ's possession]; that ye should show forth [literally, declare abroad] the praises [or the virtues] of him who hath**

called you out of darkness [darkness that has kept you blind] *into his marvellous light* [it could also be translated *wonderful light*];” Think about it! It is what this onyx stone symbolizes; this eleventh stone that has Joseph's name etched on it. We are a purchased people **“that ye should declare abroad.”** We are not only purchased; we are purchased to fulfil a great commission. I have been telling you over and over, you are not to be a Christian lump on a log or become a Christian couch potato. You are here for a purpose and the purpose is **“the praises and virtues of him who hath called you out of the dark blindness [the darkness] into his marvellous light:”**

I like one translator's translation and I will read it.

“But as for you, you are a race chosen out, kings and priests, a set apart nation, [separated from the world], **a people formed for God's own possession in order that you might proclaim....”** We are no longer Satan's possession, but God's possession. This ministry exists to achieve the purpose of taking a few more away from Satan's camp and bringing him or her to God's possession and understanding of why it is important to be possessed by God and not Satan. **“a set apart nation, a people formed for God's own possession in order that you might proclaim abroad the excellences of the one who out of darkness called you into participation in his marvellous light:**
Who at one time were not a people, but now are God's people: who were not subjects of mercy, but now have become the objects of mercy.”

Briefly, that is what this eleventh stone, the onyx, symbolizes. We no longer live in the sinfulness of our flesh, even though there are two dominating combatants fighting against each other. You read about it in Romans 7 where the Holy Spirit and our flesh [the old man and the new man as some have said] fight each other in the spiritual war that is taking place to have dominance over us as a being. I pray the Holy Spirit is winning that battle. I also pray the Holy Spirit is winning that battle for you to be more like Christ and less like yourself and less like what Satan wants to see. Satan knows the importance and the meaning of these stones and he knows the importance of the meaning of the names of Jacob's sons on these stones which became the tribes of Israel. He knows what He means. That is why I have made it my commission to point out what righteousness looks like through God's eyes, but it is not just God's eyes. Satan also sees what he is combating when we know the truth. We need this spiritual covering.

Although there are different meanings for the number 11, one I thought was unique and it was not missed by God. Eleven is also the number of spiritual covering, which we can see in Exodus 26:7, where the construction of the tabernacle is taking place.

“And thou shalt make curtains of goats' hair to be a covering [a dwelling, a place, a tabernacle; something that covers] **upon the tabernacle: eleven curtains** [as a spiritual covering] **shalt thou make.”** God has made a spiritual covering for us to do battle against unseen forces. I agonize daily how the church world has kept this in the dark. As we approach these last days, maybe this ministry will enlighten some. Hopefully pastors as they listen in to understand why it is important for their congregation to understand how we are to approach these last days understanding that God has given us the tools to overcome no matter what is thrown at us by these unseen spiritual wicked forces. God has given us a spiritual covering, so learn how He provides it and claim it for yourself.

Go to Genesis 30 as we march forward looking at Joseph. I struggled in this series because if I had it my way, I would be on this subject on the eleventh stone taking you to the lost tribes all the way back to Egypt and the time Joseph spent there. I would have covered it a little differently. I believe God finally won and nudged me to do what He has put in my mind and spirit and save some of those other things for later, but try to condense it so people at least have a summary of what this stone is and how it is applied here in the breastplate. We have been going through the different sons of Jacob as they appear on the breastplate and now, we are in verse 22 on the eleventh stone, the onyx stone, with Joseph's name on it.

“And God remembered Rachel [Joseph's mother], and God hearkened to her, and opened her womb.

***And she conceived, and bare a son; and said, God hath taken away my reproach:
And she called his name Joseph; and said, The LORD shall add to me another son.”***

Joseph's name means *Jehovah adds*. He was Jacob's eleventh son and Rachel's firstborn son. Remember she had children through a handmaid, so none came from her womb until this point. Joseph was also Jacob's favorite son and he paid the price for it. We all know God gave him dreams and also gave him the interpretation of dreams in Genesis 37 through 50. Now Joseph had a double portion in the promised land through his sons Manasseh and Ephraim who also became tribes of Joseph, but the one thing I want to point out here before I move on with Joseph is how Rachel changed and how God reacted to her faith. Back in chapter 30, verse 1, Rachel is not having children, but Leah is having children one after another either through her or through her handmaid. We read in verse 1,

***“And when Rachel saw that she bare Jacob no children, Rachel envied [literally, jealous anger] her sister; and said unto Jacob, Give me children, or else I die. [That is a serious ultimatum.]
And Jacob's anger was kindled [His nostrils were literally glowing with anger.] against Rachel:
and he said, Am I in God's stead, who hath withheld from thee the fruit of the womb?”***

Jacob told Rachel, “Don't blame me! I have done my part. Obviously, God is holding back on you for some reason or another.” I believe it was until she got her spiritual side right with God. He might have withheld all her ability to have a child. She was mad; she was mad at Jacob, she had jealous anger towards her sister, and she was not approaching it by faithfully going to the Lord and asking that He grant her this request. There was no expression of faith in any of the verses prior until we get to verse 22. There we finally see, after all these children are produced and now, we are at the eleventh son, and God remembered Rachel because God hearkened to her. There is no reference of God hearkening to her prior to this point because Rachel was not communicating. As most Christians would put it, Rachel was not in God's will. To know this, you must understand the language to understand why she was not in God's will. That is what we read in verse 22,

“And God ... opened her womb.

And she conceived, and bare a son; and said, God hath taken away my reproach:”

Literally, what reproach means in the Hebrew is *God hath taken away my shame*; the shame that

I brought onto myself because I was blaming someone else believing it is his fault or her fault, but never unto thee, O Lord, I have not faithed in you. I have not hearkened to the requests of my heart to you to see if you would grant them. This is a beautiful picture being painted here of someone again in God's Word putting their mind right with God. I am surprised you do not hear messages about this because it is a beautiful picture of someone spending a big portion of their life blaming someone else, getting mad and having feelings of jealous and anger, and unhealthy in establishing their faith connection with God. She was a blame shifter and a finger pointer, and until she started communicating to God. Rachel spoke with everyone else and obviously over the years it has not helped. She gave Jacob her handmaid to produce, but she was still barren. Then she chose to speak to God. Because of that, He hearkened to her, ***“And she conceived, and bare a son; and said, God hath taken away my shame;”*** because she was not blaming anyone else any longer. She became right with God. Verse 24 goes on to tell us,

“And she called his name Joseph; and said, The LORD shall add to me another son.”

This is a testimony of faith that is not heralded enough about Rachel. What did she do right after the Lord giving her Joseph? She claimed another statement of faith and she professed and acted on another action of faith by saying, “Okay Lord, open this womb up now because I made it right with you and I am now connected to your ways and I am now making a statement of faith and saying this is just the beginning. You will work through me and there will be another.” It was her way of stepping out and acting in faith because now her faith was restored, and the connection was there with the God she served. It is a beautiful picture of someone getting right with God. It might have taken years, but she fixed this. As a result, she is no longer mad at Jacob for not producing, which I am sure Jacob was happy about. Put yourself in their shoes. Paint the picture with your mind. It took faith and the connection back with God to start producing the results God probably intended to happen sooner, but there was too much blame shifting, blaming someone else and finger pointing instead of dealing with yourself and your relationship with God. Once that got straightened out, Rachel makes a statement of faith in verse 24, ***“The LORD shall add to me another son.”*** This statement needs to be heralded. I do not care if anybody else has done it or not, I am heralding this woman Rachel for this statement of faith that she proclaims after giving birth to Joseph. It was just an interesting sidebar that everyone should be aware of.

Let's go back to the stone. Joseph's name means *Jehovah adds*. Many already know Joseph because of his dreams and his interpretations of dreams, and of him becoming second to none in rulership in Egypt; and not just Egypt, but to a known world that had to literally come looking for food and probably other resources to survive a famine that was taking place in the then known world at the time. Because of Joseph's double portion of blessing from Jacob, they had a double portion of the promised land through his sons Manasseh and Ephraim. From there it then expanded west and that is where we go into the lost tribes of Israel, but that is not part of this teaching. Now we get to Genesis 49:22,

“Joseph is a fruitful bough....”

Here, Jacob is giving his blessings to all his sons before he dies. A bough is usually the largest and main branch of a tree. The fruitful bough in this verse is a promise to Joseph and his sons of victory both in the natural and the spiritual realm of God. Joseph names his second son Ephraim

which literally means *fruitful* because God made him fruitful in the land of his affliction in Egypt. A fruitful bough means that Joseph would be enlarged. *Joseph adds* is what his name means, but there is something else this verse says. Let's read it,

“Joseph is a fruitful bough, a fruitful bough by a well;”

“A fruitful bough by a well” described here in this verse has a never-ending source of nourishment. The largest bough of a tree, if it stays connected to that part of the tree trunk, will have a never-ending source of nourishment if it is fed by a well. But if separated from the trunk of the tree and it will not survive. If it is cut off, it will die, so it needs to be connected to have that nourishment. ***“a fruitful bough by a well,”*** refers to a never-ending source of nourishment to help it remain fruitful. That is what this verse is saying. For us it means that anyone putting on the spiritual armor given to us in Ephesians has the same never-ending nourishment through the Holy Spirit because it is what energizes the armor in the first place. To see how we know that go to John 4:14 in the New Testament. This is where Jesus is talking to the Samaritan woman, He is at Jacob's well. He is thirsty and has her give Him something to drink. The story begins with verse 1, but go to verse 14,

“But whosoever drinketh of the water that I shall give him shall never thirst; but the water that I shall give him shall be in him a well of water springing up into everlasting life.”

So will it be a fruitful bough being nourished from Christ through the Holy Spirit. Furthermore, John 7:37 it reads,

“If any man thirst, let him come unto me, and drink.

He that believeth [really *pisteuo*, *faitheth*] on me, as the scripture hath said, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water.

(But this spake he of the Spirit [that still had not yet come], which they that believe [or *faiethe*] on him should receive: for the Holy Ghost was not yet given; because that Jesus was not yet glorified.)”

The disciples were not baptized in the Holy Spirit at this point. They were baptized in water, which was the common thing to do until the true baptism that we should be concerned with given to us by the Holy Spirit. This is not about talking in tongues. It might include that if given that gift, but it is not necessary. The baptism of the Holy Spirit had yet not come. Scripture says this is the baptism that would flow out of their belly to give them and us spiritual nourishment. I will come back to this verse to make my point.

Joseph is promised to be ***“...a fruitful bough by a well;”*** which has a never-ending source of nourishment. We also know through the New Testament that Christ has said how we are to receive it in today's present age. Remember this promise was given to Joseph. Just the same, we will receive this when we wear that spiritual armor because it is part of the breastplate. We too have never-ending nourishment through the Holy Spirit with victories are not even aware of because the Holy Spirit within us has the advantage to see the seen and the unseen. Think about that! I am so tired of Christians saying they never see a victory. How do you know? Once again, take yourself out of the Christian box you are in with all the information you have been reading

and studying, and put yourself into the mindset that you are part of seen and unseen battles. How do you know that you have not been part of some victories and some battles that you have not even seen in the unseen realm? The Spirit groans for us. It intercedes for us because we necessarily do not know everything we need. If we cannot see that, what makes you think the Holy Spirit and Christ are not battling for you for things that you may have never seen because they interceded before you saw it with your eyes? The eyes that we see through are flawed instruments. I do not believe they were when God first created Adam. I believe they could see the heavenlies and all aspects of God's creation, but it was all changed because of sin and now we are flawed. We need that intercessor and comforter; we need Christ. They have won many battles for you before it slipped by and got to you or could get to you so you can grow in Him. Stop looking at God's Word myopically; stop living in the Christian cubicle and branch out. There is room in God's Word for that; but that is another sidebar. Returning to Genesis 49:22, we know that,

“Joseph is a fruitful bough, a fruitful bough by a well; whose branches run over the wall:”

The correct translation for branches is *daughters*, meaning the children the daughters would produce. The branches of the bough are symbolic of Joseph's descendants in this verse. Eventually Joseph's descendants would be responsible for overcoming all obstacles and spread the Good News to a dying world. And there were plenty of obstacles if you know history. As I said, I am not going to bring in the teaching of the lost tribes of Israel to nations after the globalization, but it is not by accident that Issachar and Zebulun come before Joseph in the rows and the stones on the breastplate. The globalization had to come and then the Good News that would be spread to a dying world would take place and it would ***“run over the wall.”*** There would be no barrier that would stop it until a set time. I will get to that in the antichrist teaching. Until a set time, the Good News will be spread throughout a dying world. You must remember Joseph was the saviour to the Egyptians in the known world because of the dreams and visions God gave him, and he is a type of Christ in the Old Testament and my favorite Old Testament character.

I have had people ask me that, but it is not because I am biased to the name. It is because there is no greater example in the Old Testament as a type of Christ. In my studies, I have identified close to 70 types of Christ that Joseph's life portrays, but he is my favorite character because what he went through in his life was nothing more than a type of what Christ would go through and what He would put Himself through for our benefit. Anything that points to Christ is going to be my favorite, just as the Book of Isaiah in the Old Testament is my favorite book.

The tribes of Joseph through his sons, Manasseh and Ephraim, would leap the wall that was a barrier and would spread the Good News of the Gospel of Jesus Christ. The United States, England, and even Australia and Canada would be thrown into those tribal units having made more of an impact in spreading the Good News than any other nation. Once Issachar and Zebulun globalized the world, it set the stage for His set times; He has everything under control. He knows when to pull the strings for the events to happen the way they have happened and the way they will happen. He has it all under His control.

Joseph was a saviour – a type of Christ in the Old Testament – preserving the then known world

as I have said from starving to death. For us, Jesus Christ is the only source that we need now to save us from a world that is dying daily. It is why our marketing campaign [I do not like to use those words] for this ministry is “*Come to Jesus or go to hell*”. And it is that black and white, or really white and black because it is the ultimate decision you will make which concerns your eternal destiny. Now go to Genesis 49:23,

“The archers have sorely grieved him, and shot at him, and hated him:”

The archers should literally be translated *the owners*. Remember we are talking about possessions. The owners are all of Joseph's enemies included here in the Genesis record that we know of, including obviously his brothers and Potiphar's wife. Joseph had dreams and interpretations of dreams. The first interpretation of dreams was there would be seven years of plenty. Remember he moved many people around, he took a percentage of their money and goods, he controlled them for a set period of time so they could survive and be saved from a dying world at that time, not only them but their offspring; not just for the Egyptians but also for the sake of the Israelites. That is why he was sent there in the first place and thirdly for the then known world. He was also a person possessed by his owners as a slave, but then he became not the possession of someone else any longer. In fact, he came to control the possessions of others for their benefit, and he had enemies. Imagine those people saying in the fourth or fifth year of the seven years of plenty “Wait a minute! We are not going to listen to him! Obviously, he made that up. We are doing well. Things are piling up and he is taking a percentage of everything. What is going on here?” This probably caused Joseph to accumulate enemies, and he accumulated plenty of them. You and I are also accumulating unseen enemies at a rapid rate the more we participate in getting God's Word out correctly. As Ephesians 6 says, our enemies will shoot those fiery arrows at us. There is no doubt about it. I am convinced he will shoot those fiery arrows. Some of you have experienced it. I know people around the world have suffered persecutions in the form of persecutions, trials and tribulations, afflictions and hardships; as the Greek says *kakopatheo*. There is no doubt that they will all bring grief to your life, but we have a promise given to us in God's Word delivered by Jesus Christ himself and implemented by the Holy Spirit. We can see that promise in verse 24,

“But his bow abode in strength, and the arms of his hands were made strong by the hands of the mighty of Jacob; (from thence is the shepherd, the stone of Israel:)”

The King James Version has *God* in italics, meaning this word was added by the translator. This verse does not say “*the mighty God of Jacob*”. Look at this verse the way it should be presented in the correct way, so you understand what is being said here. This promise is not just for Joseph's time but for our time. You can see now because we are living in a portion of history that already happened about 2,000 years ago. We can look back and say, I told you so.

“But his bow abode in strength, and the arms of his hands were made strong by the hands of the mighty Jacob; (from thence is the shepherd, the stone of Israel:)”

Not the hands of the mighty God of Jacob. No, “*the hands of the mighty Jacob;*” the bloodline where the shepherd, the stone of Israel, would eventually come from which we now know came from the line and the seed of David 2,000 years ago, and that stone and shepherd is none other

than Jesus Christ. We have a prophetic verse here.

“But his bow abode in strength,”

Strength is symbolic of power and might. This is the Ephesian 6:10 message all over again telling us to be strong, be empowered, be strengthened in Christ Jesus and the power, the force and the might that is delivered to us through Him. That is symbolic of power and might.

“and the arms of his hands [Joseph's hands] were made strong by the hands of the mighty of Jacob; from thence is the shepherd, the stone of Israel:)”

This is none other than Jesus Christ being prophesied here. This is our promise and we know it already happened 2,000 years ago. We have the benefit of seeing a promise fulfilled. Paul was trying to send the message that we are empowered, and we can be forceful because God has put that force in us. We can be mighty because God has put His might in us. In a sense, we are invincible if we stay in Christ and Satan knows that. Too many Christians act like they cannot be invincible. Yes, they can. We live in a mortal body that will die if Jesus tarries, but the invincible part of me will live forever and some day we will have a new body. If you do not believe it, you might as well close the book now and go follow Buddha or something so you can live for in the here and now.

Let's get to verse 25, where we will bring to the light what this verse is promising and what it has fulfilled not just for Joseph's benefit, but for the bride of Christ, the church. Verse 25 states,

“Even by the God of thy father, who shall help thee; and by the Almighty [El Shaddai], who shall bless thee with blessings [or the gift] of heaven above....”

This gift is none other than Jesus Christ, which we know because of the preceding verse. Also, El Shaddai, God the Father, shall bless us. This is a promise to Joseph and Joseph and his sons would carry the message of the church to a world before its last dying days. Remember that. It is also just as important to remember that we receive a gift also promised to Joseph, Jesus Christ, God's only begotten Son. That is why to deny it ever existed, deny that it had the power that it did, or deny that there is a Son of God is an abomination of desolation. That is the first thing mentioned in this verse. Let's move on,

“who shall bless thee with the gift of heaven above [Jesus Christ], blessings of the deep that lieth under....”

That is not some treasure underneath the sea; it is not a load of fish. What this is speaking of and declaring here is the resurrection! This phrase, ***Blessings of the deep***, translated correctly in the Hebrew is *blessings of the grave or the gift of the grave*. Meaning that He came out of the grave and He fulfilled everything. He came here to fulfil, and He had victory. That is why scripture can declare, “Oh death, where is thy sting?” It would still be stinging us if Christ did not have victory over the grave. He did have victory, so the second gift given to us is the resurrection.

The first gift is the begotten Son of Jesus Christ, who died on that cross. The second gift is that

He rose from the dead; He rose from the grave. The third gift is the **“gift of the breasts.”** Breasts symbolize nourishment in scripture, meaning the Holy Spirit. We have the Trinity here to fulfil a purpose because He has compassion. We have the gift of Christ himself; we have the gift of His victory over the grave; we have the gift and the promise that He said a comforter would come and that comforter would be the Holy Spirit. **“...and of the womb:”** literally in the Hebrew means *compassion or the centered seat of compassion*. In other words, this is the compassion of God and also of the Son. It is because of His compassion that we have the gift of the resurrected Son and of the comforter the Son promised because of His compassion. This is not just Old Testament.

Go back to John 7:38. Now I can finish this with a better understanding for you.

“He that believeth [or faitheth] on me, as the Scripture hath said...” Now all the cross references that scholars give point to Isaiah, some Proverbs, Deuteronomy 18, and some others do not go as far back at verse 25 that I have taken you to. I believe, and it has been lost far too long, that what Jesus was referring to here is the promise fulfilled given to Joseph that would be also promised to his sons, Ephraim and Manasseh, which would eventually be carried through the church and all the followers of Jesus Christ who wear that breastplate. **“He that faitheth on me, as the Scripture hath said, out of his belly [the heart as the seed of thought] shall flow rivers of [His] living water.”** In some translations, belly will be translated womb with the same meaning as a womb of compassion because God's heart beats for us, Christ's heart beats for us! This is what Jesus was talking about. Yes, you can add the quick Isaiah reference of this possible meaning, but what He was talking about was a gift that would come and would flow out of the belly because of His compassion for us to provide us living waters. That is what Genesis 25 is saying. Let the rest of the verse sink in. I wish I could stop here and conclude this message, so it sinks in and you understand what a powerful promise and gift we were given. We can look back now and say thank you Lord, we see it as history. They could not do that at this time.

Verse 26 goes on to tell us,

“The blessings of thy father have prevailed above the blessings of my progenitors unto the utmost bound of the everlasting hills: they shall be on the head of Joseph, and on the crown of the head of him that was separate from his brethren.”

Now go to Deuteronomy 33 where Moses gives the blessings to the tribes. It is pretty much saying the same thing. Moses acts, in verses 13 through 16, as a witness to confirm what Jacob said for the most part. The one thing I want to point out in verse 17 is where it says,

“His glory is like the firstling of his bullock, and his horns are like the horns of unicorns: with them he shall push the people together to the ends of the earth: and they are the ten thousands of Ephraim, and they are the thousands of Manasseh.”

A firstling is a firstborn. It is clearly documented here that it is the firstling of a firstborn, in this case a bullock. **“and his horns are like the horns of unicorns:”** A firstling is the firstborn of an animal and here we have a specific animal symbolic of something that is most excellent. It is an unblemished prize. If it was blemished, it could not be sacrificed. This tells us that we are God's

prize. We are most excellent; we are part of the church of the firstborn. All firstlings were set apart as the Lord's possession, and we will be possessed by one or the other – either Satan or the Lord. I am going to choose the Lord this day. You are part of the Lord's possessions. Horns are symbolic of power and influence. Joseph, Ephraim, Manasseh, as the tribes of Joseph were destined to have so much power that they would conquer anyone who would war against them. Not only when they were lined up with God in Israel, but once they were taken away from Israel and became a power again. You see it through the United States especially in these last days. That is why I will get to who Ephraim and Manasseh were. You will look at it differently when I am done.

The tribe of Joseph was destined to have so much power they would conquer anyone who would get in their way because we are God's possession and we are the Lord Jesus Christ's possession being energized by the Holy Spirit. Our belly is filled because of His compassion for us with the nourishment that we need, we are more than conquerors through Christ Jesus and Satan knows it. He has been disguising it and he has been trying to keep hidden for 2,000 years what this breastplate symbolizes. It is time the truth be told and we are to stand up and know how to fight against the spiritual enemy that wants to see us defeated, wants to see this ministry and any ministry that declares who he is and what he is trying to do to be literally shut up and closed down. Well, I will not see to it. We have a spiritual covering that the Lord Jesus Christ has specifically designed for us for His purposes because we are His possession. Now, start acting like it Christians. Start realizing what you have been called and chosen to be part of. Start realizing you are part of this Great Commission.

Jasper, the Final Stone

Go to Ephesians 6 where I have been concentrating on verses 10 through 18 but have not gone past verse 14. In this chapter, God willing, I will finish the last stone on the breastplate. Let's quickly read through verses 10 to 14 and then we will go to Exodus.

***“Finally, my brethren, be strong* [the Greek is *endunamoo*, *be strengthened, be empowered*] *in the Lord, and in the power* [*kratos*, or *force*] *of his might* [*ischus* in the Greek].”** In other words, it is God's strength, not ours, that fights a spiritual wicked enemy that we face in the unseen world.

“Put on the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil. [The Greek for wiles is *methodeia* where we get our word for methods. It is *the methods, the tricks, the strategies, the tactics* that Satan uses to come against us. We need God's armor to be able to stand once that spiritual attack starts taking place.]

For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers* [all evil beings] *of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness* [the actual demons, the offspring of the watchers] *in high places.

Wherefore take unto you the whole armour of God* [We are again reminded to take on the whole armor of God.], *that ye may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand.

Stand therefore, having your loins girt about with truth, and having on the breastplate of righteousness;”

I had several people ask me what righteousness looks like. It is something you cannot create with your own efforts. It is given as a gift from God through the Holy Spirit, but there are certain attributes of righteousness that we can see Christ takes and molds into our lives so He can produce what He wants from us. We are not robots and we are not alike. I know some Christians act like it, but we are not all robots. Christ takes us individually as a chunk of clay and molds us into the vessel that He wants for His purposes and His use. Throughout eternity, He will put us on a shelf that He will show off to the doubting world saying, “I took this vessel and molded it into what I wanted. It is now my special treasure.” Righteousness has many different looks about it. I can tell you one thing, there is nothing that you can somehow do to earn it and there is nothing you can do to personally form it into your life. God and Christ are in control of how it is formed and revealed in your own life. We have been seeing with that through the breastplate of righteousness.

As I have said many times, this breastplate is not part of some Roman soldier's garb or some suit of armor that Roman soldiers wore. Most of Christianity would have you believe that is what it is, but Paul knew exactly what the Roman soldiers wore. Believe me, he was a prisoner enough. He was captive, and he was even taken from location to location by prison guards and Roman soldiers. He knew what they looked like, but this is not what he revealed to us through God's Word, not only in his time, but throughout the ages of time. Paul knew the law and Paul knew the Old Testament. I showed through Hebrews how he took these passages to bring old truth that was declared in the Old Testament and reveal it to us now about how it applies through Christ in the New. We have been looking at how that is carried out in Paul's teachings by starting with Exodus

28.

In Exodus 28:15, Paul was talking about the breastplate and not some Roman soldier's piece of equipment that he wears as part of a suit of armor because we are dealing with spiritual beings. Two verses prior to that verse, he describes what these unseen spiritual beings are. What would a piece of Roman armor do to protect you from an unseen force that can penetrate it? It cannot protect you! Some think Paul was just figuratively revealing a message to us. No, he was not. He was taking Old Testament concepts and bringing them into light in the New Testament doctrine that Christ laid down and allowed us to be part of and to participate in because obviously He wants us to participate in the good fight of faith; the spreading of the Good News of the Gospel of Jesus Christ. By participating, He knew the unseen forces would unleash themselves on us, and He knew what kind of protection we need just as the Old Testament saints and the High Priest needed to carry out his responsibilities as a high priest in the Old Testament. Now it has an even greater significance in the New Testament because it has a deeper and larger impact because the breastplate is not some physical garment that can be made or produced. It now takes on a spiritual sense still using the Old Testament concept of what it symbolized and meant back in that day.

If you have been reading the breastplate messages as I revealed each stone and each name on the stone which represented a tribe, each one of Jacob's sons, and carried that promise forward into the New Testament, even to our present day and age, hopefully I have demonstrated how God has equipped us and delivered His message how He would. As He completes that work in us and He empowers us to complete that commission by looking back through the Old, we should start realizing the power, authority and strength that comes when you properly understand what the breastplate did for your own personal life, what it is doing now for your own personal life, and what it represented for the High Priest as it represented the children of Israel during certain times of the year. With that brief introduction, I am going right into the next stone after I read these certain passages, beginning in Exodus 28:15,

“And thou shalt make the breastplate of judgment [the mishpat] 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.”

We have covered all the colors and the linen, how it was produced by flax and the symbolism behind it. It is all part of this breastplate series.

“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: [all the different stones and listed and which stones were in each row.]

And the second row shall be an emerald, a sapphire, and a diamond. [Go to verse 20]

And the fourth row a beryl, and an onyx, and a jasper [the last stone]: ***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.”

I have shown pictures of what this breastplate looked like with the different stones, but more importantly what each represented spiritually. Now we are in the last row and the last stone, jasper, which is *yashepheh* in the Hebrew. This word comes from an unused root word meaning *to polish*, so jasper means *to polish*. Modern jasper is usually red because of its iron content, but it is also found in brown, yellow or green. This is important to understand because Satan has been trying to hide the symbolic meaning of this stone because what it represents is powerful. Modern jasper, as I said, is usually red because of its iron content, but it can also come in the colors of brown, yellow or green. It is popular because of its high polished finish. When the flesh takes over, I have to admit the only thing I can think of is the high polished finish of that red stone. Just blowing on it and rubbing it to a high polished finish to shine in the devil's face is what God thinks of me. You will know why when I tell you what it symbolizes. I have been imagining all day just rubbing this stone in the devil's face, but that is my flesh talking. However, I do not need to worry about it because Christ is doing it for me, and He is doing it for you too. You are a high polished finished treasure empowered, strengthened and spirit filled with Christ's Spirit that God and Christ are completing in their design – not man's design, not your design – so He can rub it in the devil's face to say, “Look what I have polished.” Believe that you are a high polished servant of God! Woe to the spiritual enemies who try to convince us of anything but that because to do that is to deny the miraculous working power of God in our life. Like it or not devil, evil forces or demons, I am a high polished servant of God. Deal with it. And like I said, it is not because of my merits or anything that I have done, but because I have been washed with the blood of Jesus Christ and now, He is working His good in my life. As I have been saying, I am a work in progress. Deal with it Satan and spiritual enemies that Satan himself has dedicated to my life to bring me down and destroy me and end the message of the Good News of the Gospel of Jesus Christ that I preach through this ministry. I am a work in progress and God is polishing me and He will reveal the kind of shine He wants me to project because He is the one in control and He is the one who is molding this chunk of clay into the vessel that He wants. Personalize it for yourself and let it shine in your face every day to remind you.

To repeat, this stone is popular because of its high polished finish. Some scholars believe that this stone on the breastplate was green and not red. I will reserve my comments on that and stay with God's Word and how I concluded that it was red and not green. First, I found that some of these scholars have no archeological or historical basis of why they think it was green. You will get a bit of information in this chapter about why I believe it was red and not green, but there are mounds of evidence that comes from Egyptian historical records that explains why it was red and not green. It starts with where these stones come from, but before we get to what it looks like, let's look at where these Israelites got these stones in the first place. They were obtained when the Israelites were departing Egypt.

To see this, go to Exodus 12. After the death of the firstborns, Egypt is ready to get rid of the Israelites. Plague after plague came, but Pharaoh was stubborn and hardhearted and did not allow the Israelites to depart from Egypt. Even after locusts, a swarm of flies, boils, hail, animals dying, three days of darkness, among other plagues nothing could change their minds. However, when their firstborns were dying, they said, “Enough is enough; get the heck out of here Israelites. Get out of my sight Moses. Get as far as you can from this land.” Go to verse 35,

“And the children of Israel did according to the word of Moses; and they borrowed [A closer translation is requested] of the Egyptians jewels of silver, and jewels of gold, and raiment:”

They asked for these things and they obviously borrowed. I believe Moses already gave them instruction about what to ask for. Moses was probably doing their bidding for them in the first place, but God already has given Moses insight to what they needed to take going out from the land of Egypt heading towards the promised land because God already had a purpose for them and a purpose for what they were going to take. I am not just talking about all the livestock, which there was plenty of, but the unique thing outside of the livestock and the necessary food to get them going is ***“they requested [not borrowed] of the Egyptians jewels of silver, and jewels of gold, and raiment:”*** This does not mean just clothing, or linen if you understand the language because God already knew what He planned for their future. He knew a tabernacle needed to be made and a high priest's clothing needed to be created. Yes, there would also be enough linen to provide them clothing, but the bottom line is the larger and greater purpose is how He would establish their connection with Him by that travelling tabernacle and by their representation through the High Priest. These jewels were not for bartering purposes. They did not need to barter with anyone. Look at the things they took out with them; flocks and herds, cattle, and a mixed multitude went along with them. You name it, they took it. Verse 36 goes on to say,

“And the LORD gave the people favour in the sight of the Egyptians, so that they lent [or they gave] unto them such things as they required. And they spoiled [actually, and they snatched away] the Egyptians.”

When the Israelites saw those jewels, they just snatched them away; when they saw gold and silver, they just snatched them away. They requested it and because the Egyptians were so anxious for these Israelites to leave, “Here, take it! Just get out of here.” It was also customary when parting friends or even servants, to give a gift so the practice was not so uncommon, but because of their large numbers what they gave was probably something to be marvelled at. They went out of Egypt loaded with goods and livestock, not to mention after watching the firstborns of the Egyptians dying and now dead, you would do one of two things: either kill off the Israelites because of what they did or get them out of your sight as fast as you can because you are afraid of what is going to come around next if you did not. So, the Egyptians were in a state of panic and willing to give them anything just so they would leave as quickly as possible.

These two verses are nothing more than the fulfilment of Genesis 15:14, where God is delivering a message to Abram telling them that they will be in bondage, but when they get out of bondage ***“afterward they shall come out with great substance.”*** Let's read the whole verse to really see that.

“And also that nation, whom they shall serve [that would be the Egyptians], will I judge: and afterward shall they come out with great substance.”

And a great substance they came out with including jewels, silver, gold, fabric, all types of livestock, even enough food to sustain them for a while; and they left Egypt. In Exodus 12:35 they obtained the items needed and that God wanted so they could create these garments and

breastplate.

What does this have to do with jasper being red instead of green? It has a lot to do with it. Look at where these jewels came from. If scholars would check with the historical evidence, and also the archeological evidence of that time, with not that much effort they would find out in that period of time in the Egyptian lands jasper did not come in the form of green unless it was imported outside of that area. However, probably not much of that happened because there is not that much of a record showing that. Egyptian jasper was available in three colors, and green was not one of them. Brown, yellow and red were the colors available; red being the predominant color. Listen to me again; jasper did not come in green. It was not produced in green in Egypt. Instead it came in the colors of yellow, brown and the predominant color red. We know where these stones came from, and the Egyptians gladly gave them these stones just to get them out of Egypt quickly. If this stone came from Egypt, then the logical conclusion is that it had to be red, yellow or brown, but not be green. Since the predominant color was red – a crystal-like red – then there is a good chance that it would be red, not green. Why do I believe it is red? Well, I just gave you the foundation of where they obtained these stones but if you go through scriptures, I believe in the Book of Revelation, chapter 4, something unique happens in verse 3. First, John writes what Jesus told him concerning the churches and then we are given a glimpse of the throne in heaven. Verse 1 begins,

“After this I looked, and, behold, a door was opened in heaven: and the first voice which I heard was as it were of a trumpet talking with me; which said, Come up hither, and I will show these things which must be hereafter.

And immediately I was in the Spirit: and, behold, a throne was set in heaven, and one sat on the throne.

And he that sat was to look upon like a jasper and a sardine stone [Or sardius. This is Reuben, and the sardius stone was the first stone on the breastplate.]: and there was a rainbow round about the throne, in sight like unto an emerald.”

Now this emerald could be green here, and the rainbow represents God's grace through His Son Jesus Christ; the covenant He made with us. It is either ironic, a strange coincidence, or we are given a glimpse of what this stone was actually like. Jasper happens to be the last stone in the fourth row of the breastplate, and sardius or sardine stone represents the first stone on the breastplate, and both happen to be red. We know the sardius stone was a ruby red, meaning the first stone and the last stone on the breastplate are at the throne of heaven, and the one that sat upon it with the colors were shining forth. They were probably almost blinding to the eye when the true color of the stone came through. It is not by accident in my opinion that these two stones are side by side here because of what they represent. Before I get to that, there is one other place in scripture in the Book of Revelation that talks about the New Jerusalem. It is in chapter 21 where this chapter goes on to describe the city walls in verse 19,

“And the foundations of the wall of the city were garnished with all manner of precious stones. The first foundation was jasper”

I find it ironic that the first foundation was jasper! Once again, the red stone is the foundational stone, the first foundation which this city would be built on. Is that by accident? Well, what does it represent? What does it symbolize? Jasper is the first foundational stone in the New Jerusalem

here in Revelation 21:19. In John 4, the first stone, the sardius stone, was red, and jasper, the last stone on the breastplate, was also red. In Revelation 4, we have these two stones side by side representing the first and the last, which is none other than Jesus Christ and also in the breastplate in the Old Testament, the first stone, the ruby red stone, and jasper which I believe was Egyptian red jasper. The Bible says where these stones came from in Genesis. This stone also symbolizes the blood atonement – the color of red – that we have through the sacrifice of Jesus Christ. He is the first and the last throughout scripture and the Book of Revelation makes the point strongly that He is the beginning and the end. The beginning was His blood that made the atonement for man's error. We are not destined for destructive judgment, we are destined for eternal life to be instruments as servants of God, to be sons and daughters of God to not only carry out the commission in the here and now in this mortal flesh, as you will see when we get to the name of the tribe, but what He has assigned for us throughout eternity. We are high polished jewels when we are covered by this blood. What makes us polished and makes us shine is the blood of Jesus Christ; the first and the last stone on the breastplate; the two stones side by side at the throne of heaven representing Christ and His spilled blood—the covering that we have; the first foundational stone in the New Jerusalem where the New Jerusalem is built upon the blood of Jesus Christ. How anyone could think this stone is green is beyond me. That shows as much spiritual insight as the rat crossing the street. I am sorry to be blunt, but that is what it is. The only reason anyone argues the point is because they do not know what scripture is declaring throughout the Old and New Testaments. We need sight to see light, so start looking and praying for God's guidance to see the wonderful information He has laid down in His Word to give us hope. There is no doubt in my mind. I am a high polished jewel, you are a high polished jewel, and we are covered by the blood that makes us shine. It is as simple as that! Do not try to complicate it.

Now that you have an understanding what this stone is and what it is symbolic of, let's move on to Genesis 35:16 to look at the name of the tribe on that stone. In Genesis 30, we have been following all the sons of Jacob, but in this chapter, we are given the last son Benjamin with his name etched on the last stone, the jasper stone, on the breastplate. Let's read it.

“And they journeyed from Beth-el; and there was but a little way to come to Ephrath: and Rachel travailed [She became very sick], and she had hard labour. And it came to pass, when she was in hard labour, that the midwife said unto her, Fear not; thou shalt have this son also.”

In the last message on the breastplate about Jacob's son, Joseph, hopefully I gave you a clear understanding of Rachel's rebellion and bitterness that was turned into faith. After the reproach was lifted from her and she had Joseph in chapter 30, verse 24, it says, ***“The LORD shall add to me another son.”*** In faith she made the declaration, ***“The LORD shall add to me another son.”*** And it happened. During her hard labour, she probably lost faith thinking that she was going to die and she eventually did. Thinking that she was not going to make it, the midwife [probably the same midwife that delivered Joseph] reminded her of that, and this midwife is an unsung hero of faith. By saying, ***“Fear not; thou shalt have this son also,”*** she is reminding Rachel of the declaration of faith she made in chapter 30, ***“The LORD shall add to me another son.”*** In other words, no matter what will happen to you or anyone else, this son will be born! We read on in verse 18,

“And it came to pass, as her soul was in departing [she made a statement of non-faith.], (for she died) that she called his name Ben-oni:”

If you look at this, it is a beautiful picture being painted here by Jacob. He was known to change names around and change the order of significance. You read that when he is blessing his sons before his death with Joseph in particular. Here, just before Rachel’s death, ***“And it came to pass, as her soul was in departing, (for she died) that she called his name Ben-oni:”*** which means *the son of my sorrow*. Now *the son of my sorrow* is no way to go out in faith. Jacob knew that. It is a beautiful picture, probably because of the love for his wife and probably knowing that she was going to die and near death, he changed the name immediately. There is no gap in time here in this verse. He changed it immediately and took a non-trusting statement made before her death and created a faith statement, which I believe she probably whispered on her lips as she was dying, ***“but his father called him Benjamin.”*** And Benjamin means *the son of the right hand*. So, Joseph went from a non-trusting statement to a faith statement saying, “No, this is not the son of your sorrow. This is the son of the right hand.” If you remember, the right hand is symbolic of strength, power and authority. Joseph was saying, this is not the son of your sorrow Rachel, but as you go out declare with me in faith, this is the son of strength, power and authority. This is the last name etched on the breastplate. This is the last reminder to Satan that we have strength, power and authority through Jesus Christ.

You may wonder how I know this, so let's just spend a little time tracking through the Old and New Testaments to emphasize this point over and over so you understand God's Word has declared this message throughout the ages. It is nothing new.

In Exodus 15:6, we see Moses' song sung after deliverance from the Egyptians when they went through the Red Sea on dry ground. ***“Thy right hand, O LORD, is become glorious in power: thy right hand, O LORD, hath dashed in pieces the enemy.”*** Remember, ***“dashed in pieces the enemy.”*** So here God's right hand is revealed in power and in strength over the enemy.

Psalms 16:8 tells us, ***“I have set the LORD always before me: because he is at my right hand, I shall not be moved.”*** This not only demonstrates God's power and might but His authority over anything. David is declaring spiritual victory over the enemy that is torn to pieces because of God's power. Also, because of His strength, power and authority, we shall not be moved.

Psalms 63:8 states, ***“My soul followeth hard after thee: thy right hand upholdeth me.”*** That too is a promise given to Benjamin. Here you have all the promises to Benjamin wrapped up in this one verse. You will understand what I am saying when I get to the other promises that Benjamin has that we have through the breastplate of righteousness. ***“My soul followeth hard after thee: thy right hand upholdeth me,”*** symbolizes strength here, so no matter what we go through or what we face, God is there to uphold us.

Psalms 138:7 reads, ***“Though I walk in the midst of trouble, thou wilt revive me: thou shalt stretch forth thine hand against the wrath of mine enemies and thy right had shall save me.”*** I know many are still Old Testament mentality. In the New Testament, we are not to claim these promises because we go against scripture that Christ laid out in the Gospels when we try to seek

vengeance over our physical seen enemy. In the New Testament, we are to pray and ask for God's deliverance during trouble. Because we are wearing the armor, ask the Lord to fight the spiritual unseen enemy for us to gain victory and at times that includes victory over the instruments that we can see. I know it is a hard concept that I struggle with daily. I like to see victory on the things that I can see. There is not much satisfaction in the victory of the unseen things when it is obtained, but God wants me to flip that attitude and understand that the greater victory is happening in the things that I cannot see, not the things I can see. It is the unseen that we should be concerned with, not the seen. He will deal with both but realize where the trouble starts and that is in the unseen element and the methods that these unseen forces use to try to destroy our lives and our spiritual connection with the vine. ***“Though I walk in the midst of trouble, thou wilt revive me: thou shalt stretch forth thine hand against the wrath of mine enemies, and thy right hand shall save me.”***

In the New Testament, we see the power and authority of Jesus. I want this to sink in, which is why I am giving you all these verses. There are plenty more, but I chose the ones that really make sense to me and hopefully will for you.

Hebrews 1:3, ***“Who being the brightness of his glory, and the express image of his person, and upholding all things by the word of his power, when he [Christ] had by himself purged our sins, sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high;”***

Christ is given power and authority over evil and after purging our sins for our benefit, He now sits at the right hand of the Majesty on high.

Hebrews 8:1, ***“Now of the things which we have spoken this is the sum: We have such a high priest [Jesus Christ], who is set on the right hand of the throne of the Majesty in the heavens;”***

Again in this verse, Christ is on the right hand of God pleading for us because there is an accuser at the throne of God still trying to put us down, discrediting our actions and dwelling on them so God and Christ will overlook the faith we live by day by day through all the struggles, trials and afflictions. But Christ is there at the right hand of the throne of the Majesty in the heavens defending us better than we could defend ourselves. That is a promise we have from Christ, ***“who is set on the right hand of the throne of the Majesty in the heavens;”***

Hebrews 10:12, ***“But this man, after he [Jesus] had offered one sacrifice for sins for ever, sat down at the right hand of God;”***

Why is this important? Obviously, we understand that the right hand of God is what Jacob named Benjamin. Christ is given the authority and power to be at the right hand of God after overcoming all the obstacles He faced and after purging our sins, He is sitting on the right hand of God. That important for us to understand because we also have a promise that relates to all these passages where we will be seated someday. It is in Revelation 3:21. This is the last message to the church before chapter 4. This verse tells us, ***“To him that overcometh will I grant to sit with me in my throne [where Christ also sits at the right hand of the Father], even as I also overcame, and am set down with my Father in his throne.”***

This means we have a promise, if we understand what it is to trust and faith in God's Word, what it is to be covered by the blood, what it is to understand our assignment, what it means to have the armor that we wear that when all is said and done and we accomplish what Christ has set out for us to do here and now before we go to the next stage of our eternal life, He has not left us empty handed. That is why I have taken the time to point out each significant meaning and name of the stone that is etched on that stone and how it applies to us if we keep wearing the suit of armor that Christ specifically designed and made for us. He is our divine tailor. He knows what kind of suit we need to wear, the kind of armor we need to wear as an individual. He has given us a glimpse of what the breastplate is like, what it provides and why it is important to understand that we do not go into the battle empty handed. We go into battle locked and loaded ready for spiritual warfare and we will not lose as long as we have the Holy Spirit in our life that energizes all this armor through Christ. When it is all said and done, we have the promise if we overcome ***“to sit with me in my throne.”*** We will sit with Christ who has sat down with the Father at His right hand. Just as Christ was the right hand of God, we are the right hand of Christ, and if we remain faithful, we will also have the privilege and honor to be seated there some day.

Can you even imagine what that is going to be like? I am not living in some fantasy world. This is God's Word. I faith in it and I expect it to happen. This is the promise that we have. I do not know about you, but it energizes me to understand what would turn out to be a sorrowful act because of Rachel's death, I believe just before she died, Jacob changed her non-faith statement to a faith statement, “No, this is not the son of sorrow, this is the son of the right hand of God.” What a wonderful promise. We are sons and daughters of the right hand of Jesus. He will not let His sons and daughters down. If His sons and daughters stay connected in faith with Him, we will not lose the battle although it might seem like we are losing the battle here, the overall picture is victory. To the seeing eye, when Christ died on that cross it seemed like all was lost to an unbelieving world, but the chosen ones who saw the resurrected Christ came to realize everything that Christ preached and taught up to that point came true. It was not a questionable anymore, it was a fact! They saw Him sail off into the blue with the promise that He would come again. When we die and leave this body, it is no longer the vessel that contains His Spirit and our souls. Eventually we will get a new body and that new body will still have the same promise to go out throughout eternity with and wherever Christ is present, we will be seated at His right hand because through Him, He has given us the power, the strength and the authority. That is why Ephesians 6:10 says He empowered us with His strength, might and force. Through the suit of armor that God prepared for us, we are given the same promises that were given to Him by God the Father with the promise that God the Father gave if He remained faithful and carried out His commission that only He could have done. We are given the same promise through the Son and we will sit there some day, just remain faithful.

As we march through and look at Jacob's and Moses' blessings for Benjamin, go to Genesis 49:27. Not only is this a promise to be seated with Christ someday if we remain faithful, we are also given additional promises.

“Benjamin shall raven [taraph in the Hebrew] as a wolf: in the morning he shall devour the prey, and at night he shall divide the spoil.”

Wolves are persistent. On occasion on the Discovery channel, the Animal Planet, or whatever

animal show, you will see how wolves run in packs, how they hunt, their social structure, but the one thing that comes again and again through those programs is wolves are persistent and they move quickly when they are on the hunt. Christ is asking no different from us. He is asking us when we are fighting our spiritual enemies to be persistent and not to give up at the first obstacle or problem. Stay persistent and realize you must be ready in and out of season at a second's notice to do battle with a spiritual enemy.

I have a ten-second rule around me that everybody practices. It comes down to three seconds. On occasion we find it kind of humorous because it only takes three seconds for something to go wrong. Things that will fall apart that you would not even believe could happen in such a rapid pace to cause aggravation or trouble. So, I tell everybody to be ready to deal with it within three seconds. You do not have to have the answers in three seconds, but you have to have an attitude that it is time to energize the spiritual armor that we have on because there is bleep on the horizon and it is heading our way. We do not have persistent Christians or Christians who are like Minutemen that need to go to battle in a minute's notice. We have Christians running around trying to find their comfort zones always trying to make life feel good for them. You have never been promised that through God's Word. It is false doctrine.

We are to have the same attitude as wolves. *Taraph* in the Hebrew has two different meanings. It has more meanings than that, but the two that really stand out are *to tear the enemies apart* and it also means *to provide food*. In this case, wolves that raven, ***“Benjamin shall raven as a wolf:”*** meaning Benjamin shall provide food or feed. Think about it folks. I want to go slowly enough so it sinks in. Literally it should read, ***“Benjamin shall feed as wolves: in the morning he shall devour the prey, [Or the enemies. He shall tear apart the enemies.] and at night he shall divide the spoil.”***

I know tearing apart the enemy and providing spiritual food is what is being said here. When you wear the breastplate, righteousness has a lot of different looks. One of its looks is going after the spiritual enemy when Christ says you are in the attack mode and even though you are fighting the spiritual enemy on a daily, weekly, monthly basis, or whatever you are in, you also have the responsibility to feed. For example, look at the Apostle Paul, he was a Benjaminite. How ironic that the Apostle Paul was a Benjaminite from the tribe of Benjamin. He conquered the gentile world, the Roman Empire with the Gospel of Jesus Christ. He is still doing that today with the letters that he penned, and I benefit and get rewarded, just as you will, for declaring that same message. We are to tear apart the spiritual enemy and feed or provide food to others in the same day literally. Think about it! You fight on one hand and provide the Gospel in the other. Is that not what the Christian life is all about? I do not know what you are being taught, but my Bible declares we are in a spiritual war and in that spiritual war we must stay connected to the vine. We also must keep providing spiritual food, God's Word, to the spiritually lost.

I have been trying to emphasize that point into you now for some time. As I said before this teaching, you have become spiritually lazy and only concerned about your relationship with God. That is where it starts, and you have to be connected to the vine and I will keep saying it over and over again. God has a commission for you and that commission is to not only keep fighting the spiritual fight, but also be an instrument so spiritual food can be provided to someone else, whether you are getting out in point and preaching it, or your participation in a ministry doing

that job and carries out that commission. If you like to give testimony, then give your testimony, and like I said unless you are willing to spend the hundreds and thousands of hours necessary to bring that saint closer and closer to completion, you cannot do it. You were not called or chosen to do it, but you can direct them to someone or some ministry that can, and you will get all the benefits and rewards from it in eternity. That is a win-win plan.

Here ***“Benjamin shall raven [shall tear the enemies apart literally] as a wolf: in the morning he shall devour the prey, and at night he shall divide the spoil.”***

In other words, he will be fighting and feeding. What we need now more than ever is spiritual fighters feeding the Word of God to the spiritually lost. How more important in these last days is that commission, and here it is an attribute of what righteousness looks like. I am saying that righteousness means I must be involved in a spiritual fight and provide spiritual food, among other things. Just like the fruit of the Spirit has many different attributes about it, righteousness does too. Actually even more than the spiritual fruit that is listed in Galatians 5:22-23 and other passages such as Ephesians, but in that commission or assignment, God reminds us through Christ that if we are willing participants, willing soldiers of Jesus Christ, willing ***hagios*** saints to be used bodily and also by giving, that we too can also be called sons and daughters, the beloved of the Lord.

It is a promise and blessing given to Benjamin through Moses' blessing in Deuteronomy 33:12 as Moses blesses the tribes of Israel.

“And of Benjamin he said, The beloved of the LORD shall dwell in safety by him; and the LORD shall cover him all the day long, and he shall dwell between his shoulders.”

Benjamin was called the beloved of the Lord. He had a special place in God's heart, just as you and I have a special place in God's heart if we have this breastplate on and we keep trusting in the blood of Jesus Christ and in God's Word. The Lord was the protector of the tribe of Benjamin. When we have God's suit of armor on, He will be our protector through that suit just as He was for the tribe of Benjamin. That is why the tribe of Benjamin won so many battles in the Old Testament. I do not have time to go through the history tonight. Do the history work yourself. For instance, Saul was from the tribe of Benjamin and he won many battles, but eventually just like any other tribe, they fell away. They won many battles and that promise was carried out through history, but this had bigger implications than just those physical battles. It also has implications and symbolizes the spiritual battle that we face. If we keep wearing the armor, we will not see defeat as the physical tribes did. We will see victory after victory. You will have victories where you do not even think you have victories when fighting those battles. You think you are still fighting the battle not even realizing the victories you had along the way because you cannot see the unseen forces, but Christ does, and He is dealing with them. You must start trusting in that.

Benjamin, the beloved of the Lord and has a special place in God's heart. It is a protector of the tribe of Benjamin. As we wear the breastplate, He is our protector. The beauty of this verse is God carried them all day long providing shelter from all the dangers because he dwelt between God's shoulders. He is protected and carried all day long because he is carried by God. What a

promise we have that we are covered by the blood of Christ. When we faith in Him, He is our protector and He will carry us through no matter what we are facing. God carried him and held him up; Christ will carry us and hold us up. Remember, it is not in our strength that we accomplish victory. We are tapping into Christ's strength to win the battle and eventually the war.

We are the beloved of the Lord. We are the sons and daughters of His right hand. We are a special treasure in His eyes because His Son has paid the highest price possible to redeem us and because He is constantly with us, we can claim and faith that no matter what valley we walk through, even if it is a valley of death, as Psalms 23 states, we will fear no evil because as Hebrews states, He has promised never to leave us nor forsake us. We just have to keep on conquering our spiritual enemies to share the plunder and the spoils with the other saints. He will carry us and protect us if we are willing to be spiritual warriors against a spiritual enemy to spiritually feed other saints.

I don't know if you remember how I started the first message on the ruby stone with Reuben's name etched on the stone. Remember I said that the message has not changed:

1. Few are chosen to carry out God's will. God's will is denying yourself and taking up the cross. Taking up the cross is not about your own personal afflictions. There are other passages to cover that. Taking up the cross as Jesus intended it to mean was taking up the commission. Believe me, at times you will feel like you are carrying a heavy load and a heavy cross. Deny yourself, take up your cross and following Jesus.
2. Few are chosen to engage in spiritual warfare. I have been declaring this now since the summer of 2008.
3. Few are chosen to carry out the Great Commission.

What a special honor and privilege that we have to wear the armor that Christ has made for us. What a special privilege to be a high polished stone; a stone just like the first stone and the last stone covered by the blood of Jesus Christ. If we overcome just as Christ is sitting on the right hand of the Father, we will sit at the right hand of Christ. He has given us power and authority and He will strengthen us to overcome. That is a promise!

Go back to the first message on the tribe on that stone. Remember I had you declare at the end of that message *behold, the Son of the living God is in me*. Satan sees that declaration at the beginning when he looks at the first stone and he sees *behold, the Son of the living God is in me* on the last stone. All the promises and all the blessings that we share in because that were given to the tribes of Israel, the sons of Jacob, are now worn on the breastplate not only in the Old Testament but the unseen spiritual breastplate that is formed and designed specifically for us is still benefiting us from the promises of old. Hopefully you can see that Satan is no match for Jesus Christ. He knows his place. That is why he tries to come against us to destroy our connection with Christ because he knows the benefits you will receive if you keep that connection. He knows if you completely understand what this breastplate symbolizes that he will not have a chance against you or have an opening if we do not allow it. The only way we allow it is if we create the disconnection with the vine where the old man's flesh is once again exposed for what it is, trying to take over and doing things its own way and not letting Christ take over to have His way with our lives the way He sees fit, not what we want.

Satan does not want you to understand what these breastplate stones are. Satan does not want you to understand what the names of the tribes on these stones symbolize and mean. He wants you to completely be in the dark about it because his whole goal is to keep you in enough darkness, so you lose faith after you lose enough battles. I am telling you that you are winning battles you do not even see fought in the heavenlies on your behalf and we have a promise because we are the sons and daughters of the Living God that dwells in us and we too someday will sit at the right hand of Jesus who is sitting at the right hand of God because we are covered by the blood. Throughout eternity, this blood will be a reminder of the price Christ paid for us to give us that hope and everlasting salvation through Him. That is why jasper is the first foundational stone in the New Jerusalem.

We stand as sons and daughters of the Living God on the blood of Jesus Christ. We are the beloved of the Lord, we are Christ's right hand and He will not leave us empty handed, but will give us the power, the strength and the authority to overcome whatever the spiritual enemy throws our way. I am trusting on that now more than ever. I am claiming all the promises and benefits that these stones and names on the breastplate symbolize and define throughout scripture from Genesis to Revelation. Hopefully you will do the same.

I recommend on occasion that you take one of these messages and stop to remind yourself long enough by reviewing these messages about what armor we have that Christ has designed for us. How can we lose if we stay connected? Losing is not a possibility if you stay connected. Victory in Jesus will be the outcome. He went for us and He went through it for our benefit. Now we must stay personally connected with Him and to the commission that He wants us to carry out so we too can be called the beloved of the Lord, sons and daughters of the Living God because Christ is in us.

What a wonderful way to end this teaching on the breastplate; with the reminder that Christ is the first and the last. That is why in Revelation 14 the two stones jasper and sardius are there at the throne. That is why jasper is the first foundational stone to remind us of the blood atonement. We are Christ's special treasures and we are now His right hand to complete the mission just as Paul was in a hostile Roman Empire world to complete the mission.

Let me know if you will complete it with me and this ministry because there is a lot of work to do and a lot to accomplish. I guarantee in faith we shall overcome; we shall have victory and our seat will be the best seat in the house.

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Please email us at email@teachingfaith.com if this has encouraged and strengthened your faith.

In 2 Corinthians 9:7 it reads, “God loveth a cheerful giver.” The Greek word for cheerful is Hilaros which means when someone is prompt to do something, they are ready in mind, with a joyful heart. In the Septuagint it also means to cause to shine. Today I am looking for Hilaros Givers who are ready and full of joy for the opportunity to cause others to shine by hearing, learning, and growing in God's Word.

Join with us today and participate as a Hilaros Giver. If you wish to participate use the following link: <http://www.teachingfaith.com/giving>

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Write us at

Faith Cometh By Hearing Ministries

539 W Commerce St #577

Dallas, Tx 75208