



# SPIRITUAL WARFARE

Volume 7

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# The Breastplate of Righteousness

## An Overview

In Ephesians 6:14 Paul writes, “*Stand therefore, having your loins girt about with truth, and having on the breastplate of righteousness [dekiosuna in the Greek].*” In previous messages on this subject, *the truth* is *what is true in the matter under consideration*. Many Christians want to place everything else as the truth, and there are plenty of other areas with the opportunity to talk about the Gospel, including the next verse. But that's not what Paul was referring to here in this verse. He was referring to *the truth, the matter under consideration*, which was *spiritual warfare*, and there is no better message than the breastplate of righteousness to start this mini-series within this series. This has been a very confused subject throughout history, but by the time I am done, you will hopefully have a better understanding of what type of righteousness God is referring to in these verses.

First, I chose six books to evaluate concerning the breastplate. I will keep the authors names and book titles anonymous. I'll just read the basic information and then move from book to book. Let's begin.

***“The breastplate of righteousness. This piece of armor covered the front of the soldier's body, from the neck to the upper part of the thighs. It protected the vital organs.”***

This's true; however, I believe Paul had one purpose, even though he used two different examples that can be applied in describing this full Christian armor that we are to put on. One, and I've said this before, Paul was a prisoner more times than I'm sure he liked. He saw what the soldiers wore. He saw their uniforms and the kind of weapons they used, from swords to shields to helmets. So, we can use the times Paul lived in as reference points. However, as we go further into this armor, I want to point out the spiritual aspect of all the elements listed here in God's armor. I believe Paul went beyond what he could see the soldiers wearing from the knowledge he obtained from Christ Himself. And because Paul was also a student of the Old Testament, he knew what righteousness in the spiritual sense symbolized. As a result, I don't view the breastplate like most authors do. Yes, Paul saw soldiers and was trying to identify with the people in his life, but that's not all Paul did. There was a deeper meaning than what Paul saw, and he related that poetic knowledge from God using those examples. For instance, he used the soldiers and their uniforms to make his point, but Paul was not that shallow. He was much deeper than that. Just read his letters to see how Paul goes beyond what he could see to make his point. You will never really understand this breastplate of righteousness if you don't understand what it means in the Old Testament, where I believe Paul drew from to make the point.

Spiritual warfare has been around from day one. Spiritual warfare with these evil forces is not something that was created in the New Testament, it's been here since Adam and Eve sinned. Even before Adam and Eve sinned there was spiritual warfare, but because of their sin, it intensified because Satan and his minions are not just dealing with one or two characters any longer. They have dealt with billions of people throughout the ages. That's why the Bible tells us wide is the passageway leading to destruction, but narrow is the way leading to God; to Christ

Himself. So even though Paul could see the soldiers and identify with them and make a comparison in the material sense about what a Christian should wear spiritually, I'm saying he goes deeper than that. He truly understood what Christ's message was and what Christ revealed to him, (in my opinion) in his training period after he was blinded and then could see. Paul could also draw information from the Old Testament, and you might not know that. So, as I read from these authors, they all focus in on the Roman soldier's uniform because that's the comparison and the only comparison Paul was making to poetically say what a soldier of Jesus Christ should wear in a spiritual sense. To continue with this author, we read,

***“The breastplate of righteousness. This piece of armor covered the front of the soldier's body, from the neck to the upper part of the thighs. It protected the vital organs. I believe that Paul is referring here to the righteousness of Christ which we receive when we trust Him. [Okay.] Satan is an accuser, and he attacks us by reminding us of our sins. It is through faith in Christ that we have his righteousness imputed to us, put to our account. [No problem with that at all.] It is important to make a distinction between imputed and imparted righteousness. When a sinner trusts Christ and is born again, the very righteousness of Christ is put to his account, and this never changes.”***

I do have a problem where this author wrote, ***“When a sinner trusts Christ and is born again, the very righteousness of Christ is put to his account, and this never changes.”*** It can change. Start living a life of unbelief, start living a life opposite of trusting Jesus for your salvation. Do you think God's righteousness will never change and never leave you? Do you think you won't grieve the Holy Spirit? Faith in Jesus redemptive work is how you get it in the first place! If I gave you the name of this author you would say, “What! How could he say that?”

***“As the believer walks with the Lord and yields to the Spirit, the righteousness of Christ is imparted to him and becomes more like Christ.”***

I'm not going to get into the difference between imputed and imparted righteousness. I think they made a whole big deal out of nothing. It is just more fancy terminology that tries to confuse the Christian believer.

***“Every believer should know the meaning of the word ‘justification.’ It is the gracious act of God whereby he declares the believing sinner righteous through the merits of Jesus Christ. Justification never changes. Once God has declared you righteous, your standing before him is settled for eternity.”***

Again, no, it's not, ***“once God has declared you righteous,”*** or reconciled back to Him. Once again, continuing trust and confidence what Christ did for us is what we must have to keep God's righteousness imputed into our lives or it will change.

***“However, your state- your walk- is quite another matter. This changes as we yield to the Spirit and obey the Word. It is worth noting that the breastplate covers the heart, which suggests that our feelings ought to be protected by Christ's righteousness.”***

You'll find that several of these authors are more concerned about emotions and feelings. If this was true, then why is this breastplate even in Ephesians 6:14? It's there to protect us when we are physically attacked, and the devil works on our conscience with guilt that we are falling short and not living up to God's standard. We will never live up to God's standard; I will never live up to God's standard. It is impossible; therefore, the breastplate of righteousness is there to protect us from the onslaught of the devil's accusations that brings us down and makes us feel unworthy to be a child of God. This book falls short in describing and defining what the breastplate of righteousness is.

You must understand all the benefits of righteousness, and there are many benefits that Christ allows us to participate in along with Him. My whole goal in these next few weeks is to give you a better understanding of what Christ has done for us, why it was important for Him to step in, and it's not just for the shedding of blood for the remission of sin, without which there is no hope. You have heard me preach on it and you have probably heard others preach on laying up your treasures in heaven. There are rewards that come by laying those treasures up in heaven. In the chapters to come, I will make clear all the wonderful benefits here and now that we have once we understand what righteousness is. At the same time, I don't think anyone can completely explain it because it is that overwhelming of a subject, but in the Old and New Testaments, Christ gives us a better picture of what those benefits are if you have eyes to see and ears to hear. That's probably the most important key point up to now, and once you understand and see for yourself in God's Word what they are, you'll say, "Sign me up. I cannot believe I did not understand this before, but I do not want to miss out on any of the benefits that I can receive through Christ Jesus."

***"It is worth noting that the breastplate covers the heart, which suggests that our feelings ought to be protected by Christ's righteousness. Because we know we have been accepted by God and are righteous in Jesus Christ, we do not fear or fret when Satan throws his accusations at us. Often Satan will use people- including Christians- to slander and accuse us; and we are tempted to fight back. But these 'fiery darts' must not be allowed to penetrate and hit the vital organs. Rest on the finished work of Christ; realize that you are 'accepted in the beloved'; and know that God's righteousness, imputed to you, will never be removed."***

And that's all. With this author there were no shortcuts. That is all he says about the breastplate, and it found me wanting. Moving on to the next one we read,

***"Next, we come to the breastplate of righteousness. The breastplate, of course, protected the vital organs- the heart, the lungs, the pancreas, and the liver. The ancients believed this part of the body to be the seat of emotions. So we speak of sorrow as being 'brokenhearted,' or we use the term 'bowels of mercy' as a way of describing compassion. Therefore, the breastplate is to protect us in the realm of our emotions. [Back to the emotions again.] Notice it is the breastplate of righteousness. Satan quite often attacks our emotions in regard to righteousness."***

I wish I could see your faces to see if you can remember what I've been saying. Remember I told you that most authors and scholars of God's Word place these weapons and the definition of them as defensive weapons? Yes, they can be used as defensive weapons, but I'm telling you that parts

of the spiritual armor are not *just* defensive weapons. Each one of these weapons are offensive weapons. This breastplate of righteousness is a signpost, a billboard for lack of better words, announcing to Satan what kind of energized being we are now through Christ. Satan will not walk over our lives. He will not be victorious if we have as our banner this breastplate of righteousness as a signpost sending a message to him: you can come at us, but we will put on one hell of a fight through Christ Jesus by applying what He has given to us in His Word, listed here as part of the armor. I know I'm speaking in a lot of generalities right now, but I will get into detail on everything I'm saying.

***“When condemnation would overwhelm us, an understanding the doctrine of the imputed righteousness of Christ serves as our first line of defence. That knowledge is obtained through the Scriptures.***

***Paul was primarily referring to Christ's imputed righteousness when he spoke of being clad with the breastplate of righteousness. In another sense, putting on the breastplate of righteousness refers to the practice of righteousness. [‘The practice of righteousness’ should be the first clue there is something wrong with that.] Holy living makes it a lot more difficult for the devil to trip us up.”***

The word holiness is thrown around so liberally by author after author. First, I don't think they know what it really is. They throw it around so liberally, almost like a guilt stick, pounding you, and if you don't live your life as a holy servant unto God somehow you are going to fall short and the devil will have his way with you. When I see authors use the words *holiness* or *holy* in print, I almost want to cringe every time. It takes a lot more than that, but many try to define this in one or two sentences or maybe a paragraph or two at the most to define the things of God's Word in these 66 books. However, in the Bible we are just given a glimpse of what we need to concentrate on to get us home. I'm trusting that when we get there that our minds will be opened to all the vast knowledge and wonderful riches that God has for us. I believe our minds will continuously be expanding throughout eternity. I know I'm jumping all over the place, but I cannot help myself when I read these things and express the opinions that I have based on God's Word and to come against these kinds of authors who try to explain away things without really explaining anything!

***“In another sense, putting on the breastplate of righteousness refers to the practice of righteousness. Holy living makes it a lot more difficult for the devil to trip us up. [Actually, live holy all you want and see how the devil trips you up even further than you ever imagined.] Living right, doing good, and obeying God's commands will be a sure protection against the attacks of the enemy.”***

I have no problem with obeying God's commands, but living right and doing good is back to some kind of formula of what to do and what not to do; a system of works to produce holiness and to energize this breastplate of righteousness, but that's not what God's Word says, so, let's move on to the next author.

***“Heart righteousness makes head righteousness and life righteousness.”***

That sounds good when you are putting a sentence together, but what the heck does that mean? I

can give you a simple definition or explanation of what it means, but I would have to do more work explaining that particular sentence than it is worth.

***“We cannot fight without heart righteousness.... The ‘breastplate of righteousness’ protects the heart and makes us feel right. The old heart cannot be made right by the most skillful craftsman or by the most correct rituals. [I agree.] No tinkering on the old heart can make it right. It is as hard as a stone and as crooked as the Jordan. No melting can make it soft, and no human effort can make it straight. We need a new heart, soft as flesh and washed whiter than snow in the blood of Christ. A piece of Christ's heart- perfect, right, pure, and good- is what is needed.”***

Again, it all sounds good, but what does it mean? Here is another author,

***“A Roman breastplate was usually made of bronze, or, if you were a more affluent soldier, chain mail.”***

There you go. They only compare what they believe Paul was identifying with, what he was seeing every day of his life as he was walking through the streets or as a prisoner in the Roman system. Once again, the armor is much more than what Paul saw when he was penning these verses in the letter to the Ephesians. It goes a lot deeper than just making the comparison about the soldiers wore and what a Christian soldier should wear.

***“A Roman breastplate was usually made of bronze, or, if you were a more affluent soldier, chain mail. It covered the midsection and then some, from just below the neck to the thighs. And they called it a heart protector- for obvious reasons. It guarded the vital organ that keeps us alive.***

***That’s what Paul tells us to put on after we’ve girded ourselves up in the belt of truth. The next piece of equipment is the heart protector- the breastplate of righteousness. No one would dare to go into battle without it.***

***What exactly does righteousness mean? You may be tempted to give up if you think it means you have to become perfect before you can be protected, but don’t give up just yet. That’s not what this is about. The word righteousness in Ephesians 6:14 means ‘uprightness, right living....’”***

I could accept *uprightness* even though it is incomplete, but *right living*? Once again, it is saying that it's something that we could accomplish, but we can't. Only the Spirit implanted in us can accomplish it, and all our best efforts will fall short.

***“...uprightness, right living, integrity in one’s lifestyle and character.’ [Hogwash.] It is a matter of conforming our will to God's will. It is rooted in the objective righteousness that we already possess and our standing before God through Christ's work. That righteousness cannot be taken away. It is complete because we are in Christ and he is in us. But while the righteousness of this verse flows out of the objective reality, this is really the practical application of truth to our lives. In other words, the righteousness referred to here is submitting to the lordship of Christ. Put simply, it is putting into practice what you know is right.***

***That's why the belt of truth came first. We have to have that. It is fundamental. Now that we have it, though, we need to apply it. That's what righteousness is. It is putting into practice what God has told us through his word, his community, and his worship."***

If that is true, we would fail every day. Even though I might try to apply some of the principles of God's Word, especially when it comes to telling the truth, for instance, it's going to make me about as righteous as a turnip, because anything that implies that my efforts produce righteousness is going to fall short and it's not from God's Word. That's why most of these authors don't have a clue about what the breastplate of righteousness is. There is nothing that I can develop with my own efforts and understanding to make me a better person. You may think I am against being a better person. I am not, but I think God's Word changes a person and I think faith changes a person for the better. Let faith in God's Word change the person, not our efforts, because most of the time we're influenced by a material world that has more impact on our conscious and subconscious than we realize. When you start intertwining the two together, what looks like it is coming from God's Word is just adopting what the material world says and putting religious tones to it. We fall short in trying to live a life that is right thinking and believe it give us God's righteousness. Listen to this:

***"We can immerse ourselves in Scripture and spiritual fellowship all we want to, but if those things don't transform the way we live, they are practically useless. When God works his truth into our hearts, we are called to live it out 24/7."***

Okay, enough of that one. I think you get the picture but let me read one more.

***"The second piece of the Roman soldier's equipment is his breastplate; which Paul compares to righteousness. Like truth, righteousness can be taken in two ways. It can refer to what in theology is called imputed righteousness, the righteousness of Jesus Christ reckoned to a Christian's account that enables him to stand before God. Or it can refer to specific acts of righteousness or personal holiness. As we might say, if I had to choose between the two possible meanings of righteousness in this passage, I think I would pick the second for this reason: [The second being acts of righteousness, personal holiness.] In this context Paul is urging those who already are Christians to 'put on' God's armor. If they are Christians, they have already been clothed with God's righteousness in the first sense. Therefore, the only thing they can put on is practical holiness expressed in righteous thoughts and deeds. [This is only more things that we control instead of the Spirit.] I think here of Jesus' words when he said in reference to Satan, 'The prince of this world is coming and has no hold on me' (John 14:30). I have heard it said that although Satan could find no sin in Christ on which to take hold, he can latch onto plenty in us. That might be true. We are simple. But what Paul is saying here is that this should not be. We should not give Satan handles to grasp easily. Instead, we must live righteously as Job did, so Satan and everyone else can see that we are God's true children and his faithful servants."***

The analogy that he is making here between Job and righteousness breaks down. Job was not very righteous when that force field, that shield, surrounding him where Satan couldn't touch him, broke down or was removed by God. Eventually God had to come and straighten him out. Job wasn't very righteous. I probably wouldn't be either, suffering what he suffered, having



everything and losing everything; family, money, too sick to even live. I probably would not be very righteous at all, so I am not pointing fingers here. This author is saying, ***“what Paul is saying here is that this should not be. We should not give Satan handles to grasp easily.”*** First, Satan didn't have a handle on Job's life at all while the shield was up, so this is a bad analogy. ***“Instead, we must live righteously, as Job did, so Satan and everyone else can see that we are God's true children and his faithful servants.”***

Do you see why I get so aggravated? I have book after book, and they all say the same thing and gets us no closer to understanding what the breastplate of righteousness is. So, let us return to Ephesians 6:14 where Paul writes,

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

Righteousness is *dekiosuna* in the Greek with a very short definition, *right with God*. We only become right with God through Jesus Christ. It is *His* righteousness that puts us back on the right path with God and being right with God through Jesus Christ is the only way of even obtaining that type of righteousness. God's judgment for us was placed on Jesus, which now allows God's righteousness to flow back to us through the Holy Spirit. Through Jesus we are reconciled back to the Father. **There is no other way.** That judgment was for us, but Christ stood in for us and God put that judgment on His Son, so now we are reconciled back to the Father. Now His righteousness can flow back to us through the Holy Spirit which puts us in a position of reconciliation with God once again. There is no shortcut and there is no other explanation. That is the only explanation. Go to Philippians 3:7. This is where Paul is counting all gain as loss, meaning all the things that he ever achieved really were worthless to him if he lost Christ. Paul writes,

***“But what things were gain to me, those I counted loss for Christ. Yea doubtless, and I count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord: for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and do count them but dung, that I may win Christ, [All those material things which the world so values and wants to get their hands on and accumulate are considered dung.] And be found in him, not having mine own righteousness....”***

Paul spends a lot of time, especially in the Romans' letter, describing what his own righteousness would be, or our own righteousness if we follow our own way in how we perceive things. In this case, what he was talking about was how we react to, apply, and live out the Mosaic Law, but we can never even come close to living that Mosaic Law; no one ever has except Christ. Only He fulfilled every jot and tittle of it.

Some Jewish scholars say there were 611 commandments; others say there were 613 commandments in the Mosaic Law. Some include the Ten Commandments, some do not. It doesn't really surprise me, but whatever number they come up with, it is always around 600. Only Christ Jesus fulfilled the law. Of all the 613 laws, 365 have negative restrictions, things that you could not do, and 248 laws had positive commands, things that you should do. There is a new fad in Christian foolishness going around today that we should still try to apply the law.

Listen to the most famous Christian broadcasting channel and occasionally they have some of their talking heads saying that the law is not abandoned in the New Testament. My friend, the law is dead. The only law we live now is faith and love, because Christ commanded it in John 15 — it's about love, about faith, and what our hope is in. Read it for yourself and then try to live by those 613 commandments. I'll bet if I were to ask, there's not a single person, including myself, who could recite even 50 of those commandments. Thank God we are no longer commanded to keep the law. I don't let the devil beat me over the head that I didn't do this just right or that just right. I say, "Get behind me Satan. I am covered by the blood of Jesus Christ." When I finish these messages, you will understand that your loins are girded, you will understand the truth that Paul was speaking about was spiritual warfare, and how important this breastplate is as a banner that goes before us as an offensive weapon to send a message.

I had one message come in that said: ***"As you were reading, I was looking closer at the armor and concluding that the only true offensive weapon listed was the sword. The others are used in conjunction with the sword and shield and are used to assist and move the sword forward."***

No, they are not. They are all independent of each other for a purpose, but when combined all those weapons work together to make one mighty soldier of Jesus Christ who knows how to use each individual weapon for its purpose. Wait until you find out in the coming chapters what this breastplate symbolizes, then you will want one for yourself. To obtain it, however, you must put on Christ. If you want righteousness in your life, put on Christ. The short answer is put on Christ. Paul said it in his writing in Philippians 3:9, ***"And be found in him, not having mine own righteousness, which is of the law, but that which is through the faith of Christ, the righteousness which is of God by faith:"*** Having your own righteousness is like having Satan as your banner that goes before you. It is that simple. That's not the only place Paul says this. Go to II Corinthians 5:17. Here Paul writes,

***"Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away [including the Mosaic Law; the 613 commandments]; behold, all things are become new. And all things are of God, who hath reconciled us to himself by Jesus Christ, and hath given to us the ministry of reconciliation [to God.]; To wit, that God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself, not imputing their trespasses [Not imputing my sins and shortcomings to me any longer. He put that on Christ.] unto them; and hath committed unto us the word of reconciliation. [That is the promise.] Now then we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God did beseech you by us: we pray you in Christ's stead, be ye reconciled to God. For he hath made him [Christ] to be sin for us, who knew no sin [that is why He fulfilled every aspect of the law]; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him [in Christ]."***

As part of righteousness, in Ephesians 5:9, Paul writes about the fruit of the spirit, ***"(For the fruit of the Spirit is in all goodness and righteousness and truth;)"*** In the Greek, when translated correctly, goodness is *agathosune*; *generous giving*. And again, righteousness is *dekiosuna*; the same *dekiosuna* in the breastplate of righteousness, and righteousness is also an attribute or fruit of the Spirit. Furthermore, the word truth in this verse is the same word used in Ephesians 6:14 ***"having your girt about with truth"***, that is, the truth being *what is true in the matter under consideration*. However, this attribute of the fruit of the Spirit is *discernment*

meaning we discern what is true in the matter under consideration, which is God's Spirit in our life; the indwelling Spirit that is brought into our life because we are now a container where God's righteousness can dwell because of our faith in Him, His Son and His blood. God gives these attributes and gifts to those who are listening. For example, in Galatians 5:22, we see *generous giving*; we want to give, and nothing will stop us. So, the focus of these verses is righteousness, *dekiosuna*, and truth, *discerning what is true in the matter under consideration*.

Whether it is in your job, with your family, or with a decision about your future, you can ask God to energize that gift in you to direct your life and discern what matter is under consideration through the view of God's Word. It's a wonderful gift, and it is not only the truth of the Gospel we are talking about, it is the truth and discernment. In addition, righteousness is a fruit of the Spirit to prove what is acceptable unto the Lord and it is needed for generous giving. There are many phonies and 'prosperity doctrine' people to lead you astray, but once you give, you have given to the Lord, and whether the stick is crooked or straight, it will not matter. God sees the heart, your willingness, and hilarious way of giving knowing your intention in that gift was pleasing to Him because you handed it over in obedience. We need righteousness and discernment or how else will we prove what is acceptable to the Lord? It's important to understand Ephesians 6:14 and about the breastplate of righteousness. That is why I'm laying the foundation in this part the series about what righteousness God is looking for. It is not ours; it is Christ's righteousness that now indwells in us by faith and through faith in His Son.

With that, go to Romans 4, where we see what righteousness is and how we get it. First, it is imputed. We have read that over and over, but I do not impute righteousness. In a short definition, it is imputed by faith in God's Son; faith in what He did on that cross for our benefit. He will not leave us nor forsake us. But how did righteousness come or get imputed in the Old Testament? It is no different in the Old Testament than in the New Testament, and we have a glimpse here in Romans 4. Beginning in verse 1 we read,

***“What shall we say then that Abraham our father, as pertaining to the flesh, hath found? For if Abraham were justified by works, he hath whereof to glory; but not before God.”***

In other words, if it was all about works and doing good deeds, Abraham would not need God; He could boast in himself.

***“For what saith the Scripture? Abraham believed [really *pisteuo*- trust and confidence in] God, and it was counted unto him for righteousness.”***

It doesn't matter if you lived in Abraham's day or today, if you want God's righteousness, you must trust Him, you must believe that He is not a man to lie but will carry out His word; and what He says is as good as done. Skipping to verse 20 we read,

***He staggered [or wavered] not at the promise of God through unbelief [the opposite of faith]; but was strong in faith, giving glory to God; And being fully persuaded that, what he had promised, he was able also to perform. [What God said would come to pass.] And therefore it was imputed to him for righteousness.***

*Now it was not written for his sake alone, that it was imputed to him* [it does not just apply to the past];

*But for us also, to whom it shall be imputed, if we [not believe, but] faith on him that raised up Jesus our Lord from the dead;*

*Who was delivered for our offenses, and was raised again for our justification.”*

Our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ, was raised up from the dead for our benefit which now gives us the right to be reconciled back to the Father to be right with Him, and God now looking at us through Jesus cannot say no.

How are we imputed with righteousness through faith in Jesus and His Word? Don't doubt God and His Word, don't stagger, don't waver, and don't live life in a state of constant unbelief. Live in a trusting state so therefore you too can be imputed with God's righteousness. Without God's righteousness, there is no container that can hold the Holy Spirit. That is a must. It is a requirement. Faith gives us God's righteousness and God's righteousness now allows us to be a container for the Holy Spirit to carry out His will, denying ourselves, taking up our cross, and following Jesus.

Many of the authors I shared with you referred to Isaiah 59, so let's look at it. Isaiah is reproofing Israel on God's behalf, but this can also be applied to our individual lives, just as when I taught from Isaiah 41:10, ***“Fear not, I will help thee.”*** Yes, Isaiah is talking to Israel, but we can also apply this to our own personal life. It begins in verse 1,

***“Behold, the LORD'S hand is not shortened, that it cannot save; neither his ear heavy, that it cannot hear:***

***But your iniquities have separated between you and your God, and your sins have hid his face from you, that he will not hear.”***

Skipping to verse 8, ***“The way of peace they know not: and there is no judgment in their goings: they have made them crooked paths; whosoever goeth therein shall not know peace. Therefore is judgment far from us, neither doth justice overtake us: we wait for light, but behold obscurity; for brightness, but we walk in darkness.”***

Now go to verse 12, ***“For our transgressions are multiplied before thee, and our sins testify against us: for our transgressions are with us; and as for our iniquities, we know them; In transgressing and lying against the LORD, and departing away from our God, speaking oppression and revolt, conceiving and uttering from the heart words of falsehood. And judgment is turned away backward, and justice standeth afar off: for truth is fallen in the street, and equity cannot enter.”***

This sounds like a miserable state to be in, but this was the state of Israel at the time. And today, people walk around in that same state until they understand and trust in the blood of Jesus Christ in their lives.

Verse 15 continues, ***“Yea, truth faileth; and he that departeth from evil maketh himself a prey: and the LORD saw it, and it displeased him that there was no judgment.***

***And he saw that there was no man, and wondered that there was no intercessor: therefore his arm brought salvation unto him [This is his presentation of Jesus that was still yet to come]; and his righteousness, it sustained him.***

There is no problem with that if you want to apply that part to Ephesians 6:14, but the following is where a lot of scholars take this verse and misapply it. In verse 17 there are two parts. The first advent and the second advent, which has not yet happened. It tells us,

***“For he put on righteousness as a breastplate, [See the connection there?] and an helmet of salvation upon his head [That is still yet to come in the Ephesians' teaching, but now draw a line; that is the first advent, and here comes the second.]; and he put on the garments of vengeance for clothing, and was clad with zeal as a cloak.”***

That has not yet happened, but it will happen. So, verses 16 and 17 are talking about someone who will bring salvation and his righteousness shall sustain us. That is true and that is what happened when Jesus Christ came, and now through Him we can participate by enjoying and applying all the benefits of that righteousness that are freely given to us. It is also part of what comes with grace. Grace is unmerited favor. It is nothing we deserve or can earn; it is given to us as a free gift. I'm sure most of you understand that grace is given to us as a free gift, but with that free gift comes the benefit of righteousness. As we move forward in this study, I want to explore what those benefits of righteousness are that are given to us. We must be aware of them and know how to apply them, and when you know how to apply them and wear them, you will be a banner for the Lord. Have you ever seen an old movie and noticed how the big flags or banners go before the army announcing who and what they are? For us, once we know how to apply the breastplate of righteousness, we announce to the devil and the unseen world what we are. The world will never understand, but the unseen world understands everything about this spiritual fight. With God's banner, we announce to them that although they may be mighty and many, our God is greater, we carry the banner of righteousness before us, and He will defeat them.

This verse is taken out of context constantly, ***“For he put on righteousness as a breastplate,”*** because it has nothing to do with Ephesians 6:14. Furthermore, Paul uses the armor imagery in Ephesians 6, but Isaiah uses it in a significantly different way than Paul. Paul does not speak of God or Jesus wearing the armor, but of God's people wearing the armor. In Isaiah Jesus is wearing the armor in His first advent, but Paul was not describing Jesus in Ephesians 6:14. Paul says we are to put on Christ, there is no doubt. However, His Father had a purpose for Christ in His first advent and He still has not fulfilled the second purpose in the Second Advent. Paul was describing something different. Again, Paul doesn't speak of Jesus wearing the armor, but of God's people wearing the armor. Ephesians is not found in Isaiah. Also, there are two words used in the Old Testament for breastplate. The first one is ***shiryown***, which is a breastplate like full-body armor and the word is used at different times in the Old Testament. One of the more popular places that you probably will remember in your own studies and messages that you have heard is when Saul tried to put on his armor on David, but David could never wear Saul's armor. The breastplate of righteousness in the Old Testament is an entirely different word with different implications; that is ***shiryown***.

Now I want to read from the Apocrypha from the Wisdom of Solomon, which was not written by

Solomon, by the way. Many believe the Apocrypha should be in the Bible. Originally it was, but it was taken out, including the earlier manuscripts going back to 300 and 400 AD. The Wisdom of Solomon was written sometime around 250 BC probably in Alexandria, and we will probably never know who the original author was, because all those records were most likely destroyed. People still argue about who could have written it, but that's not the subject matter. Tonight, I want to point out where the Wisdom of Solomon might have been referenced by Paul. Remember, Paul was a scholar trained in every way in the Torah, all the Mosaic Law, and in books that were written outside of that law, including the Wisdom of Solomon. And the author of this book may have drawn from the Wisdom of Solomon 5: 15-20. This is the King James translation; see if this doesn't sound familiar to you,

***“But the righteous live for evermore; their reward is also with the Lord, and the care of them is with the most High.***

***Therefore shall they receive a glorious kingdom, and a beautiful crown from the Lord's hand: for with his right hand shall he cover them, and with his arm shall he protect them.***

***He shall take to him his jealousy for complete armour, and make the creature [us] his weapon for the revenge of his enemies. [We are weapons of God's righteousness.]***

***He shall put on righteousness as a breastplate, and true judgment instead of a helmet [which is still yet to come].”***

***“He shall take holiness for an invincible shield. [Speaking of the faith.]***

***His severe wrath shall he sharpen for a sword, and the world [a better word is universe] shall fight with him against the unwise.”***

Some scholars think Paul was drawing from the Wisdom of Solomon in some of the analogies and comparisons he used in Ephesians 6. Whether it was from the Wisdom of Solomon or some other source, whether it was hanging around Roman soldiers and trying to compare the two, that is fine. Maybe it was a combination of it all, but I contend where Paul drew most of his information was from the Old Testament, which I will go to in the next message.

For now, I want to end with some good news for those who still want to fight this good fight of faith as a good soldier of Jesus Christ. Isaiah is my favorite book in the Old Testament and chapter 41 is the foundational message of this ministry. In December 2005, I went through hell because of the havoc created in my life and the people around me. Go to Isaiah 59:1,

***“Behold, the LORD'S hand is not shortened, that it cannot save; neither his ear heavy, that it cannot hear:”***

Whatever you are facing, He can hear you. His hand will not be short in reaching you.

***“But your iniquities have separated between you and your God...”***

Don't let them. Let faith stand in the gap. Let faith in the blood of Jesus Christ take hold of your life and let no one convince you that your life of sin will keep you from it. You will keep on sinning, but in that process become more like Christ and keep on trusting in Him.

Isaiah 41:10 tells us, ***“Fear thou not; for I am with thee: be not dismayed; for I am thy God: I will strengthen thee; yea, I will help thee; yea, I will uphold thee with the right hand of my righteousness.”***

That's why it is important for us to understand what God's righteousness is. It is not defined in one or two sentences or even a paragraph. It is much deeper and has much more meaning to it with many benefits. Once we understand that, we can apply it to our lives thanking Jesus Christ for giving us the opportunity we have now to not only understand the verse, but to use it as a banner that goes before us in our daily life in this spiritual fight. He will be our right hand of righteousness. Verse 11 in Chapter 41 goes on to say,

***“Behold, all they that we incensed against thee shall be ashamed and confounded: they shall be as nothing; and they that strive with thee shall perish. Thou shalt seek them, and shalt not find them, even them that contended with thee: they that war against thee shall be as nothing, and as a thing of nought.”***

Now apply ***“they that war against thee”*** in a spiritual sense, and not just to the people we see here and now. As Paul explained it, we don't fight against flesh and blood, but we fight against principalities and powers, evil forces, fallen angels, and powerful beings. ***“... they that war against thee shall be as nothing, and as a thing of nought.”*** I have news for Satan and his army; with God on my side, with His right hand of His righteousness imputed in me, Satan and his minions shall be as nothing. Claim that today for yourself. Verse 13 continues,

***“For I the LORD thy God will hold thy right hand, saying unto thee, Fear not; I will help thee.”***

***“Fear not; I will help thee.”*** There is not a message I have not preached, there is not a message, a verse, or a chapter in this Book that doesn't have some type of spiritual warfare implication. I am training soldiers. I am making you aware of what the breastplate of righteousness and all the weapons listed that are part of the armory are to be used for and how to use them, not for fleshly purposes, but for the Spirit to be directed and guided by God to fulfil His purposes.

He is holding my right hand with His righteousness. He has extended His right hand with His righteousness holding on to me saying that we will be in a fight, but your enemies will be as nothing and as a thing of nought. I might go through hell here on earth, but I pity my enemies throughout eternity.

I have only just begun on this subject. In fact, I have barely even touched it. That is why there isn't just one or two explanations. Righteousness is a subject matter that has been neglected for centuries. It is simple to understand, and it is simple to understand how we are imputed with it, but it is made complicated with a smoke screen, so you don't receive true prosperity and all the benefits of God's righteousness that are available to you. I plan in the next chapters to reveal those benefits.

To be continued...





## Logion, Stoicheion and Gematria

Ephesians 6:14 tells us, “**Stand therefore, having your loins girt about with truth, and having on the breastplate of righteousness;**” Righteousness is *dikaioisune*, *right with God; being right with God through Jesus Christ*, which is the short definition. As I start revealing what this breastplate of righteousness consists of, I will lengthen that definition, but for now just know that is what it is. God's judgment for us was placed on His Son Jesus Christ which now allows God's righteousness to flow back to us through the Holy Spirit. It is through Jesus we are reconciled back to the Father.

In the last chapter I explained how we receive that righteousness. I took us back to Romans 4 that tells us it is not by the law, the 613 commandments, that we receive righteousness. It is by faith in His Son Jesus Christ; faith in the precious blood that He spilled and what it did for us to reconnect that relationship we have with the Father. I also showed that righteousness is one of the attributes of the fruit of the Spirit in Ephesians 5 by faith, not by our own works. Unfortunately, right now we have a church world full of self-made righteousness through things they do, that they call righteous acts. However, it falls short, because it is not God's Word. Instead, it is man's effort to develop righteousness through a standard that they think God wants from us, but it falls short.

In the last chapter I also went to Isaiah 59 and read from the Wisdom of Solomon in the Apocrypha. Isaiah 59 was used to make the distinction between the imagery of that armor and the one described in Ephesians 6 by Paul. They're different even though many preachers and scholars make the mistake that they are one and the same. No, they're not. In fact, there are two words in the Hebrew used for breastplate. The word used in Isaiah 59 is always the breastplate that we put on ourselves. For example, Christ could put on the breastplate given in Isaiah 59, not only when He came the first time but when He comes again, and we will be following Him as part of His armory in those last days to accomplish those last-day events. However, the breastplate Paul speaks of is not what God or Jesus wears as armor, but instead the armor God's people wear. In contrast, in Isaiah 59 it is just the opposite; the word is *shiryown* and is a breastplate or body armor and is totally different than what Paul meant as the breastplate of righteousness. It's very important to understand that and if you don't understand this particular piece in the armor, you might as well forget all the rest. This is a very important lesson that sets the foundation, not only for the breastplate of righteousness, but how it is verified in God's Word with His universal language, which is not Hebrew or Greek or any other language.

Some of you listened to my mentor and know the sources that I researched and the material that he used in the book, [The Gospel of the Stars](#), because I was part of it. Even the heavens have their own universal language. There are many ways God has shown His word throughout time to give man an opportunity to establish the connection back to Him again, but we have ignored it and that is why man is without excuse. Now, I don't necessarily blame the people. I come against the lack of concern those who were chosen to preach His Word. They must declare the Word and bring out the truth, yet it is not seen because we have teachers and preachers with itching ears listening closely to what their congregation wants, and usually, the congregation wants milk to

keep sucking on milk, but if you are going to be a soldier of Christ sooner or later you have to begin eating some meat. So, this is a quick review of what we covered in the first message on this breastplate of righteousness.

To begin this message, I have several pictures of a typical Roman soldier used in history books and in a lot of Christian material used when they refer to Ephesians 6:10 through 17 describing the Christian armor.



Look at this picture, if you want to start with milk; that's fine and it's a good first step. For instance, if you look at the colored in area of the head, that is the depiction of the helmet of salvation. The chest shows the breastplate. The tassels hanging down are supposed to be the belt of truth; having your loins girded with the belt of truth. Of course, this picture doesn't show the correct depiction of the shoes and the shield. The sword is probably the worst of all. The long sword was used by the Roman soldier, when it is the short sword referred to in Ephesians 6:17, and there's a reason. Paul, being under guard time in and time out and thrown in prison, experienced a lot of situations where he was involved with or apprehended by the Roman soldiers for his protection. Scholars believe this was because he was a Roman citizen and a Jewish citizen, but also to protect him from the people. He was also imprisoned falsely, and these soldiers surrounded his everyday experiences more often than he probably liked. Therefore, these

Roman soldiers and the pieces of equipment in their armor are used to convince us that this is what Paul was relating to in his writing.

The things that we perceive in the seen world look very similar, so authors match the Roman armor to what we know. However, we put on spiritual armor, not physical armor, to fight against these spiritual wicked beings. This is an unseen armor which Christ has designed specifically for us; perfectly fitted for us to do battle with the unseen forces. So even though it is cute, and you can make the comparisons, it is milk and not meat. These pieces of armor have a deeper meaning in spiritual things than what most scholars either ignorantly want to confess or refuse to look at. For the life of me, I can't figure out why. It's there in God's Word to be seen; Romans 10 is not there by accident. Preachers and teaching preachers are still needed to get God's Word out. That has always been God's design. Don't fall for the fad today that says you are all your own priests. It is true, but there is order even within the priesthood. If you want to use the Old Testament comparison, then use it to its full extent. Just don't pick a part that you like.

However, returning to this soldier, this is what most Christian teachers and preachers use as an example when they give a pictorial description of what Paul was trying to express, probably because he was in prison so many times or under the watch of these Roman soldiers. It is taught that when he was penning this letter to the Ephesians, he used pictorial words to describe what they will face in the unseen world. To sum it up, author after author, scholar after scholar, and commentary after commentary, will tell you that this breastplate is there to protect your heart and your emotions. Yes, there is a certain truth to that, but it falls short by leaps and bounds about what this breastplate of righteousness truly is. How will you be a good soldier of Jesus Christ if you don't even know how to spiritually use the weapons that God has given you and clothed you with?

With that introduction, go to Romans 6:13.

***“Neither yield ye your members as instruments [weapons or arms is the word used in the Greek] of unrighteousness unto sin: but yield yourselves unto God, as those that are alive from the dead, and your members as weapons [not instruments] of righteousness unto God. For sin shall not have dominion over you: for ye are not under the law, but under grace.”***

Read this part again; ***“...as those that are alive from the dead, and your members as weapons of righteousness”*** How will we be a weapon of righteousness if we don't know what righteousness is? I know for a fact if our only source is what is found in Christian bookstores, we don't know what righteousness is. It's a shame and it saddens me, because God has left a record to explain it to us. When we truly understand what righteousness is, there is no way anybody could think they could even be close by applying in their lives any righteous acts based on their efforts. It's because some don't know that they keep trying to gain righteousness in their own power, without realizing no matter how much they try, they fall short, and not just a step or two, but miles short.

How are we used as a soldier by Jesus Christ as ***weapons of righteousness unto God?*** I want you to stop right now and ask yourself that question. There are acts of righteousness that some of you are aware of. I know because I read your messages, but that is just the beginning. Through these

messages on the breastplate, I will give us better insight into what God sees righteousness as. Foremost, He sees it through His Son, just in case you think I'm going to go into some foolish thought to convince you that somehow, we can obtain righteousness because we know about some information presented here in God's Word. ***It all has to come through His Son.*** No matter how much you know of God's Word, His Word will either make you realize you can't do it on your own, even though you know about it, or you can have all the benefits of righteousness if you let God do the work through the Holy Spirit in you. I'm repeating myself, but I want to make sure this is clear. I'm not one of these silly Christians saying that we can make a checklist and develop righteousness in our own strength. No, I'm not saying that at all. It can only be done through God's Spirit as a weapon of righteousness because we are no longer under the law; we are under grace.

To begin laying the groundwork, go to II Timothy 3:16. Paul is writing to Timothy and in verse 16, begins to sum up the letter. Paul knows he is about ready to finish his course. He has fought the good fight of faith and is charging Timothy to keep in remembrance the things he was taught and the gift that was given to him by God so that he could also complete the ministry that he was called and chosen to do. Verse 16 begins,

***“All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof [or to be proven], for correction [our basic training or boot camp], for instruction in righteousness:”***

Remember that. To me therefore scripture must be verifiable, especially now that we have so many translations and opinions to confuse scripture more than ever. We see this with all the opinions about how certain words, phrases or verses were translated in scripture. Scripture is given by inspiration of God because it is profitable for setting doctrine straight. In Paul's day, it didn't take much for different philosophies of the same doctrine to take off and start pointing men in a wrong direction, from the views that catered to the flesh through humanism, rather than the message of the cross; deny yourself, take up your cross, and follow Christ. All Scripture is given by inspiration of God for *reproof* or for *proving*. In other words, God is saying, “Go ahead and prove scripture; see if it is not given by me.”

When was the last time someone gave you instruction in righteousness? I walk a fine line here. That is why I repeat over and over that I can't instruct you to be righteous, but God's Word can. And what God's Word instructs is to see how righteousness works through us by the Holy Spirit. Because of that, it is also a fine line you walk. Given the chance, the devil will twist something in scripture or something that we hear to make us think we are experiencing what righteousness is, but we cannot. The Scripture is for our instruction in righteousness. The instructional lessons come from God's Word and are implanted into our life and imputed into us for God's purposes. Verse 17 goes on to say,

***“That the man of God may be perfect [No, be complete or keep progressing towards completion. We will never be totally completed down here; we are a work in progress.], thoroughly furnished unto all good works.”***

This is where Christians are so confused and where preachers have gravely mistaken what righteousness is. Because the word *works* is *ergon*, this verse should read,

***“That the man of God may be complete, thoroughly furnished unto all good [agathos in the Greek] works [ergon, or all the good employment of whatever].”***

In the context of this verse, it is with the Word of God. Paul was writing to Timothy, but even so, we can apply it to ourselves whether we are a preacher or not. This kind of instruction is for our completion, or ***“thoroughly furnished unto all good ergon;”*** all the good things that come about if the Word of God is employed correctly. Chapter 4:1 continues,

***“I charge thee therefore before God, and the Lord Jesus Christ, who shall judge the quick and the dead at his appearing and his kingdom;***

***Preach the word; be instant in season, out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort with all long-suffering and doctrine.*** [My job is to reprove, rebuke and exhort with all long-suffering and doctrine.]

***For the time will come when they will not endure [hold up is a better translation] sound doctrine*** [That time has already come, and it is getting worse.]; ***but after their own lusts*** [desires is a better translation] ***shall they heap to themselves teachers, having itching ears;”***

Those *itching ears* would be preachers listening closely to see what their congregations like to hear so their pews stay filled and the offerings will keep coming in, or whatever other purpose they have for preaching false doctrines. They have the attitude that they will preach anything they know that you want to hear. Reading on the verse 4,

***“And they shall turn away their ears from the truth...”***

The truth is, *the matter that is under consideration*, which is also used in Ephesians 6:14, ***“girding your loins about with truth.”*** What is under consideration is what will happen as time marches on since Paul wrote this letter. Churches will have teachers with itching ears, teaching what they think they want to hear to please them, rather than teaching the inspired scripture given by God to reprove, correct, and instruct you in righteousness.

***“And they shall turn away their ears from the truth, and shall be turned unto fables.”***

*Fables* is *mythos* in the Greek and where we get our English word mythology. Paul is saying here that preachers with itching ears will turn away people by using mythology, even though not all mythology is necessarily fable; there is truth to some myths. However, these teachers are using just a bit of the truth to create their own fables, their own myths to lead men astray keeping them satisfied and knowing they are preaching what they want to hear. For example, we have one of the largest churches in the world today doing just that and they fill up the stands with the 'what can God do for you today' message. However, in verse 5 we read,

***“But watch thou in all things, endure afflictions [or kakopatheo, hardships and sufferings], do the work of an evangelist*** [A better translation for work is *ergon, employment of the Word of God*], ***make full proof of thy ministry.”***

In other words, Paul is telling Timothy, “Make sure your ministry will last until God calls you

home. Keep preaching, keep teaching, keep trusting in God, and keep enduring the afflictions, the hardships, and the sufferings because that is why you were called.” What a message! If you really stop to think about it, what a farewell message Timothy is getting from Paul. Paul goes on in verse 6 to tell Timothy,

***“For I am now ready to be offered, and the time of my departure is at hand. I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith: Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give me at that day: and not to me only, but unto all them also that love his appearing.”***

When it is all said and done, we will receive a crown of righteousness. Until then, we are to use the inspired Word of God for our training and correction, but also for our instruction in righteousness, so that step by step we may get closer and closer to completion, and even though it will not completely happen down here, so we can be thoroughly furnished in the good employment of His Word. I know I keep repeating myself, but I want it to sink in. We have two purposes in life as a soldier of Jesus Christ: First, to serve Him personally in your own personal relationship with God; and second, to serve Him where He has put you in the capacity, He has called you to employ the Word of God. It is not complicated. In fact, it is very easy to understand, but so many don't want to take that step because it requires commitment.

Before I go to the Old Testament, go to Hebrews 5:8, where we see Jesus, the great High Priest.

***“Though he were a Son, yet learned he obedience by the things which he suffered;”***

This verse is loaded with sermons. I know some preachers are still trying to figure out what this verse means, and looking at it long enough, I can see where they're coming from. To begin, you must start with the premise that He was obedient to the Father by just making himself available to step in for us. Otherwise, how would He learn further obedience with the things that He would suffer? Moving on to verse 9 we read,

***“And being made perfect [or being made complete], he became the author of eternal salvation unto all them that obey him; Called of God an high priest after the order of Melchizedek. Of whom we have many things to say, and hard to be uttered, seeing ye are dull of hearing.”***

This verse is telling us to not become a person who is dull of hearing, thinking you know everything you need to know. Right now, some of you are no longer paying attention because you don't know where I'm heading with all this and because you think you know what righteousness is. You are dull of hearing. You have become a know-it-all, even though I am still learning and far from being completed in what God's Word means when it says to be righteous. The easy step is understanding how we are imputed with that righteousness. The next step is a little bit more complicated because it takes digging in to see how God defines righteousness and how it is available to us through His Son Jesus Christ. Verse 12 continues,

***“For when for the time ye ought to be teachers [Paul was saying we should be teachers ourselves], ye have need that one teach you again which be the first principles of the oracles of***

**God;”**

Many think Paul is referring here to the Gospel, and in a sense, he is, but he is also using another illustration that goes back to the Old Testament. Paul is saying that they should have been teachers at the coming of the Messiah Jesus Christ, yet His own people rejected Him because they didn't understand, they didn't see, they didn't have the spiritual eyes, or the spiritual ears because they were dull of hearing. Instead, they say that either Paul was referring to the law, the Gospel, or in general, God's Word. Then why didn't Paul say that? Paul didn't write that way. Study the letters for yourself. Being inspired by God, he was deliberate with the words he used. In addition, look at the phrase '*the first principles*'. The transliterated word is *stoicheion*. The various definitions of that word are:

- 1. Any first thing, from which the others belonging to some series or composite whole take their rise, an element, first principles.** [This tells us nothing.]
  - 2. The letters of the alphabet as the elements of speech, not however the written characters, but the spoken sounds.** [That is not what Paul was saying here.]
  - 3. The elements from which all things have come, the material causes of the universe.** [That is close to what Paul was saying.]
  - 4. The heavenly bodies, either as part of the heavens, or (as others think) because in them the elements of man, life and destiny were supposed to reside.** [This is where we get our present-day word *atoms* or *atom* in the English.]
- Finally, the last definition:
- 5. The elements, rudiments, primary and fundamental principles of any art, science, or discipline.”**

The last definition is the closest to being correct, and all these definitions are from this word *stoicheion*, or *the first principles*. The best definition of it comes when speaking of a discipline, whether it's art, science or whatever discipline. The discipline of mathematics is one example. For instance, geometry; the rudiments, the principles of geometry. At this point you may wonder where this message is going but read the whole message. Don't tune me out, don't have dull hearing, and don't stop paying attention because I'm taking most of you, if not all of you, to a place where you have never been before.

**“For when for the time ye ought to be teachers, ye have need that one teach you again which be the first principles [a universal system that God laid down that Paul was very well aware of] of the oracles of God;”**

The Greek word for the phrase “*of the oracles*” is *logion*, which the Septuagint used to describe the breastplate in the Old Testament in Exodus 28. *Thorax* is the Greek word in the New Testament in Ephesians 6:14; the area which the breastplate covered. It's important to understand that the breastplate of righteousness is what the Old Testament breastplate of judgment was, and that's where I am heading. So, what are these principles? What is this universal principle that Paul is speaking of, with *logion* and *of the oracles*? First, read verse 12 with the original words in place;

**“...ye have need that one teach you again which be the first stoicheion [the principles] of the**

***oracles [logion] of God; and are become such as have need of milk, and not of strong meat.”***

Paul is writing here that for us to have *strong meat*, we must go back and try to understand these first principles of the oracles of God. This is all about righteousness and the understanding of it, and why you must understand the principles of the oracles, the *stoicheion* and the *logion*. Verse 13 goes on,

***“For every one that useth milk [where many of Christianity is today] is unskilful [without experience is a better translation] in the word of righteousness: for he is a babe.”***

Here, Paul is saying that, “You should be teachers, yet you are babes because you are still sucking on milk instead of chomping on a good beefy steak of the Word.” (For you vegetarians, put in your own food that you can crunch down on in substitution of what takes you away from the milk and gives you something worth biting in to.) So not understanding the first principles of the oracles will keep you at a level in God's Word that is comparable to just sucking on milk and not getting to the meat of the Word. Read verse 14,

***“But strong meat belongeth to them that are of full age, [This is not age, but the understanding of what the word righteous in an experienced way is truly defined.] even those who by reason of use have their senses [a better translation, their perception and understanding] exercised to discern both good and evil.”***

Paul was saying that if you don't know what righteousness is about, your senses, your perception, and your understanding of what you think you know will be diminished because you will be unable to discern between good and evil. The Greek word here for evil is *kakos*, so either you want to be discerning in understanding what God's Word is truly saying in the correct way that things that are coming at you in life, or you are where most people are, which is standing in *kakos*, overtaken by evil, because of your lack of understanding of God's Word. That's why Paul wrote, “ye have need that one teaches you again”. They still didn't understand what they were told and how to apply it.

In addition, Paul also wrote, ***“that one teach you again which be the first principles of the oracles of God; and are become such as have need of milk, and not of strong meat.”*** In order to understand what those principles and oracles are, you must understand *gematria*, the universal language that God uses. It is one of the elements of His creation that God uses to keep getting His message out. We have the written word and the spoken word, but we also have physical things He created that send a message. However, because people are dull of hearing, they aren't getting that message. Even though gematria is a universal language, it has been abused since its creation by sects. For instance, Cabalists use gematria quite often these days and some say they are the inventors of gematria. No, they are not. God is the creator and just like everything in His creation, once it becomes available for man's understanding, the devil goes to work to bring confusion, twisting God's intention in the creation He uses for our benefit. Here is a definition of gematria;

Gematria is, ***“A system by which hidden truths and meanings are discovered within words. Each letter of an alphabet corresponds to a number. Numerical values of words are totaled up***



***and then these words are said to correspond with other words sharing the same numerical value.”***

That's a short explanation, and this is not numerology, because most numerologists don't use it to verify God's Word. God created the numerical values of both the Hebrew and the Greek letters as another source to verify what His Word says, and I'll show a perfect example using the breastplate shortly. God put His messages in many things for us. I don't make up these theories or interesting possibilities about what God's Word means to get your interest or intrigue you in some way to keep you listening. I'm not interested in any of that. I am interested in seeing what God says over and over no matter what source or medium He uses. The one thing that I have found, if done correctly, is that He is saying the same thing repeatedly just in different ways, from the spoken word to other mediums. To continue, gematria has been used to interpret dreams, divinations, you name it. It has been abused and misused, and because of that Christians don't want to look at it because it scares them. It takes them out of the comfortable box they are in, so they don't see that God is in control of all things, including the things that He created to get His message out. For example, even though the above is only a short definition of gematria, whether you know it or not, the number 7 in its numerical value as used in letter form, is the most used number in the Bible.

The gematria, the first principles of the ***logion***, the oracle, was a message through the breastplate of a coming person. In no way could Moses have known this when he was getting the Word from God about how to make and wear the high priest's clothing in Exodus 28. That's why you'll never understand what Paul truly meant about the breastplate of righteousness unless you go back to the Old Testament. The principles, the ***stoicheion***, are the gematria, the numerical value of the oracles. The oracle Paul was speaking of is the breastplate of judgment from Exodus 28. When I explain how I know that, it will give you the understanding, the meat of the word, because it will give you an understanding of what righteousness looks like as perceived by God. You can only have righteousness if you are imputed with it, and it will only stay in you if you let God take control of it and not twist it into some type of performance that you create to judge righteousness in yourself and others. With that, go to Exodus 28:1 to look at the priest's clothing and how Moses was instructed to make them.

***“And take thou unto thee Aaron thy brother, and his sons with him, from among the children of Israel, that he may minister unto me in the priest's office,”***

Now, Jesus is our high priest, but He wasn't yet on earth, so Aaron had to step in as high priest along with his sons to carry that line of responsibility and duty.

***“...even Aaron [He goes on to list others, including Aaron's sons. Verse 2 continues,] And thou shalt make holy garments for Aaron thy brother for glory and for beauty. And thou shalt speak unto all that are wise-hearted, whom I have filled with the spirit of wisdom, that they may make Aaron's garments to consecrate him, that he may minister unto me in the priest's office. And these are the garments which they shall make; a breastplate,”***

***Choshen*** is the Hebrew word for breastplate, and in the Septuagint, it is translated as ***logion***, the

oracles. (The Septuagint was written in about 200 BC, when 70 scholars came together to translate Hebrew into Greek, the common language of that day.) **Logion** is the same word that Paul uses in Hebrews 5. Additionally, the Septuagint used the same word, not only here in verse 4, but also in verse 15 and other places. The Septuagint got it right, as compared to the King James Translators. Verse 4 goes on to tell us,

**“... and an ephod, and a robe, and a broided coat, a mitre, and a girdle: and they shall make holy garments for Aaron thy brother [It almost sounds like some of the spiritual warfare armor as described in Ephesians 6:14 through 17, which it is.], and his sons, that he may minister unto me in the priest's office.**

**And they shall take gold, and blue, and purple, and scarlet, and fine linen.**

**And they shall make the ephod of gold, of blue, and of purple, of scarlet, and fine twined linen, with cunning work.**

**It shall have the two shoulderpieces thereof joined at the two edges thereof; and so it shall be joined together.**

**And the curious girdle [or the embroidered girdle] of the ephod [I have already said there were two girdles.], which is upon it, shall be of the same, according to the work thereof; even of gold, of blue, and purple, and scarlet, and fine twined linen.**

**And thou shalt take two onyx stones, and grave on them the names of the children of Israel: Six of their names on one stone, and the other six names of the rest on the other stone, according to their birth.**

**With the work of an engraver in stone, like the engravings of a signet, shalt thou engrave the two stones with the names of the children of Israel: thou shalt make them to be set in ouches of gold.**

**And thou shalt put the two stones upon the shoulders of the ephod for stones of memorial unto the children of Israel: And Aaron shall bear their names before the LORD upon his two shoulders for a memorial.**

**And thou shalt make ouches of gold;**

**And two chains of pure gold at the ends; of wreathen work shalt thou make them, and fasten the wreathen chains to the ouches.”**

That was all leading up to verse 15,

**“And thou shalt make the breastplate [choshen in the Hebrew; logion in the Septuagint and in Heb. 5:12, of the oracle, the logion] 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 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...”** And he lists the different rows in verses 18, 19, and 20; four rows with three stones in each row, continuing in 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.**

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

[skip to verse 29]

***And Aaron shall bear the names of the children of Israel in the breastplate of judgment upon his heart...***

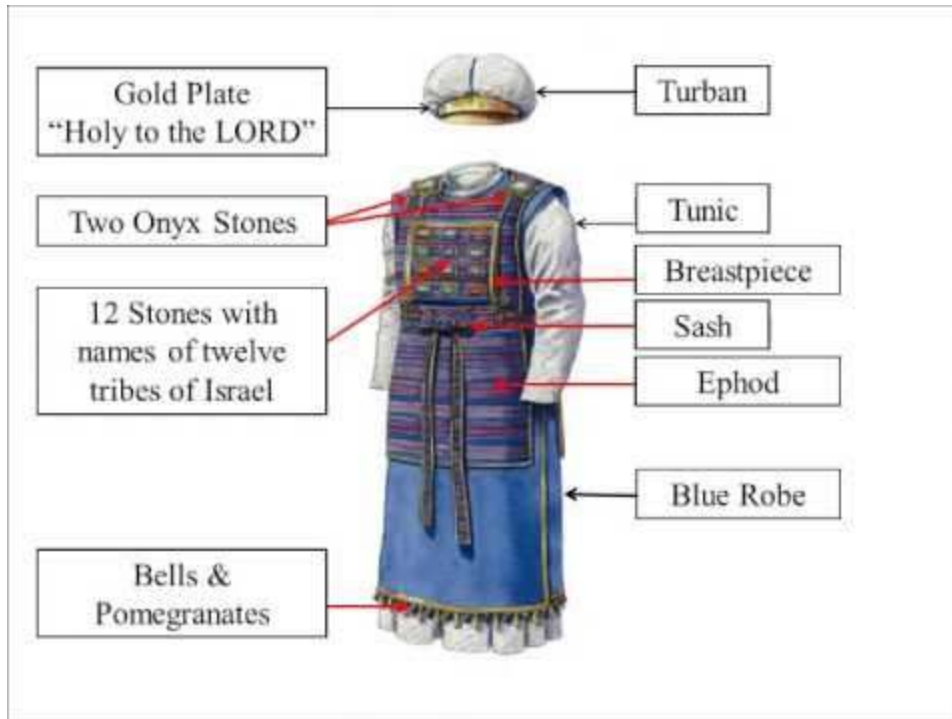
This was a breastplate of judgement because the high priest would stand in for the congregation, but we have our chief high priest, Jesus, standing in for us. Christ suffered the consequences that we should have suffered; He stepped in for us. In Romans 8:1 we read, ***“There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus.”*** Satan cannot use anything against us because Christ is there with His blood, saying to the Father, “I have paid the price. Do not listen to him. He has no right even saying it, so do not even listen to it.” Of course, God honors that. Our breastplate of righteousness allows us to sit in a position of no condemnation.

However, here in Exodus, the high priest Aaron sat in that place, so the congregation, if they kept God's ordinance, wouldn't have judgment or condemnation either. The problem is they drifted from that so often in scripture. They were pathetic and we're just as pathetic, but we have a mediator who sits in for us. That's why we can't quit, and we can't turn in our armor, saying we have had enough; it's not worth it. Christ paid dearly for our redemption, so how dare we even entertain those thoughts for very long, even though the devil slips in to test our growth in Christ. When that happens, use David in the Old Testament as an example, especially in his psalms, where he spends less time complaining about the situation and more time getting his eyes back on God. The older he got, the more mature of a saint he became, but we have a mediator, and we put on the breastplate by putting on Christ in the New Testament. In contrast, in the Old Testament, they had to go through the high priest, and in this case, it was Aaron. Returning to Exodus 28:29, we read,

***“And Aaron shall bear the names of the children of Israel in the breastplate of judgment upon his heart, when he goeth in unto the holy place [the Holy of Holies part of the tabernacle], for a memorial before the LORD continually. [But we continually have Christ and His blood sitting on the right-hand side of the throne of God.]***

***And thou shalt put in the breastplate of judgment the Urim and the Thummin; and they shall be upon Aaron's heart, when he goeth in before the LORD: and Aaron shall bear the judgment of the children of Israel upon his heart before the LORD continually.”***

We are to put on Christ, and if we keep putting on Christ, our breastplate of righteousness is there continually, as Christ is our mediator. But that's not all. Let's look at it using the gematria of the Word of God both in the Hebrew sense and in the Greek sense and take a closer look at why these rows, three across, four down, are important in understanding and confirming that this breastplate of judgment is also the same breastplate of righteousness that Paul uses as an example. In Hebrews 5, Paul reminds the Hebrews to go back to the beginning when Moses laid this out. We need to remind ourselves and teach ourselves all over again what we are missing and all the benefits of God's righteousness. We should be eating the Word of God like meat, but if we are sucking on it like milk we can never graduate from kindergarten. Here is a picture of the Breastplate from the Old Testament.



The 9" x 9" area covering the chest is the breastplate. It covers the *thorax* area, the Greek word Paul used to describe the area the breastplate covered. As I said earlier, most commentaries and preachers of the Word of God want to use the breastplate of righteousness as an example of how God is looking after your emotions and protecting your heart from the devil's attacks. I have no problem with that, but it's incomplete, because that is not only what it was designed to symbolize. It is deeper than that simple explanation. So, to give you a picture of what the high priest wore and where the breastplate covered, it's the chest area. There are four rows of stones, three across, with the names of the children of Israel written on them.

The *Urim* and *Thummin* are part of this and I will get to them a bit in this message, but I will go deeper into them in the future when I get to verse 30. However, this breastplate of judgment is in the Old Testament and is what the breastplate of righteousness is in the New Testament. The Septuagint translated that correctly when they used the same word, *logion* in Hebrews 5 to describe the oracle and in Exodus 28:4 and 15 and other verses. I want to take a deeper look and read what this gospel in stone is saying to us today, even though its designer God, put it in motion 3,500 years ago, approximately 1,500 years before Christ. It was an announcement, a banner that ahead of the armies of Israel to proclaim that God went before them. It is a beautiful picture in the Old Testament, when it is taught properly and correctly with all the symbolism and the universal language of mathematics, the Gematria, used to describe this breastplate.

Exodus 28:17 through 20 describes the stones used in this breastplate on all four rows and verse 21 says, ***“And the stones shall be with the names of the children of Israel, twelve, according to their names ... every one with his name shall they be according to the twelve tribes.”*** This is my drawing of the Gematria in these stones and what they mean.

<b>Judah</b> 30	+	<b>Simeon</b> 466	+	<b>Rueben</b> 259	= 755- Jesus in Hebrew
<b>Gad</b> 7	+	<b>Napthali</b> 570 = 577, + repairer of the breach	+	<b>Dan</b> 54	
<b>Zebulon</b> 95	+	<b>Issachar</b> 830	+	<b>Asher</b> 501	= 1480- Jesus in Greek
<b>Ephraim</b> 331	+	<b>Manasseh</b> 395	+	<b>Benjamin</b> 162	= 888- Jesus in Greek

The stones on the breastplate are arranged with four rows down and three rows across, and 12 different stones were placed on this breastplate symbolizing the sons and grandsons of Jacob. The grandsons, Ephraim and Manasseh, stood in Joseph's place with Benjamin being Jacob's last son. Some wonder why Levi is not represented in this breastplate. That's because he was set apart, called for a specific duty; called out from this group for a purpose which I will get to in the future. Other than that, all 12 of Jacob's sons and grandsons are shown here the way God instructed.

The word *gematria* where we get our English word *geometry* and uses numbers for letters. For instance, in this case, Ephraim's numerical value is 331; Manasseh, 395; Benjamin, 162; Asher, 501; Gad, 7. About the breastplate, one author writes,

***“This breastplate was formed from a single piece of highly-embroidered linen cloth one cubit long and a half cubit wide, folded [in a way that will] form a square... (about 9in. x 9in.) [that covers the thorax area.] It was adorned with twelve precious stones on which were engraved the names of the tribes- i.e. those of the sons and grandsons of Jacob arranged according to their order of birth. These were set out in the four rows of three stones each. (Ex. 28:15-30) [and also in Exodus 39].”***

Why four rows of three stones each? Is there a message? I'm absolutely convinced there is and hopefully I can convince you to see what I have seen that verifies God's Word.

***“In my opinion, the most startling feature of these numbers is that there appears to be a ... message in the High Priest's breastplate.”***

Yes, and this message the Gospel in stones that the high priest wore. To understand what the message is we must look at the numerical values in both the Hebrew and Greek.

***“These are the 12 numbers -- gematria of the 12 stones on the High Priest's breastplate [see picture above]:  
The 3 stones at the bottom layer form the FOUNDATION STONE.”***

Who is that foundation stone? It is none other than Jesus. To see this, add up the numerical values on the breastplate. That would be the two grandsons and the one son of Jacob; Ephraim, Manasseh, and Benjamin. The numerical value of Ephraim is 331; Manasseh, 395; Benjamin, 162. These numbers add up to none other than Jesus in the Greek. The foundation stone is Jesus. This was written in Hebraic times. Add up the numbers 331, 395, and 162. In the Greek gematria this totals up to Jesus.

Now, look at the top of this foundation layer of stones. Here there are four stones. If you think I am skipping Gad and Naphtali, just wait, I'll get to it. Add up Dan in row two with Zebulon, Issachar, and Asher in row three. That would be 95, 830, 501, and 54. The Greek Gematria of these four stones adds up to 1480, which is the numerical value of Christ. The message contained in these seven stones is Jesus Christ in Greek. Think of the improbability of this as just coincidence. Each individual letter in the Greek is added to create this total value. In another case, 331, 395, 162 in the bottom row is the foundation layer stone. Again, think of the improbability of this as a coincidence. These names were arranged by God thousands of years prior to our time and lined up by God with a numerical value in the Greek. Jesus in the bottom layer is the foundation stone. Then, in the next layer, the kind of L-shape of Dan, Zebulon, Issachar, and Asher adds up to Christ in Greek. Could Moses have anticipated Jesus 1,500 years in advance and designed this in the high priest's breastplate? Just think about it! Could he have designed this high priest's breastplate using Gematria in Hebrew, because these names with the numerical value in the Greek were originally written in Hebrew, but the Greek Gematria of those values adds up to Jesus and adds up to Christ. Could Moses have known in advance the high priest's breastplate's, through the Gematria in Hebrew would conceal the name of Jesus Christ in Greek? Did Moses foresee Jesus and know Greek? Think about it! He could not possibly have control over the birth order and the names of the 12 sons of Jacob, and not just the sons, but even the grandsons.

***“The 7 stones in which JESUS CHRIST is encoded in Greek, must have been ordered and positioned on the breastplate by design. There is no other plausible explanation. The Person who encoded the name JESUS CHRIST in these 7 stones by necessity must be a seer, a mathematician and a linguist of the highest order. Moreover, by implication, the Designer appears to possess the ability to direct human affairs, control human births and naming of even newborns.***

***While the bottom 7 stones cry out JESUS CHRIST in Greek, the top 3 stones proclaim JESUS CHRIST in Hebrew!”***

In the Hebrew Gematria on the top three stones, Judah, Simeon, and Rueben add up to 755. In Hebrew, that is Jesus Christ.

***“There appears to be a coherent message in the High Priest's breastplate... The 12 stones conceal a message concerning JESUS CHRIST. The message appears to be directed to Jews and Gentiles (Christians) - - the Old and New Testament peoples of God since the Old and New Testaments were originally written in Hebrew and Greek respectively. The question may now be asked: Why did the Encoder of the breastplate message, as it were, engrave on the [12] stones the name of JESUS CHRIST in Hebrew and Greek? What is the message for the Jews***

***and Gentiles- - the apparent intended recipients?  
The key to the puzzle lies in the two remaining stones....”***

Gad and Naphtali would be those two remaining stones, and this is the overall message of the breastplate. If you were to remove those two stones; just take them out completely, you have a gap between Jesus Christ in Hebrew and Jesus Christ in Greek. Just imagine that there is nothing but blank space, a gulf, if you remove these two stones. A breach is formed in that place if you take out Gad and his brother, Naphtali, which add up to the numerical value of 7 and 570. This is fascinating when you look at the Gematria of the two stones. It is the same as the title that is found in Isaiah 58:12, and also in Amos 9:11. Those two stones 570 and 7 add up to 577. They tell us in the Hebrew Gematria of *‘the repairer of the breach’* found in Isaiah 58:12. This is the breach left between the message of Jesus Christ, of one that is still yet to come, who would truly be the chief high priest, and the king of righteousness for both Jew and Gentile. Here is the message of Jesus Christ in Hebrew and the message of Jesus Christ in Greek, and the breach in the middle is represented by these two stones, with the names of Jacob's sons that add up to 577. Go to Amos 9:11,

***“In that day will I raise up the tabernacle of David that is fallen, and close up the breaches thereof; and I will raise up his ruins, and I will build it as in the days of old:”***

The hidden message engraved on the high priest's breastplate pertains to our eternal high priest Jesus; the Jesus that is referred to over and over as our chief high priest in Hebrews. This same message, the repairer of the breach, is found by adding up 570 and 7 in the Hebrew Gematria. Those five words in Isaiah 58:12, in the Hebrew Gematria, is the repairer of the breach for both Jew and Gentile. (There is symbolism even in the way the tabernacle was built.)

Jesus is our foundational stone. It is as clear as it can be in the universal language of mathematics. God used it to send a message to all mankind. And He is also the capstone, Jesus Christ in Hebrew. He is the capstone, the cornerstone, and the foundation stone, and He is also the repairer of the breach. In Isaiah 43:10 where it says, ***“and understand that I am he”*** it is referring to the Messiah who was still yet to come. Jesus Christ has a numerical value of 577, the same value of the repairer of the breach.

***“The matter is sealed when one realizes each of these phrases has a Greek gematria of 577 too [in the Greek they are]: ‘God's love’, ‘God's will’ and ‘Gospel’.”***

God's love, God's will, and the Gospel have a Greek Gematria of 577. Because of God's love, we have the repairer of the breach and that repairer of the breach exercised God's will by going to that cross. And because of that, it gave us the message of the Gospel, the Good News of Jesus Christ, the foundation stone, the capstone in Hebrew, Jesus Christ in Hebrew; the capstone, the foundation stone, Jesus Christ in Greek; the cornerstone, and the repairer of the breach.

***“Moses could not have encoded them [with the knowledge of what he was doing]. Jacob could not have fathered and named the 12 [sons] so that a message is engraved in the 12 stones of the breastplate....the message is unmistakable - that JESUS IS THE CHRIST TO BOTH JEWS AND GENTLES! He is the One that fills the gap. He is the One that breaks down the***

*dividing wall between Jew and Gentile. He is the Yeshua HaMashiach. He is Jesus Christ, the Repairer of the Breach.*

*It is clear the Almighty God foreordained the gematria of Aaron's breastplate. He designed and ordered the position, the number of the 12 patriarchs such that His undeniable signature may be detected by anyone who cares to scrutinize- - that JESUS IS THE CHRIST, the saviour of all mankind, Jews and Gentiles alike. The amazing gematria described above testifies beyond a shadow of doubt that the cornerstone that was rejected by the Jews is indeed their Messiah. It confirms that the Jewish Messiah is the Christian Saviour as written in the gospel of the New Testament. Jesus is God's Love and Goodnews. Ultimately, Jesus reconciles men to God, the very mission He came to earth for. The stones tell it all [in the breastplate of judgment that the high priests wore.] **The stones cry out ... JESUS CHRIST -- THE SAVIOR OF ALL MANKIND!**"*

Now, it's just not Paul in Hebrews 5 saying that we need to go back to the first principles of the oracle, which is what he was referring to. Instead of being teachers, they forgot where they came from and what they had been taught, because they wanted to keep sucking on milk. They forgot that this breastplate symbolized the One that would come to set us free, the One who would die on the cross, forgive our sins, and reconcile us back to the Father. Now, by faith in Christ, we can also be imputed with righteousness.

Josephus had a better understanding than most Christians today and even in his time what this oracle, this breastplate of judgment, symbolized. I will read part of what Josephus wrote,

*"For as to those stones, which we told you before, the high priest bare on his shoulders, which were sardonyxes (and I think it needless to describe their nature, they being known to everybody), the one of them shined out when God was present at their sacrifices, I mean that which was in the nature of a button on his right shoulder, bright rays darting out thence, and being seen even by those that were most remote; which splendor yet was not before natural to the stone. This has appeared a wonderful thing to such as have not so far indulged themselves in philosophy, as to despise Divine Revelation."*

Think about it. Josephus is saying not to forget the splendor, which naturally God created for our benefit, and not to confuse it with vain philosophies and false doctrines. Don't forget what its true divine revelation was intended to be.

*"Yet will I mention what is still more wonderful than this: For God declared before-hand, by those twelve stones [the ones worn in the breastplate] which the high priest bare on his breast, and which were inserted into his breastplate, when they should be victorious in battle; for so great a splendor shone forth from them before the army began to march, [Before they even went into battle, this breastplate was shining with God's glory as God's judgment on His people and the armies that they were facing.] that all the people were sensible of God's being present for their assistance. Whence it came to pass that those Greeks, [A period of time later.] who had a veneration for our laws, because they could not possibly contradict this, called that breastplate the Oracle."*

This was a word that Paul knew would be understandable in his time, so he used it in Hebrews 5.



Also, about this, the notes in Josephus say that it wasn't the light, shining from the stones, which told the message to the priest, but a voice coming *'from the mercy seat,'* speaking the instructions to the priesthood. That's why Saul desperately wanted to control Samuel, the keeper of the breastplate, so Samuel could go to the Holy of Holies and communicate to God for further instruction. It could be possible. I'm not ruling it out. Most scholars believe that the Urim and the Thummin gave, (for lack of knowledge about what it really did), a yes or no answer when you asked God a question. No, it did not. It was an instrument that God used, when presented correctly by the high priest when he went to the Holy of Holies, as a communication piece for instruction. I am totally in agreement with Josephus here, as it was a voice coming *'from the mercy seat'* in the Holy of Holies speaking the instructions to the priesthood. Our mercy seat is Jesus Christ, and when we put on the breastplate, we are literally putting on Jesus Christ. Jesus is our breastplate and we are cleansed by His blood. We know, and I verified it by using the Gematria of the numerical values in both the Hebrew and Greek numbers that are given to letters, that the message of Jesus Christ is the first and foremost important message of that breastplate. Even though they didn't understand it in their time, it was a communication device to the unseen army they were facing.

The Hebrews probably didn't know that breastplate symbolized in the names of Jesus Christ, but I guarantee Satan did. That's why I have said the breastplate was a banner that went before the people to let the enemy in the unseen spiritual world know that Jesus Christ, the Son of God, went before them. That same message is still applicable in today's Christian world. We put on the breastplate of righteousness, even though I haven't yet explained what righteousness is, and we are putting on a banner that goes before us and that banner is Jesus Christ. Whatever you are facing in life, whether it is at work, at home, at school, in whatever situation, put on the breastplate of righteousness and let our unseen enemy (which is what we have been dealing with in Ephesians 6:12), know that our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ goes before us. And if Christ goes before us, who can stand in the seen and the unseen world against Him? I'm telling you no one can. This breastplate of righteousness was a message to Satan that He was the Christ of the Jews, of the Hebrews, and He was also Jesus Christ of the Gentiles, and He will someday become the repairer of the breach that was formed (and is to this day not totally healed). Christ is the repairer of the breach for both Jews and Gentiles. That is just one of the messages of this breastplate of righteousness, but I wanted to start there using the Gematria as verifiable evidence once you understand the meaning of the numerical value of these letters both in Greek and Hebrew. He is the foundation stone, He is the cornerstone, and He is the capstone, and He did come and repaired the breaches for all mankind because He is the Savior of the world.

There is also a message and a gospel in these stones, not just in names and the numerical values of those names, but also for the stones and the colors (among other things), and why it was always connected to the ephod. In Hebrews 5, Paul made it very clear, you ought to be teachers, but you are still sucking on milk and the reason why you are sucking on milk is because you don't completely understand from Old Testament to New Testament what God's Word has been saying throughout the centuries. It's not really the people's fault in this case. It is the preachers who don't bring people up to speed about what God's Word is truly saying and all of the wonderful riches in it to give us the skillful knowledge of what Paul was referring to in the word righteousness. You have to go back to the first principles, in this case, the universal language, the numerical value, the Gematria of the language of mathematics to understand what the oracle

represents. Then, when we get past that point, we can further investigate what righteousness means through the breastplate of judgment and the breastplate of righteousness in the New Testament.

To be continued...

## Color and Light

Open your bibles to Ephesians 6:14, where I have been focusing on the breastplate. Of all the imagery in the spiritual Christian armor that is given to us, if we put on Christ, the breastplate is the closest to the heart. Ephesians 6:16 in the King James Version reads, ***“Above all, taking the shield of faith,”*** but it does not say *‘Above all’* in some of the manuscripts. However, because we exercise faith in Christ, the breastplate gives us an extra layer of protection to deal with the incoming fiery arrows and darts that Satan throws at us, and nothing comes closer to the heart than the breastplate of righteousness.

In the previous message, I took us to Hebrews 5:7, but I will begin at verse 12 in this message,

***“For when for the time ye ought to be teachers, ye have need that one teach you again which be the first principles [the *stoicheion*] of the oracles [the *logion*] of God; and are become such as have need of milk, and not of strong meat.”***

Both words, *stoicheion* and *logion*, were used in the Septuagint when describing the breastplate in Exodus 28:15. And in this verse, Paul is saying that you should be teachers, but instead you still need to be taught repeatedly about the first principles, the *stoicheion*. You should be understanding God’s righteousness and teaching others, just as when your children grow up and leave home it’s important that they have the understanding about God’s righteousness. Paul reminds us of this over and over. Unfortunately, most Christians read right through this and don’t recognize the importance of righteousness, which comes because we faith in God’s Word. It is then that it is imputed in us, and God’s righteousness then dwells in us and operates in the realm with the Holy Spirit. We are just human fleshly instruments to be molded and used as a weapon of righteousness that God controls. If you have no understanding of what righteousness is, and I am not just talking about how to get it, you’ll never understand righteousness unless you understand it the way God sees it. This is not self-righteousness as most of the church world sees it; things that you do to get it, earn it, and show it off. Those Christians are stuck on milk. Paul wants you to advance to strong meat. Hebrews 5:13 goes on to tell us,

***“For every one that useth milk is unskilful [has no experience is the best translation] in the word of righteousness:”***

Those Christians go around trying to make others believe that they know what righteousness is because they figured out how to make a checklist. They think that putting things on that checklist makes them look good in front of God, and then they hopefully convey to others that they are skillful in the use and the knowledge of righteousness. God is saying through Paul, “No, you are still babes sucking on milk.” You have no teeth to even take a good bite of God’s Word, the strong meat, to chew it and absorb it to get its nutritional value (to use that analogy). Our energy source in the Spirit is God’s Word. It’s planted there in our hearts by faith in Jesus Christ and then we receive righteousness for it. Now God can dwell within us again. Chapter 5 concludes in verse 14,

***“But strong meat belongeth to them that are of full age, even those who by reason of use have their senses [or perception or understanding] exercised to discern both good and evil [or kakos].”*** By eating strong meat, you will discern what is good; not the good you create, but the good that is implanted in you given by God, in contrast to evilness, *kakos*.

In the last chapter I also took us to Exodus 28 and a few other passages, but before I go back to Exodus 28, let's go to Matthew 5 to read what Jesus said about righteousness, as a foundation to understand the important value of this breastplate, through His creation, and through the Word. Jesus says in verse 6,

***“Blessed are they which do hunger and thirst after righteousness: for they shall be filled.”***

Blessed is *makarios* in the Greek, but unfortunately some dictionaries have translated it as *happiness* or *happy*. Happy is a temporary physical state that we experience when reacting to something that pleases us, but this scripture never said that. If you look at the King James Version, it is closest to the accurate meaning, (even though there are some things they didn't get quite right). The meaning of this verse is obvious, and I will point those things out, including how some of the Sinai manuscripts that many translators are using now have really huge errors.

Returning to this verse and *makarios*, blessed, the closest translation in English would be *fully satisfied*, but when the King James 1611 version was written, there was a different understanding of what blessed was. One of the stronger meanings for blessed was, *bathed in the blood of something*; in this case, Christ. So really, blessed, would mean *'fully satisfied are the ones that are bathed in the blood.'* Yes, I am sure these people didn't understand what Jesus was saying -- or maybe they did-- but somewhere along the line, we've lost the translation. The translators of 1611 that put the King James Bible together to use the right word here; blessed, *fully satisfied and bathed in the blood*. Where do you think we get 'God bless you' when somebody sneezes? Basically, you are telling someone literally 'God bathe you in the blood of Jesus Christ' when you sneeze. And why not; usually sneezing leads to a cold, viruses, flus, or sickness. Why not be *bathed in the blood of Jesus Christ*? Read this verse again with that understanding,

***“Blessed [fully satisfied or bathed in the blood] are they which do hunger and thirst after righteousness: for they shall be filled [chortazo in the Greek, being filled and satisfied].”***

Also, in the Greek, hunger is very clear: *keep yourself constantly hungry*. Don't get filled up and kick back doing nothing or take a nap spiritually. Jesus was saying we are to stay hungry for righteousness throughout God's Word in the Old and New Testaments. We are constantly being reminded to seek righteousness, not our own righteousness, but God's righteousness. Keep yourself hungry for God's righteousness and thirst, or *eagerly long for those things which the soul is refreshed and strengthened by*.

I have read many messages on this verse and many miss the promise here. What I love about the Greek is that God is saying, *“Fully satisfied and bathed in the blood of Jesus Christ are they which do keep themselves hungry and longing for those things of which the soul is refreshed and strengthened and those things as righteousness for they shall be* [and this is the best translation found with a wonderful promise that goes along with the type of righteousness that God implants

in us] *they shall be fattened.*” Fattened! Yes, we are to be fat cats in God's righteousness. “*for they shall be fattened.*”

The problem with most Christians today is that they fatten themselves up in their own self-seeking ways which produces self-righteousness. Our checklist for Jesus will only make sure that we look righteous, act righteous, and we smell righteous. However, if one of those, we are nothing more than a smelly dirty dog. I know some of you won't like to hear that, but that's what we become because of our own checklist of righteous works. God is not looking for that. He could have produced robots filled with righteousness if He wanted to, but He didn't. And since we failed, since Adam failed, and since no one can live up to the law, He had to send someone who would *bathe us in the blood*. All we must do is keep ourselves spiritually hungry, constantly longing for the refreshment that gives us strength in our soul, which is the righteousness given by God for one purpose and one purpose only, to fatten us. Instead, everybody is looking for prosperity in the wrong areas in God's Word.

A lot of people have even mistaken my mentor in thinking that there are plenty of prosperity messages in the Bible that say God wants us rich. There are many areas, but there is only one theme about that which rings true over and over. God will make us rich if He chooses to do that to see how we will get the Word out with the resources He gives us. King after king in the Old Testament exploited that and fell from favor with God quickly. If God has chosen us to be one of those individuals that do become rich, I have nothing against it and neither does God. He does it to see if you will keep the priority of your life in focus, to be an instrument to distribute those riches first and foremost for God's purposes. Like it or not, that is the lost message of prosperity. Most Christians want to become rich, so they invest in, enjoy and exploit the here and now. When it comes to riches, God's Word always has an eternal factor about it. That is why He speaks in His Word where your heart should be: it is in heaven and so also should be your treasures. Unfortunately, it hasn't happened that way and it's not being taught. It is a shame and one of the biggest evils in this country today and around the world.

This verse in Matthew is telling us that, ‘*Blessed are they that keep hungry and longing eagerly for the refreshment that only comes through righteousness that satisfies our thirst and also will fatten us in righteousness.*’ True prosperity will fatten us with righteousness. I want to be one, and I'm sure many of you want to be one too, who are part of the individuals chosen by God to be fattened by Him by His righteousness. Well, to be fattened by God by His righteousness is to know what it is.

To continue, go to Exodus 28:15, which is about the priest's clothes.

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

This verse will be the focus of this message. The question is, what was the meaning and purpose for this breastplate of judgment to be made “***of gold, of blue, of purple, and of scarlet, and of fine twined linen***”? Why did God list colors in that verse that eventually would be written down and read by billions for thousands of years? Was it to keep their attention, to keep it amusing, to

keep it colorful, or did He have a meaning behind it? How many times have you stopped and asked yourself, why gold, why blue, why purple and why scarlet? You'll never understand this, not only here in Exodus 28:15, but other areas of scripture, unless you know that God, in His creative power, made many universal languages besides speech, and all the different languages keep His message alive and keep sending out His message.

I've told you about the universal language through astronomy and how we view the skies, the stars, the heavens, the planets, quasars; all the heavenlies. Just by looking up you can observe how all its alignment preaches His message of the Gospel. Look at the Great Pyramid and how without mathematics, it would never have been decoded and is still revealing itself, specifically the measurements in the pyramid and other areas including stones. In this chapter, mathematics, the Gematria, which I briefly presented in an introduction, when used properly (rather than the fanatical sects that have abused it), is the universal mathematical language both seen and unseen. I haven't even gotten to the unseen part yet. God has always had His message declared throughout all His creative processes, and those who can see it sit in awe and say, "How could no one ever believe that you truly exist?"

Another universal language God uses is color. It's not by accident that in Exodus 28:15 and in Exodus 39, that the description of the priest's clothes is similar to what is being described here, except it doesn't use the breastplate of judgment. It just outlines the breastplate. As I said, that breastplate is the banner that we wear. We put on Jesus when we put on that breastplate. Remember, this is spiritual armor that Paul was talking about that sends us a message and gives us hope so we rejoice in God's wonderful power. He is the One who controls our lives and goes before us to fight against our enemy, both seen and unseen. However, this breastplate was a sign, a banner that was to be worn, not just in the Old Testament but also in the New Testament. In the Old Testament, they wouldn't even go to war unless the high priest wore this breastplate. It is important to understand because this breastplate is the banner that sends a message to the devil, to the fallen angels who follow him, and to the demons and wicked spirits under his control.

We will look at all these colors, but in this chapter, I'll only look at blue. In Genesis 1:1, 1:2, and 1:3, I have taught on other subjects, but now the subject is light. Usually, we just relate to light as there is light and there is darkness, or we can see, or not see. The lights are turned off, you cannot see in the dark. When the lights are turned on, you can see everything around you. It is how we identify with light, but light has other purposes besides just being able to see something. However, without light, there is no creation. Read Genesis 1:1,

***"In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth.***

***And the earth was without form*** [Or became a worthless and empty thing. It has a very negative connotation to it. It was desolate and without form.], ***and void*** [empty]; ***and darkness was upon the face of the deep.*** [The earth was a desolate, empty, spinning planet without form and void, filled with darkness.] ***And the Spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters.***

***And God said, Let there be light: and there was light."***

So, obviously there was water here. How much water no one will ever know, but there was water and God moved upon the face of the waters. The Hebrew makes it very clear that this planet was first created for a different purpose. Satan and his fallen army destroyed it and God looked upon

this destruction and then He decided to recreate Earth. After recreating earth, the first thing God created was light! Now, when He created this light, He created a spectrum of light that can be broken up in two parts: an invisible spectrum and a visible spectrum. I don't want to get too deep into this, because it will take away from this message, but there is an invisible spectrum and a visible spectrum that were both formed by God. Some of you might be engineers or into quantum mechanics which deals with the fundamental properties and the structures of light energy which allows us to understand atoms, for instance. Atoms are the building blocks of light, and light in Genesis 1:2 is the building block and the basis for all physical creation. Without light, there is no creation. What came out of physical light are two spectrums of light; the visible and the invisible. There are other parts of visible light, but this physical spectrum of light is what we call color.

There is color in this breastplate, and the first color we are going to look at is blue. I took it out of order for a reason, which you will see in a minute. God created seven basic colors which are also illustrated in God's Word as a covenant to Noah. These seven basic colors are all in the rainbow of promise that He would never again destroy the world with flood or water. That promise was there for Noah and Noah's offspring. Read God's Word. It is in Genesis. From these seven colors, which is God's completed and perfected number, we get shades that produce thousands of colors. I have said before when we get to the Gematria, you'll see the unseen use of sevens in God's Word, not just in particular words, but in phrases and phrases that add up to be divisible by seven. (You'll see the remarkableness of how accurate God's Word is by these types of verification at another time.) Seven is the number of completion and perfection. From these seven colors, thousands of shades of colors are produced. This all comes from Genesis 1:3, ***“And God said, Let there be light: and there was light.”*** And with light came color and the spectrum.

Colors are pleasing to God; there's no doubt about it. Light is a divine process of God and a good production, according to Genesis, that stands out from darkness. You find that in Genesis 1:4,

***“And God saw the light, that it was good: and God divided the light from the darkness.”***

Light is what God created to separate us from darkness; from this desolate worthless emptiness that became without form and void, this planet Earth, prior to its recreation. He sent forth His light to separate us from that darkness and He saw that it was good. Colors are pleasing to God. It is a divine creation by Him, and it is a good creation, according to Genesis 1:4, that stands out and separates us from darkness.

It's important to know the generalities of light; the basic principles and the type of colors, especially when it's not the invisible spectrum point of view, but the visible spectrum that we relate to through colors. The type of colors that God's Word uses are in the visible light spectrum, the colors of the rainbow, and from that we get the colors in nature. This we see in Genesis 1: sky, ocean, grass, and vegetation. These colors in nature are not pure colors necessarily, but they are colors absorbed by nature which also create the many different shades of color. The spectrum of colors is visible light, which we translate into seven main colors, and those seven colors are found throughout scripture repeatedly. That's what we'll look at in this chapter.

I am fascinated with color. I remember as a little kid having the measles, the chickenpox, or other

illnesses. I caught everything that came along. Because of that, I went through a lot of crayon boxes. I was excited when I got my first 8-pack of crayons, and I think there was either a 24- or 48-pack of crayons also. After many different sicknesses, from rheumatic fever to all the diseases, I spent time in bed, and the one thing that fascinated me and kept me entertained, was all the colors in the crayon box; and I used every single one of them. No exceptions. I saw as I grew up in New Jersey some of my cousins only used a few colors, even if they got a 64 Crayola box. Not me, though. I used the whole box and I made sure that before I was done with that crayon box, every color was used in one form or another.

So, colors have always fascinated me, especially when I found out that there is color in God's book and that color is another universal language that God used and is still using today to say, "I told you so. My message has always been there." Therefore, we are without excuse. No matter where you study or what you study, you'll come across God's creation and the things that sprang forth from that creation. Whether you are a scientist or a preacher, you'll use it and you'll find out about it. Then, one of two things will happen; you will either reject it or you will dig in. I chose, in just about everything in life, to dig in before I tune it out, and then I pray that God will guide me to sort out the nonsense. There's even nonsense with colors, and that's why I warned some of you about gematria. You must be very, very careful, especially if you are not experienced in the unseen use of the gematria hidden behind the letters, its numerical values and how they are to be added up. Just as with gematria, so is color not understood; there is less damage done with colors, but it is still there.

To begin, there are four different types of colors:

1. The visible light spectrum.
2. Colors in nature.
3. Artificial colors, which are man-made colors of pigments and compounds.
4. Patterns that alter color into images.

There are also different types of colors, but that's not the focus of this chapter. First, there is the light spectrum seen in the colors of the rainbow; colors in nature; sky, ocean, grass, and artificial colors made by pigments and compounds; the patterns which alter the colors into images.

Now we will be dealing with man-made artificial colors through God's instruction to Moses, and we'll look at the symbolic meaning that is behind God's purpose in choosing those colors.

Look at blue, *tekeleth* in the Hebrew. It's used mostly in the Exodus story to show how the priests were to design not only their own clothing, but the breastplate. The best way blue is described in scripture is through the color of the sky, because it reminds us of heaven and where Christ came from. So, blue refers to Jesus Christ and where He came from; the Son of God who came down from heaven to fulfil the Prophecies of the Old Testament and to also give us eternal hope.

Go to John 6 in the Gospels where Jesus feeds the 5,000, leaves, and then His disciples are in a boat and see Jesus walking on water; then we get to verse 25,



***“And when they had found him on the other side of the sea, they [the 5,000 pursuing Him who He just fed not long before] said unto him, Rabbi, when camest thou hither? Jesus answered them and said, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Ye seek me, not because ye saw the miracles, but because ye did eat of the loaves, and were filled. [Rather than listen to the message or see the miracles that God was doing through Jesus Christ that benefited mankind. They were just hoping that He would continue to give them meals to satisfy their hunger.] Labour not [work not is a better translation] for the meat which perisheth, but for that meat which endureth unto everlasting life [the strong meat Paul refers to], which the Son of man shall give unto you: for him hath God the Father sealed. Then said they unto him, What shall we do, that we might work the works [the ergon] of God? Jesus answered and said unto them, This is the work of God, that ye faithe [not believe] on him whom he hath sent. [I am sure they were confused at this point.] They said therefore unto him, What sign shewest thou then, that we may see, and believe thee? what doest thou work? Our fathers did eat manna in the desert; as it is written, He gave them bread from heaven to eat. [Now Jesus had them right where He wanted them.] 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. [The theme of what is coming from heaven is in the next few verses.] For the bread of God is he which cometh down from heaven [Jesus is speaking of Himself], and giveth life unto the world. Then said they unto him, Lord, evermore give us this bread. [They still did not understand what Christ was saying.] 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.”***

You are looking at Him! Do I need a big banner to introduce myself or is your hearing dull as Paul also said in Hebrews? You are listening, but you do not understand. In contrast, people who faithe in Jesus Christ and are eagerly and constantly pursuing Him will never hunger and thirst, because they are pursuing and being fattened by righteousness, we read in Matthew 5. The bread of life is fattening them with righteousness from God and they will never spiritually hunger and thirst if they have the attitude they can never get enough. God wants to see your activity in your pursuit of Him. I've said this over and over; He does not want couch potatoes for Jesus.

***“But I said unto you, That ye also have seen me, and believe [faithe] not. All that the Father giveth me shall come to me; and him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out. For I came down from heaven, not to do mine own will, but the will of him that sent me.”***

My question is: Why are you reading this? Is it to do your own will or the will of the Father? I will let you answer that yourself, but I want to point out that Jesus is saying over and over that someone is coming from heaven. At four different times He makes them aware where this person is coming from, and He is trying to make them aware that He is that person! I don't know if they ever really caught on, but He was saying that He came from heaven. Remember, blue is the color of the sky. When we look up and see blue skies, it reminds us of heaven. It's to remind us of heaven, but also it is to remind us of where Jesus Christ came from. We know He came from

there because of John 6:25-32, but that is also in other areas of God's Word in the New Testament. For example, in John 6:32-38, Jesus is the one that comes down from heaven.

In addition, blue is also frequently associated with the tabernacle. You'll see that in the Old Testament, especially in Exodus, and the temple furnishings. Blue refers to where Jesus Christ came from, the heavens, and that He would satisfy their hunger and thirst. It is why we must go back to Matthew 5, which tells us blessed are the ones that hunger and thirst after righteousness. Where did that righteousness come from? Jesus was sent from the heavens by the Father to fulfill prophesy, no doubt, but also to do His will to reconcile us back to Him. It's also associated with the tabernacle, the furnishings in the tabernacle, and it is also closely connected, especially in the Old Testament, with that which is holy in God's service. By the way, that also means me and you in the New Testament. Blue in God's Word also represents the righteousness of God that was satisfied by Christ Jesus. Without righteousness, we don't have a satisfied God. None of us were ever able to satisfy God because of our lack of righteousness; not our man-made righteousness, but our lack of true righteousness that comes from God. Only Christ could break that chain and He did. It was promised in Isaiah 53:11,

***“He [Jesus] shall see of the travail of his soul, and shall be satisfied: by his knowledge shall my righteous servant justify many; for he shall bear their iniquities.”***

He did, and God is saying, “I will be satisfied; by his knowledge shall my righteous servant justify many.” Christ would justify and satisfy the requirement God had on what righteousness is; not man's point of view, but God's point of view and He did that. We are told here in Exodus that He would do it. Romans 3:25 tells us,

***“Whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation through faith in his blood, to declare his righteousness for the remission [or for the passing over] of sins that our past, through the forbearance of God;”***

There are many scriptures, but I will give one more and then move on. II Corinthians 5:21 reads,

***“For he hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin [He knew no sin; He is the bread of life who came from the heavens.]; that we might be made the righteousness of God [not of ourselves] in him.”***

Because of this, believers share Christ's righteousness since we are now in union with Christ. We put on Christ and we put on righteousness that comes from God. He imputes us with His righteousness. That is the message of Romans 4, symbolized by the color blue, as it always has been, whether in the Old or New Testaments. Jesus Christ satisfied the righteousness of the Father for reconnecting those who put their trust in Him back to the Father. I have said it over and over. He reconnected us back to the Father and it opened the highway, for lack of better words, of righteousness flowing back to us. What a beautiful picture of what Christ did for us. He opened that highway of righteousness and He reconnected us back to the Father. God allowed us, to be restored. That's what being born again is all about; being recreated, just as this planet in Genesis 1:1 was recreated by the light. Our light now is the Son of God, Jesus Christ. We are recreated and reborn just as this planet was recreated and reborn, no longer without any form and

void, but now recreated to be formed in His image as He molds us and recreates us for His purposes, the ones He originally had for us.

Colors are a part of His creation, there's no doubt about it. They are also part of the plan of God. When you understand the meaning behind the colors, it opens another opportunity in understanding God and His Word and what He has sent through the person of Jesus Christ and what He did for us. By wearing that breastplate, it's a constant reminder to the evil unseen enemy what Christ did for us. That breastplate is blaring out the message and we have only begun declaring and defining what that message is. To somehow compare the Priest's breastplate to a Roman soldier's breastplate in Ephesians is laughable. It is the milk, not the strong meat, that most of Christianity has been stuck sucking on. I'm interested in giving out strong meat of what God's Word says about the imagery in the armor of God. It opens another opportunity to understand God, what He did, and who He sent from the sky-blue heavens.

Hopefully what I have given you in this chapter will reveal the stage of life that is portrayed in living color. It is a beautiful picture. I don't know about you, but the next time I look at this planet with all its color, how it came from the basic seven colors of the recreation process, I will be reminded of Noah and God's covenant of color in the use of the rainbow, He would not destroy men and there is hope. It's a wonderful picture, so thank God for another opportunity to truly understand all the wonderful opportunities we have in this life day by day and how it is portrayed in living color to declare the message of what Christ has done and what the Father has also done for us through His Son.

I could spend weeks with this color blue, but there is one other thing I want to point out about why blue is an important color and why I chose to put it first. Go to Numbers 15:37,

***“And the LORD spake unto Moses, saying, Speak unto the children of Israel [and He is speaking to us today], and bid them that they make them fringes in the borders of their garments [for us today we put on the unseen spiritual armor, and it is sufficient] throughout their generations, and that they put upon the fringe of the borders a ribband of blue: And it shall be unto you for a fringe, that ye may look upon it, and remember all the commandments of the LORD,”***

For us today, we remember what the blood of Jesus Christ did for us and by faith we are reconnected back to the Father through Jesus Christ. Now He will send His Holy Spirit because He has a container where the righteousness of God is imputed. In addition, Jesus made it clear that we are to love one another. Have the passion to love your brethren and not just what good you can do like helping an old lady cross the street, (even though it is polite and a lost courtesy in this country) or doing something nice for someone. I'm not talking about that. Love one another, in this context, means being willing to give your life if it allows the message of what Christ has done to be conveyed to someone else. That is true love, not what God can do for you, but what you can do for others. That is true love seen as getting the message out. We are told, “Deny yourself, take up your cross, and follow Jesus.” It is a commandment, so when you look up into the heavens into that blue sky during the day, be reminded of what God is seeking from you; deny yourself, take up your cross, follow Jesus, and love one another. Fall in love with the

will of God!

***“And it shall be unto you for a fringe, that ye may look upon it, and remember all the commandments of the LORD...”***

That is why I mentioned earlier some of the early manuscripts like the Vaticanus and the Sinai Manuscripts especially. They took out the last chapter of Mark from verse 9 on. In it is one of the greatest commandments that we all have, and not just for the disciples and the apostles. I truly believe the reason why it was taken out of those manuscripts was because the devil had his way, because in that particular Gospel more so than any other Gospel, Mark gets the Great Commission out and makes it very clear that is our responsibility and a commandment from God. He also refers to the devil and his interference in it. I believe the devil had his way, but he didn't win. It still made it into the King James Version of 1611 and in today's versions. He didn't win.

We are to deny ourselves, take up our cross, follow Jesus, love one another, and keep employing the Word of God. Those are the things that Christ talks about and when we look up at the sky-blue color, knowing it is where He came from to give us an opportunity to be reconciled back to the Father and to have that righteousness once again indwelling in us if we keep trusting in Christ Jesus. It also reminds us of our responsibilities. This is not our 'to do' list because there is no one who will do a 'to do' list that says to love one another. People love to do things for others if it makes them feel good, but true love is doing things for others that makes God feel good. And what makes God feel good is having the Word employed. If it is not, then His Son coming for this planet and dying for the individuals in it past, present, and future would have been a waste. He falls in love and it is well pleasing to Him to see His will being carried out in the Great Commission. That is loving one another.

Verse 39 continues with, ***“and that ye seek not after your own heart [this is denying yourself, take up your cross, and follow Jesus] and your own eyes, after which ye use to go a whoring:”***

A better translation is to go after other gods; pursuing, worshipping, and adoring false gods. Push this verse along 3,500 years. When you do your own checklist of what you think righteousness is, you just became self-righteous. A better definition of self-righteousness is making yourself your own god because you now have put yourself in the position of Jesus Christ, knowing what is best for God and what pleases Him through your own imagination, but now the devil has control of your mind. There's no nice way of putting it. Becoming self-righteous is setting yourself up as another god, which God hates the most. In the Old Testament, the reason He became so angry at Israel, time and time again, was because of their chasing other gods. He is a jealous God. (I don't care what Oprah Winfrey thinks. She doesn't like that phrase. She is so wrong, and it is pathetic.) God is a jealous God, and you must be ignorant not to realize it, even if you're not a Christian. When you read scripture, He didn't want His people to go whoring after these other gods, and when you create yourself as a righteous expert, which means you are no more than a self-righteous person, you just became your own little god, which God hates. You are not going to be well pleasing to Him and there is no way you can be offering your holy service to Him, as the Book of Romans puts it. Numbers 15:40 goes on the say,

***“That ye may remember, and do all my commandments, and be holy [separated] unto your God [for God’s service].  
I am the LORD your God, which brought you out of the land of Egypt, to be your God: I am the LORD your God.”***

Get it in your head, Jesus Christ is the Lord our God. He has brought us out of the bondage of sin and the eternal death that comes with it. He has brought us out of the bondage of sin to be used of God; to be our God. He repeats himself in this verse.

We are to keep His commandments as the blue fringe represents. Don't go whoring after other gods, do not become your own self-made god, and remember that He is your God. He has delivered you from death, and this blue fringe reminds us our Savior came from the heavens, as John 6 puts it, to be our bread of life and to give us a second chance to realize He is the only one who should be worshipped, dedicating and giving our service to Him. He has told us how to do it, the next step is yours. That breastplate with blue is to remind us not only of what Christ did for us, but where He came from, and what our responsibilities are now: to keep getting that message out.

To be continued...

## Tried in the Fire

Ephesians 6:14 states, ***“Stand therefore, having your loins girt about with truth, and having on the breastplate of righteousness;”*** In this message we are in the last part of this verse, ***“and having on the breastplate of righteousness.”***

In previous messages we launched into different areas of God's Word trying to bring some definition to this breastplate that Paul was writing about to the Ephesians in Ephesus: what it meant in Paul's mind, what he was trying to communicate to these Ephesians, and even to all of us. This was not some breastplate that the Roman soldiers wore in battle. That's a good basic starting point, but as Paul said in Hebrews 5, that is just milk. What I have been trying to do is get to the meat of all these verses. I was very frustrated in verse 12 because even though I spent a lot of time on it, I barely touched on the information I believe Paul was trying to communicate and what God's Word communicates from front to back, from Genesis to Revelation, about this verse. As I have said many times, even though this series is focusing on verses 10 through 18, the spiritual warfare teaching will never end until the day the Lord calls me home or we are raptured in the twinkling of an eye. So that's our starting point again in this chapter. I'll be on the breastplate for quite a while so that we can understand the reason behind our loins being girded and the truth of the matter about the Christian armor in this spiritual warfare. It is then that Paul says that we put on the breastplate of righteousness.

I want to read a message I received from a person who really understand this topic. They write, ***“I was trying to understand how the breastplate was an offensive weapon. [I have been saying all these verses are describing offensive weapons.] With that explanation, the vampires and the cross, I understand completely. Satan cringes when he sees it because he knows its full meaning and no longer sees us, the man wearing it, but he is confronted by Christ Himself in that moment.”***

That's right. It is the banner that goes before us. Even though He loves us, and doesn't see us with guilt and condemnation, to think we are fighting this battle in our own strength (using whatever righteousness we try to create ourselves) isn't understanding that it is not **our** righteousness. Satan likes to keep us in that trap, but he truly knows that he is seeing us through Christ. The breastplate in the Old Testament, as I have been defining, was there for a purpose. In fact, the high priest wouldn't even dare not to wear it, because along with the mercy seat as they would get instruction, God would communicate what they were supposed to do before they went into battle. And they had plenty of battles as they were marching through the promised land, overturning communities, villages, and cities. The Lord goes before us today. Spiritually now, we put on Christ; He is our breastplate.

I can almost sense the frustration Paul was experiencing in Hebrews 5 when he was telling the Hebrews, starting in verse 12, ***“For when for the time ye ought to be teachers [In other words, “You should already know this. It should be engrained into your mind and soul.”], ye have need that one teach you again which be the first principles [the stoicheion] of the oracles [the logion] of God....”*** I am as frustrated as Paul was in his day, that he couldn't understand why people didn't remember the rudiments, the elements of the oracle in its symbolism, the Gematria,

the sacred geometry, and everything it represented.

Josephus was correct in Chapter 7, Book 5, in the **Antiquities of the Jews** when he described the high priest's garments or clothing. Josephus wrote:

***“Besides these, the high priest put on the third garment, which is called the Ephod, which resembles the Epomis of the Greeks. Its make was after this manner: it was woven to the depth of a cubit, of several colors, with gold intermixed, and embroidered, but it left the middle of the breast uncovered:”***

Josephus is saying the high priest would put on the Ephod, but that was not the complete covering the priest or high priest would wear. An opening was left in the middle of his chest and once the Ephod was put on and strapped in, it would cover that opening.

***“... it was made with sleeves also; nor did it appear to be at all differently made from a short coat. But in the void place of this garment there was inserted a piece of the bigness of a span, embroidered with gold, and the other colors of the ephod, and was called Essen, [the breastplate,] which in the Greek language signifies the Oracle. This piece exactly filled up the void space in the ephod.”***

As the Greeks saw it, the oracle covered that empty space in the ephod, and this is what Paul was referring to when he wrote about the principles of the oracle. He was reminding these Hebrews that they should be teachers of what the breastplate of righteousness should be, or what the righteousness of God is, what it has done for us, how it puts us back in connection with God, and how the indwelling Spirit along with that righteousness goes to work in us, not of our own doing but in us, to create the molded being that Christ wants us to become. And he is saying you still need milk instead of meat. Many Christians over the centuries have misapplied this verse. I can't find anyone who hasn't. If you do, let me know because I really want to contact that person and give them the credit because there is no one who has truly caught what Paul was trying to say. They are still giving you the milk specifically about this verse. Hebrews 5:13 goes on to say,

***“For every one that useth milk is unskilful [without experience is a better translation] in the word of righteousness:”***

There's no doubt that Paul wanted everyone to understand what righteousness is, how to get it, and not how to fabricate it in your own strength. If you do, you have really fallen into the hands of Satan. Too many Christians over the years are nothing but babes and don't know how to discern what is good and evil, the *kakos*, as verse 14 says. Unfortunately, that is where we are today, and I've made it my point in every message to emphasize that I'm not trying to make you righteous. That is Christ's doing. I'm trying to make you understand what righteousness truly is-- the way God sees it, not the way man sees it. From the beginning man has tried to create his own righteousness to commune and get back in line with God but has constantly failed. We will never achieve that type of righteousness in our own strength or with our righteous 'to do' list. Isaiah 64:6 makes it very clear and to the point,

***“But we are all as an unclean thing, and all our righteousnesses are as filthy rags; and we all***

***do fade as a leaf; and our iniquities, like the wind, have taken us away.”***

Whatever type of righteousness we try to clothe ourselves with is nothing more than filthy rags. Even if you are a Christian for 30 years with many accomplishments that should prove your righteousness and how good you are, you are nothing but filth wearing filthy rags if Christ is not the one implementing and imputing that righteousness. You are clothed in filthy rags and it is not going to change until you understand righteousness is not of your own doing.

In other countries Christians are being persecuted with the kind of intensity that hasn't really taken place since the days of the martyrs in the New Testament church days. And it is not just happening by the dozens, but by the thousands. It's not wrong to let you know what our fellow brethren are suffering and what they need. That's why Paul said not to forsake the assembly and, of course, once again it has been taken out of context. If you understand what Paul was saying here, the reason and meaning behind it, it was so these New Testament Christians could unify together and strengthen each other in the Word. Not only because of the terrible times they were facing, but also to see each other's needs and if they could take care of those needs as a group. Fellow Christians have written to me saying they are being persecuted and they have needs. I might ask you to participate in that along with me and this ministry, but will that give us any righteousness because we are doing something that is good in the sight of man? No, and that is where most Christians fail. Helping others is demonstrating your love for one another, your concern and your compassion, and it is being more Christ-like. That is how God is molding you into the new creature that He wants you to be. It demonstrates all that, but it does nothing to make you a righteous person. If it did, then it would give us the ability with our own means to develop righteousness in our life.

What God's Word says over and over is that righteousness is something man cannot achieve by himself; it can only be achieved through Christ. Even the best things we do and the most viewed good things we do by man is still nothing more than filthy rags to God because it is not the kind of righteousness that God is looking for. He was righteous from beginning, in the middle, and to the end. He was without sin. He had to come here and be righteous and represent the righteousness of God that was satisfied through Him and only through Him. God was satisfied with Christ's efforts, no one else. Everyone else falls short and through Christ the righteousness of God is now satisfied. It is the only representation of what righteousness is and how it can be imputed into us or else we are nothing but filthy rags that will fade away as a leaf blown away in the wind thinking that we are in line with God and what He wants from us, but really, we are just doing it our own way because it makes us feel good. That is not what God is looking for.

The same message is in Romans 5. This is an introduction to where I am going, but I want to remind us and keep reminding us through the breastplate of righteousness part of this series that it is not our own efforts that gives us righteousness. Romans 5:17-18 is contrasting Christ and Adam and tells us,

***“For if by one man's offense death reigned by one [Adam]; much more they which receive abundance of grace and of the gift of righteousness shall reign in life by one, Jesus Christ.)*** [It is only through Jesus Christ.]

***Therefore, as by the offense of one judgment came upon all men to condemnation; even so by***



***the righteousness of one the free gift came upon all men unto justification of life.”***

Because of one man, Adam, we all have physical and spiritual death. Paul doesn't even blame Eve in this case. Because Adam sinned, we are all under that curse until we recognize what the blood of Jesus Christ did and how it stamped out that curse once we start trusting in Him. Paul also writes that both grace and righteousness are gifts. We cannot earn them; they are given freely to us. Yes, Christ paid a dear price for it, but it is given to us. We don't earn it and we don't fabricate it. In other words, Paul is telling us that just because Adam sinned it doesn't mean that we must live under that condemnation any longer. There is a way of escape and that way of escape is none other than Jesus Christ. Once we are willing to understand and be in His holy service, trusting in His Word and His blood, He imputes in us and gives us freely both grace and righteousness, both gifts so we can have eternal life. Death came by the offense of one, that was Adam's offense, but righteousness and eternal life comes as a gift by Jesus Christ ***“unto all men upon justification of life.”***

Verse 19 continues, ***“For as by one man's disobedience many were made sinners,”*** but that is a bad translation. It should say,

***“For as by one man's disobedience all were made sinners, so by the obedience of one shall many be made righteous.”***

All but Jesus Christ were sinners, and because of Jesus Christ many may be made righteous. As I say, I am a work in progress. Go to any department store and turn over the item you are trying to buy to see the price, and you see 'Made in China.' Well, I am not made in China. I am made in Jesus Christ because He made me in righteousness. I am made in Jesus Christ and what a wonderful opportunity and gift He has given all of us.

In the last chapter I talked about the visible and invisible spectrums of light. We went into the color blue with some definitions and examples of what blue symbolized, in both the Old and New Testament. The color of the sky reminds us of heaven and of John 6, where that bread of life, being none other than Jesus Christ, came down from heaven. Jesus told us in those verses over and over that He is the bread of life. Most walked away from Christ wondering, “What is He talking about?” You need sight to see light and you need the Holy Spirit to begin understanding what Christ was really saying. Once you do, you'll understand all the different ways and all the universal languages through speech, through mathematics, through colors, and through stones, among other things. When we look up or even see the color blue, we are reminded of John 6 and the bread of life, but the Old Testament saints had a ribbon at the end of their garment to remind them who they served and why they should serve Him. That brings us to the connection with that which is holy in service, another symbolism of blue. Then I took us in scripture to how it represents the righteousness of God which was satisfied through none other than Jesus Christ. Understanding the colors in scripture opens another opportunity to understand God's Word and what His Son did for us.

With that review, go to Exodus 28 where God describes how the priest's clothes were to be made. In verse 15 we read,

***“And thou shalt make the breastplate [the *choshen*] of judgment [the *mishpat* in Hebrew] with cunning work;”***

There is something very interesting in this whole chapter. If you read from verse 3, it describes the pieces of the garments that were to be made for the high priest to wear; everything from the fine linen, to the ephod, to the hat, to the breastplate and that they would be made of gold, blue, purple, fine linen of the ephod with cunning work. With the same concern, the people who had the same ability to build the tabernacle would participate in the construction of this clothing. Exodus also goes on describing the curious girdle and the two onyx stones. Verse 10 tells us that names were to be engraved on them, with six names on each of the stones. Verse 11 talks about the ouches of gold and you finally get down to verse 15, ***“And thou shalt make the breastplate of judgment,”*** but something is missing here because it really doesn't tell you a particular way one of the elements was to be used in its symbolism or how it was to be fabricated into the garments and the breastplate. Read verse 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.”***

In the last chapter in this series, we looked at the color blue. Gold is not necessarily a color, but it is a color in the way we perceive it because of the brilliance and shimmering effect of this metal. In God's Word, gold represents His divine nature, His purity, and His presence, but gold had to be worked differently than the other colors. The reason why I went to blue first is because I wanted to remind us where and what the symbolism is behind the color blue. It reminds of heaven and of Jesus Christ, and we wear it because it represents the righteousness of God that was satisfied through Jesus Christ.

Now I'm going back to gold in this chapter. Even though it is listed first, I didn't start there, and you will probably wonder how gold became a color. Where many commentators make a mistake is that they don't really grasp what God's Word is saying about how gold was fabricated into a color. If you do any study on it, they assume what is being referred to must be the color yellow; the closest color to gold, like a dye, because how do you melt down gold and make it into a color? We have more ability now to create color than they did, but gold was not a color that was dyed into the fabric. Gold had a different meaning behind it. Symbolically it meant something else, and unfortunately, scholars have missed an important part. The same things have been taught in bible schools for many, many decades now. It seems like everybody closes their minds to new scholarship of all the riches in God's Word. They think they have arrived and understand everything about it. However, I have just a very small glimpse of all the riches of God's Word. It can never be exhausted.

To understand how the color gold is to be understood, look at the phrase ***“after the work of the ephod.”*** This verse is saying ***“the breastplate of judgment with cunning work; after the work of the ephod.”*** So, the same way they made the ephod, and the same way the colors were incorporated in the breastplate, was also to be done in the ephod. Exodus 39 gives more enlightenment about how this was done, and verses 8 and 9 tell us,

***“And he made the breastplate of cunning work, like the work of the ephod; of gold, blue, and purple, and scarlet, and fine twined linen.  
It was foursquare; they made the breastplate double: a span was the length thereof, and a span the breadth thereof, being doubled.”***

These two verses are almost a duplicate to Exodus 28:15, but Exodus 39:1 gives more insight, specifically about how the breastplate was created and also into the colors, with verse 3 being the key. Verse 1 begins,

***“And of the blue, and purple, and scarlet, they made clothes of service, to do service in the holy place, and made the holy garments for Aaron; as the LORD commanded Moses.  
And he made the ephod of gold, blue, and purple, and scarlet, and fine twined linen.  
And they did beat the gold into thin plates, and cut it into wires, to work it in the blue, and in the purple, and in the scarlet, and in the fine linen, with cunning work.”***

They beat the gold. I like the way the Revised Version puts it because it gives a better understanding of how that was done. The Revised Version states,

***“And he made the ephod of gold, blue, and purple, and scarlet, and fine twined linen.  
And gold leaf was hammered out and cut into threads to work into the blue and purple and the scarlet....”***

The Revised Version tells us the gold was, ***“hammered out”*** to such a thin layer, or ***plates*** as the King James says, that it resembled a gold leaf. The gold was super thin and could be worked into the blue, into the purple, into the scarlet; the other colors that were used. And no, the color was not yellow like so many commentators want you to believe. It was not a yellowish color instead of gold. It *was* gold because gold has always had a purpose. Outside of its monetary exchange value, gold had another purpose in scripture that made it precious.

My goal for this chapter is to show what gold represents in the breastplate, so go to Job 23. Gold has always had a purpose in scripture. It is divine in nature, purity, and presence. That's how God perceives gold and how God uses what we perceive as the color, the brilliance, and shimmering effect that gold produces. It also has a meaning in our spiritual lives, particularly how God is molding us through His Son Jesus Christ. In Job 23:10 Job wants access to God and says, ***“But he knoweth the way that I take: when he hath tried me, I shall come forth as gold.”*** Now, I have preached before that we are gold being tried in the fire. After talking to his friends, after all the troubles, heartaches, and losses he suffered which goes beyond even reason, Job finally concludes here at this part of the conversation with his friends, ***“But he knoweth the way that I take: when he hath tried me, I shall come forth as gold.”***

Now return to Exodus 39: 3 which says, ***“And they did beat the gold into thin plates, and cut it into wires....”*** Christ didn't have to go through what He went through. He elected to do so, and we are the beneficiaries of it, but He was tried in the fire. He was without sin. He was pure, just as one of the symbols and definitions gold, yet He was tried in the fire. He was placed on the cross even though He was pure and holy from the first day He was born to the last breath He took on that cross. He was tried in the fire. Are we better than the Master? His promises to us are

that He will be with us in that fire, and that fire has a purpose to see if we can be pure and holy for His service. That is not like some goody two shoes, but pure and holy through Christ. God sees us as pure and holy only through Christ. If Christ is eliminated from the equation, God would see us as filthy rags. I am going to be descriptive to make the point. God would see us as vomit without Christ, but He does not see us that way; He sees us through Jesus Christ. To the next super spiritual Christian who says, “You did this, and you did that. I don't think you are very holy or pure,” tell them, “Thank you. I am not really interested in how you perceive me. I am only interested in how God perceives me through Jesus Christ. And He sees me as gold tried in the fire. He sees me as pure and holy to Him for His service.”

When we are spiritually wearing that breastplate of righteousness, Satan knows it and he sees us as pure and holy. Imagine the spiritual irritation he feels with that breastplate we are wearing! Because we are clothed by Jesus Christ Himself when we put Him on and are strengthened by Him, that breastplate of righteousness is sending a message to unseen forces that have nothing but condemnation, nothing but guilt, nothing but accusations, nothing but what tears us down daily. Some of you saints need to get your heads straight, realize that, and stop insulting your Master. Instead say, “I understand your Word. No matter how much I fall short, if I get up and look unto Jesus Satan cannot hold anything against me. The unseen evil cannot hold anything against me because my banner, my place of righteousness, tells him I am holy and pure because I am gold tried in the fire.”

That message is not just in Job. I want to drive this message home until you understand it and stop living under this sense of constant guilt that keeps you from employing the Word of God. Become that salt Jesus is looking for and not that hidden light under a bushel afraid to turn left or right because you are afraid of making a mistake or that you might sin. I guarantee one thing, just as I sin daily, you will too, but it is a good thing our sins are covered by the wonderful gifts we have of grace and righteousness through Jesus Christ the way God perceives us. Isaiah 48:10 tells us, ***“Behold, I have refined thee, but not with silver; I have chosen thee in the furnace of affliction.”***

We might not like the furnace of affliction, but it is the method God has chosen for mankind Adam-like beings, and the process He uses to refine us, so we come out more precious than gold, as I Peter puts it. More precious than gold! God is looking for a metal that is even more precious than gold, but it must go through the refining processes. That breastplate is telling Satan and his minions, I'm a work in progress being refined by God, going through the furnace of affliction because Christ has gone there before me. Thank God, He made the trip all the way without failing and falling on His face like Adam. He went all the way through the whole journey, staying connected with His Father, without sin, living the law, dotting the i's and crossing the t's, and all 613 commandments, paving the way for the rest of us. The only thing is, some of you don't like the way and would rather avoid the furnace of affliction. You don't want any spiritual or physical pain. God's promise for our sicknesses and diseases is that He is a healing God and we don't have to be sick, although I don't quite understand all the reasons why some of us still are.

I'm just talking about sicknesses now, but as Christians we try to avoid pain. We don't want pain.

I don't care who you are, you're not better than the Master and some of you sometimes think you are. The Master had to come and suffer some horrible, horrible afflictions. He had to be scrutinized, He had to be mocked, He had to be scourged, He had to be tortured, and He had to bow Himself down from the throne of God to sit in for us. Like I said, you're not better than your Master. Yes, there are promises of deliverance and healing. Yes, we will have afflictions the rest of our life. I guarantee it. Put this way, this message will not be accepted in a television program and probably not watched by many, because this message doesn't offer prosperity and all the different aspects of that in the here and now. God might grant you that; He might grant you all that prosperity, but if He chooses not to, He has His reasons. Are we to question the Potter? We are just the clay. Are we to question the Potter? Absolutely not! Do I question the Potter? All the time! I am human. I say, "What the heck are you doing God? Have you lost track? I've had enough afflictions and valleys." Well, if we are to be like our Master, we need to have the mind of Christ. He did not get any relief at the end of His ministry from affliction. In fact, it just got worse. My mentor used to say, "Cheer up saints, it is going to get worse." However, He will give you the strength to go through it; that is one of the promises.

What did Paul do when he was in jail, in stocks, and beaten? He recognized that these afflictions were just another opportunity for God to be glorified and he starts singing in the middle of the night. It received God's attention that the jail fell apart. When was the last time you praised and honored God through your affliction? I must remind myself of that daily. A lot of the affliction placed on us is by our own doing because we are always trying to go our own way, thinking we know better than God which path we should take. Then, when we get ourselves into some mess, whether it is financially, relationships; whatever, it doesn't really matter. A lot of it is our own doing. We got into the mess because we probably didn't keep our eyes focused enough in His Word and taking the path that He wanted us to take because our own flesh has its own desires. This is a hard message for some of you. This message starts with me, nevertheless God's promise, because that is one of the meanings of gold, is that He is there and present with us. He might allow or put us in this furnace of affliction, but the promise is He will be there with us. The furnace purifies and separates the gold from the other stuff. If you are a Christian believer, you are being separated from the other stuff so God can use you in His holy service.

Now go to Zechariah 13:9. Once again, this is the Lord's shepherd who will be struck down. It was prophetic when Zechariah was writing it, but you can apply it to yourself.

***"And I will bring the third part through the fire, and will refine them as silver is refined, and will try them as gold is tried: they shall call on my name, [or they shall cry out and proclaim my name] and I will hear them: I will say, It is my people: and they shall say, The LORD is my God."***

We might be going through the fire to be refined, we might be hammered out as the Revised Version says in Exodus 39:3, or as the King James Version says, we might be beat on. Beat on, hammered out, tried in the fire all makes the same point, but the promise is there, and Satan knows it too. But this says, ***"...they shall call on my name, [or they shall proclaim and cry out] and I will hear them:"*** God will not leave us in the furnace. God will not allow us to be beat on, stamped on, and hammered out without Him being there all through the trip. That is a promise. I'm just going through a few verses, but you can find this throughout God's Word. Go to I Peter

1:7. I have already mentioned it in this message but go there as I track through the New Testament with at least a few verses. I have been here many times.

***“That the trial of your faith [the Greek translation, the testing of your faith by afflictions], being much more precious than of gold that perisheth, though it be tried with fire [or separated from the other stuff with fire], might be found unto praise and honour and glory at the appearing of Jesus Christ:”***

We see the same message in the Old and New Testament; the testing of our faith by afflictions in the furnace. Even though God tested Job, he would come out more precious than gold.

Another example is found in the book of Revelation 3:15. Here we see the last church, the lukewarm church that is neither hot nor cold. God wishes we would be either hot or cold, but this is the lukewarm church, and this is the church age that we live in today. What does God say about them?

***“I know thy works, that thou art neither cold nor hot: I would thou wert cold or hot. So then because thou art lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I will spew [or vomit] thee out of my mouth.***

***Because thou sayest, I am rich, and increased with goods, and have need of nothing [And boy, there are some churches today proclaiming that.]; and knowest not that thou art wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked:***

***I counsel thee to buy of me gold tried in the fire, that thou mayest be rich; and white raiment, that thou mayest be clothed, and that the shame of thy nakedness do not appear; and anoint thine eyes with eyesalve, that thou mayest see.***

***As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten: be zealous therefore, and repent.”***

What makes us rich is not what the world is pursuing, and not what the church world has adopted, but gold that is tried in the fire; the gold that is refined in the fire to separate it from the other stuff. Now we can honour, praise and glorify God, because we are a holy and pure creature through Jesus Christ, as God perceives us. There is a whole wave of Christianity that believes if everything is going well, you're obviously living in God's righteousness and God's way. That's the furthest thing from the truth. I worry when God doesn't have a furnace waiting for me, even though saying that won't get me many followers. I am not looking for followers; I am looking for people to be excited with God's Word and to once again be in union with Him and His ways. I have no interest in followers. I'm interested in people being excited by God's Word so God can mold them into the beautiful servants He wants them to become.

That is what Exodus 39 was saying. ***“And they did beat the gold into thin plates,”*** or as the Revised Version says, ***“and the gold leaf was hammered out”*** to a fine gold leaf material to be mixed in with the dyes and the different colors as described, not just for the ephod, but for the breastplate, to once again symbolize God's divine nature, His purity, and His presence. God's people are like gold tried in fire. In the midst of the hardships, we are shown to be pure in our faithfulness to God.

Put simply, what this breastplate is saying to the enemy, the unseen forces, is, “Hands off with

the guilt, the condemnation, and the accusations. They are refined creatures who I see holy and pure through my Son. So, don't come up to my throne any more with that garbage.” Jesus is there to remind Him of the price that He paid so we can wear that spiritual breastplate of righteousness. This beat on, hammered out, gold plated, very fine material was blended in with these colors and Satan knows all about God's creations, whether it's colors, stones, mathematics, or anything else. He knows what they mean to God and how God has applied His meaning through His Word. I know I am frustrating Satan and making him angry, his wrath will pour down on me, this ministry and the people around me. But I also know I'm wearing the spiritual banner, the breastplate of righteousness that separates me, because of the refining process to be holy unto God's service. His promise is that He will never leave nor forsake me. It is what gold represents in this breastplate: God's divine nature, His purity, and presence, and His presence will not leave me, and He will not leave you. As my mentor used to say, “Cheer up saints, it is going to get worse.” But we have the weapons through Jesus Christ to strike a blow in the devil's kingdom, because he is the prince of the power of the air. We're are soldiers of Jesus Christ, which is a high calling for the ones who truly understand God's Word, to employ His Word in the capacity where we were called.

To be continued...

## The Color of Royalty and Evangelism

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

In the New Testament, it is called the ‘breastplate of righteousness.’ In the Old Testament, it is called the ‘breastplate of judgment.’ The Old Testament also refers to it as the ‘robe of righteousness,’ and in the New Testament it is the ‘best robe,’ and so forth. In this chapter we will begin where we left off in Exodus, going back to the Old Testament and comparing the breastplate of righteousness to the breastplate of judgment. It wasn't some soldier's breastplate from Paul's era that a Roman soldier wore. No, what Paul is referring to is the breastplate that the high priest wore in the Old Testament. Exodus 28 and 39 describe it for us. Exodus 28:15 tells us,

***“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.”***

We've already covered the significance of the colors blue and gold. In this chapter we will look at the color purple. I'm not spending as much time as I want on any of these colors, but I'm giving enough information to help you see why color is important in God's Word. It does have symbolism to it, and it is all connected to Jesus Christ: what He created, what He is going to be doing, and what He has already done.

More than 20 years ago there was a movie called *The Color Purple*. Somebody in it won an Academy Award. In my notes, I wrote down a quote from the movie. I don't remember who said it, but this is the quote: *“I think it makes God mad when people walk by the color purple and don't notice it.”* There you get the title of the movie, *The Color Purple*. Well, I don't know if it makes God mad if people don't notice the color purple, because I don't think most people understand what the color purple symbolizes, but I know who does and that is Satan and his army. See, when they see these colors, it's a constant reminder of Jesus Christ, and all the symbolism that comes with these colors. They are definitely mad, and their anger and wrath goes without saying; not just with the colors, but more importantly to what Christ did, what He promised, what He fulfilled, and what still yet remains to be fulfilled by Him. Satan understands exactly what God's Word says, exactly what God's Word means and all the symbolism in it is a constant reminder in his face of what Christ did and is going to do.

So, with that, we will look how most of the Christian world traditionally defines the color purple. And it's okay, I'm not saying it is wrong. The color purple has always been associated with royalty in God's Word; not just royalty, but also wealth, which is why you see kings, rulers and rich people wearing purple in both the Old and New Testaments. Remember the story of Lazarus? It was that rich person who wore a purple robe that wound up in hell, the other side of the abyss or the Great Gulf, looking on at Lazarus at the bosom of Abraham. As he was experiencing what hell was like, he was just hoping and praying that someone would get the message to his family, so they wouldn't wind up in the same place that he did.



In both the Old and New Testaments, purple always goes hand in hand with rulership, royalty, and wealth. The New Testament has a more significant meaning. A beautiful picture is painted in the New Testament.

As I did last time with the color gold, I want to take us through the Old and New Testaments to see how these colors were used. I'm going to read from the book of Judges, because in each of the messages, I make it a point to show that there is nothing you can do to develop your own kind of righteousness that will please God. The Christian world has been trying to do that for millenniums, but it cannot be done. It would fall under the classification of developing your own works to please God and demonstrating your righteousness to others through "this is the way you should be, because I am this way." As the Old Testament says, it is nothing more than filthy rags to be cast away and taken by the wind into oblivion.

The reason I'm pointing this out is because God took crocks of clay, He used them, and He developed them, but they had flaws, just as David had his ups and downs. It seemed like David would never learn his lesson through life, but he had one trait that God was seeking; he realized the wretched creature that he was, and that he was nothing without his creator. When he sinned, he realized he sinned unto God. More importantly, if you read his psalms, David asked for God's grace and forgiveness. So, as I go through these verses, don't think I'm hard on Gideon. Gideon probably did a lot more than I will ever do in life, but he also had his flaws. He was a crock of clay and he would take his eyes off God, because somewhere along the line, after the victories, he was brainwashed into thinking that he could develop his own righteousness. Even if the whole intention was to do something great for God, it was still no excuse. You cannot develop righteousness or create an ornament and hang it somewhere or hang it on someone and think that you've now established an institution where people will keep their eyes focused and not drift away from God in trying to be righteous. It never was that way in God's book and it will never be that way in God's book unless you go through Jesus Christ. He is the only thing we have to point to. He adopts us if we faith in Him. All our hope is in Jesus.

You know the story of Gideon. Starting with Judges 6, Gideon's call, and how he was barely existing day by day, hiding, trying just to survive another day, because for seven years the Midianites brutally oppressed the people. The Midianites were brutal savages among these people; robbing, stealing, even killing. The people couldn't grow anything without it being stolen. They were barely surviving. Verse 5 begins,

***"For they came up...and they came as grasshoppers for multitude*** [They nearly destroyed the land.];

Verse 8, ***That the LORD sent a prophet unto the children of Israel...Thus saith the LORD God of Israel, I brought you up from Egypt, and brought you forth out of the house of bondage; And I delivered you out of the hand of the Egyptians, and out of the hand of all that oppressed you, and drave them out from before you, and gave you their land; And I said unto you, I am the LORD your God; fear not the gods of the Amorites, in whose land ye dwell: but ye have not obeyed my voice."***

Now, I believe, it was Jesus Christ Himself who came to Gideon in verse 11 and not an angel of

the Lord. Not all angels of the Lord were the appearance of Jesus Christ.

***“And I said unto you, I am the LORD your God; fear not...”*** The prophet is saying this. I'm sure God was looking for a response from these oppressed people, but they didn't respond to the prophet. There was no purpose for God sending this prophet first, if He had all intentions of coming and delivering the message Himself. Once again, God is long-suffering. He had compassion, and He was long-suffering to see if they would just turn to Him. He could then turn to them and wipe out those Midianites, but that's not what happened. He finally came to Gideon throughout Judges 6. As my mentor used to say, "Those verses established the vocabulary of doubt." Gideon had excuse after excuse and then finally he turns his sight off his circumstances and himself and puts his eyes on what the Lord was about to do. Gideon then created an altar in Judges 6:24, which was not a sacrificial altar at this point. Read verse 24,

***“Then Gideon built an altar there unto the LORD, and called it Jehovah-shalom: unto this day....”***

It was more of a memorial than an altar and was built after the fact in verses 25 and 26. Gideon prepares for battle, then God sorts out the people. They went from tens of thousands of men down to 300 men. Then they had the battle and God gave instructions about how to wage war. If you look at it from the human point of view, it was insane to try to wage war on so many Midianites, who were considered enemies of God's people, with just 300 men. God performs the miracle, however, and Gideon was faithful, and he pursues the kings after the destruction of the Midianites. Then you move to Gideon's later years starting in Judges 8:22,

***“Then the men of Israel said unto Gideon, Rule thou over us...”*** After everything was said and done, the Israelites wanted a king over them. They were never satisfied having it done by God's direction and the way He established. They wanted a king; they wanted to be like other nations. They didn't want to be different. God separated them and He made them different in so many ways, culturally, in language, and by worship, yet they still wanted to be like other nations, believing “other nations have a king so why can't we have a king?” But Gideon had no part of it.

***“Then the men of Israel said unto Gideon, Rule thou over us, both thou, and thy son, and thy son's son also: for thou hast delivered us from the hand of Midian.***

***And Gideon said unto them, I will not rule over you, neither shall my son rule over you: the LORD shall rule over you. [Gideon still wanted to do things God's way.]***

***And Gideon said unto them, I would desire a request of you, that ye would give me every man the earrings of his prey. (For they had golden earrings, because they were Ismaelites.)***

***And they answered, We will willingly give them. And they spread a garment, and did cast therein every man the earrings of his prey.***

***And the weight of the golden earrings that he requested was a thousand and seven hundred shekels of gold; besides ornaments, and collars [jewels is a better translation], and purple raiment that was on the kings of Midian, [Once again, purple symbolizes royalty worn by kings.] and besides the chains that were about their camels' necks.”***

And with that gold Gideon planned to make an ephod. Many Jewish historians outside of the Christian world have recognized this as the ephod worn underneath the breastplate. It is through

their historical studies, trying to trace it as far as they could with other historical documents, that they are convinced that Gideon was making an ephod that also included the breastplate. That is why there were jewels, gold, and the color purple. This was a breastplate, but it wasn't God who asked Gideon to do this in verse 27,

***“And Gideon made an ephod thereof, and put it in his city, even in Ophrah: and all Israel went thither a whoring after it: which thing became a snare unto Gideon ....”***

They started worshipping this breastplate because they were looking for something to worship besides God, which is no different than idol worship. It became a snare not only to his family afterwards, but also while he was still alive. There is no record in God's Word, (and I have also searched everywhere outside of God's Word), of God telling Gideon to make this ephod, this breastplate for His purpose. Why would God do this and tell Gideon to take it back to his hometown? The rightful place of worship at this time was not in Gideon's hometown. It was still with the tabernacle at Shiloh.

This story in verse 24 may sound familiar to you. This verse tells us,

***“And Gideon said unto them, I would desire a request of you, that ye would give me every man the earrings of his prey.”***

The golden earrings and so forth were used to make this breastplate and ephod. There was a lot of valuable gold here. Some have calculated 50 pounds, 70 pounds, some even higher, plus all the other ornaments and jewels. There was a lot of money involved here. Gideon didn't want to be king, but he wanted these precious commodities. And, of course, it's always disguised as Gideon doing God's work, but there were no instructions from God throughout chapters 6, 7, and 8. Previous to this, Gideon got instruction after instruction from God through Jesus Christ. Now, His voice is silent, and Gideon is making something he had no business making. This is no different from Exodus 32. I told you the story sounded familiar, and these are the things that intrigue me. I ask God to guide me in presenting the Word and to make it verifiable in God's book over and over and that is the way I preach. Go to Exodus 32:1,

***“And when the people saw that Moses delayed to come down out of the mount, the people gathered themselves together unto Aaron, and said unto him, Up, make us gods, which shall go before us; for as for this Moses, the man that brought us up out of the land of Egypt, we wot not what is become of him.”***

In other words, “We do not know what happened to Moses, so obviously we now must go back to Egypt, so let's make some gods that we know Egypt will be pleased with.” Verse 2 is the familiar part,

***“And Aaron said unto them, Break off the golden earrings [What did Gideon request? The gold earrings of the prey.], which are in the ears of your wives, of your sons, and of your daughters, and bring them unto me.***

***And all the people brake off the golden earrings which were in their ears, and brought them unto Aaron.***

***And he received them at their hand, and fashioned it with a graving tool, after he had made it a molten calf: and they said, These be thy gods, O Israel, which brought thee up out of the land of Egypt.”***

Through all of this it's obvious where they kept going wrong and why they went in the wrong direction. The golden calf here was made from the golden earrings given to them on their way out of the land of bondage. These were slaves; they were poor people. They didn't bring any assets with them. The gold was given to them by Pharaoh himself just to get rid of them, saying, “Here, take this too. We want you out of here and take all this stuff with you. Stay out. Have a nice life.”

Returning to Judges 8:24 we now read what Gideon did,

***“And Gideon said unto them, I would desire a request of you, that ye would give me every man the earrings of his prey.”***

He wanted the gold and jewels that were seized from these kings and their territories to fashion an ephod and breastplate. It wouldn't take that much in gold and jewels to make an ephod or breastplate. Gideon didn't want kingship or to be ruler over them, but with good intentions, he wanted to do something that he thought would please God. So, Gideon made an ephod and a breastplate of righteousness. Here in these verses we see it is self-righteousness created by man, and he was doing something he had no business doing. If God had told Gideon to make it, He wouldn't have separated it from the Tabernacle, because that breastplate was an instrument to communicate with God at the Mercy Seat. This is where Gideon got off track. Even so, he made it into Hebrews 11 -- the Heroes of Faith chapter. That gives me hope, because even though I fail and fall on my face, and 'unto thee, O God I have sinned,' I have examples to look back at and see that God forgave Gideon and still classified him as a hero of faith. We don't have the last words of Gideon. We just have a record of some of the things he did in that period of calm described in verse 28. Again, Gideon had no business doing what he did. He created an ornament of self-righteousness, not an ornament to be used by the high priest along with the tabernacle and the mercy seat as a communication device with God to receive instruction, especially when they would go into battle. He made it and took it back to his hometown, where it became an ornament the children of Israel went whoring after just as they did with the brazen serpent. It had to be destroyed because they started to worship it. This falls in the same category.

Now I'm not saying this just because the color purple is defined here in verse 26. What I've been trying to tell you with all these messages on the breastplate of righteousness, is that when you try to create a self-made type of righteousness, you are only creating self-righteousness that is displeasing to God. The only righteousness is pleasing to Him is Jesus Christ. Now we can live in faith and be imputed with that righteousness if we faith in Him and His blood. Be thankful we have that opportunity. If we take the other road and do what Satan is trying to have so much of the Christian world do today, create their own self-righteous image, their own golden calf, it really gets God's wrath going, and displeases Him. In a sense, the devil looks on saying, “Hurrah! Look what they are doing not only to God, but to themselves.” Don't fall into the trap that Gideon did. Furthermore, look at what happened as Gideon produced many sons in verses 30 and 31,

***“And Gideon had threescore and ten sons [seventy!] ... for he had many wives. And his concubine that was in Shechem, she also bare him a son, whose name he called Abimelech.”***

Look at how he is naming his son in this verse. Translated into Hebrew, his name has several meanings, but the closest for this word is *my father, a king*. Yet nine verses prior Gideon wanted no part of being king. However, he got sucked in through wealth and the creation of self-righteousness and eventually even named his son *my father, a king*, forever proclaiming in scripture how he fell. Abimelech was an evil son who eventually murdered all 70 of his brothers in cold blood. Developing your own self-righteousness will produce nothing more than filthy rags. I want to be clothed with the breastplate of righteousness. The righteousness of judgment in the Old Testament was no more than symbolizing who was going to be judged; the righteous one covered in the robe of righteousness, as Isaiah puts it.

For an understanding of what purple has meant, usually in this case with royalty, was what was taken away from the kings of Midian. In verse 26, the purple raiment was in the robes they wore, or the outfits that would show off, not only their wealth, but their power. We see this also in Esther 8. Most of you know the story. It starts with Mordecai not bowing down to Haman. Esther is made queen under Mordecai's guidance. (These are the people who didn't go back to the promised land when given the opportunity. They should have, but they didn't. There was a remnant that stayed behind.) Mordecai would not bow to Haman. Haman wanted to be worshipped and adored. He was a part of the Agagites, who were enemies of God, all the way back to Moses' day. The point is that Haman wanted Mordecai destroyed because he would not bow to him and give him reverence. Because of it, not only was Mordecai destined for doom, but so were all the Jews. A decree was made to destroy the Jewish people. Mordecai asks for Esther's help in chapter 4, and then Esther plans the banquet. If you don't know the story, read through the Book of Esther. Eventually, the king finally honors Mordecai and Haman is hanged, his plot destroyed, and the Jewish people survive, even though there wasn't much hope. The Jews are given a decree that they could defend themselves, just in case Haman's decision was not received in time by the outside communities and villages. It is in chapter 8, verse 15 after Haman is hanged and after the Jews are authorized to defend themselves, that the king decides to honor Mordecai. Verse 15 says:

***“And Mordecai went out from the presence of the king in royal apparel of blue [a better translation is violet.] and white, and with a great crown of gold, and with a garment of fine linen and purple: and the city of Shushan rejoiced and was glad.”***

This is one example of purple demonstrating royalty, but there is another example of someone being honored and wearing the color purple. I could give many other illustrations, but there's one important illustration that I want to give, because it might be the most important illustration for us New Testament Christians. It is in the story of Lydia. Go to Acts 16. I think this is the most important thing that you should remember about the color purple in our New Testament times of the church age. Paul is in Philippi, the beloved church in Philippi, where he wrote the joy letter to the Philippians in the New Testament, because they were always the group of people that he could count on. Even when he was not expecting anything, they would always provide him in

material goods, commodities, and/or money for the buying of materials, goods, and sustenance. They sent him money and material goods to keep his ministry and the Good News proclaimed to the untouchable areas at that time in the New Testament. This church is always remembered as a church that Paul truly loved, because he didn't have to coerce them. They just had to hear about the need and instantly they wanted to be a part of it. It's a beautiful picture painted in this letter to the Philippians. Paul loved these individuals because they gave in the way that pleases God. We pick it up in verse 11:

***“Therefore loosing from Troas, we came with a straight course ... and the next day to Neapolis;  
And from thence to Philippi, which is the chief city of that part of Macedonia, and a colony:  
and we were in that city abiding certain days.  
And on the sabbath [or the sabbath day] we went out of the city by a river side, where prayer was wont to be made; and we sat down, and spake unto the women which resorted thither.  
[They not only sat there and prayed, but they also start communicating the Good News of the Gospel of Jesus Christ. It is as simple as that.]  
And a certain woman named Lydia, a seller of purple, of the city of Thyatira, which worshipped God, heard us: whose heart the Lord opened, that she attended unto the things which were spoken of Paul.”***

Lydia was Paul's first convert in this part of Europe. Do your research if you want but believe what I'm saying is fact. Lydia was the first convert in that part of Europe in general. She was a Gentile, but she was also a well-to-do woman. We know this because she was the seller of purple. It takes a lot of work to extract the purple dye. It came from a certain mollusk shellfish in the Mediterranean. It was expensive because of the tedious and laborious process they had to go through to get a certain part of this shellfish, the fleshier inner part of this shellfish. When it was squeezed, it would shoot out a substance, along with other stuff, that would make this purple dye. Because of that, it was a valuable dye, more so than any other dyes. If you were involved in this trade, then you had the means to support not only yourself, but a large household and business. Lydia was a businesswoman. She was in the business of selling purple dye, and usually the ones who could afford this dye were well to do; people who had money, people who were rich. This purple dye was expensive, so she was a well-to-do woman. Not yet hearing Paul's message, she was still concerned about the things of God. She would go down by this river, probably to have discussions with other women who were also there, to pray along with them on the Sabbath day. She runs into Paul, and she was Paul's first convert, a Gentile and a well-to-do woman. The beginning of the church in Europe happened at that moment. Because of that, the expansion of the Good News of the Gospel of Jesus Christ that would happen, not just during Paul's time, but in the years after. It expanded rapidly, all because this woman was faithful with her riches and with the gift that God had given her to be able to be in this certain business. She might have thought that she got into this business to become rich, but God had different intentions. She made herself available and she made herself a witness of Christ to be used by Paul, and also to support Paul throughout his ministry – not just by inviting him into her home when he was in town, but through the material support of money and material things that would sustain Paul and his fellow laborers as they traveled.

Most traditional Christians will not view the color purple as an evangelistic message from God,

not only in the breastplate, but also here in the New Testament. I want to make the point that the color purple is associated with evangelism. If you remember anything, remember that. Yes, we are royalty; yes, we are chosen by God, joint heirs with Jesus Christ. That makes us royalty. That allows us to wear the best robe; the robe of righteousness.

The color purple in the New Testament is associated with power and wealth, but more importantly in its spiritual association, it is associated with evangelism and how it was used to help Paul spread the Word of God. Yes, it is about royalty; yes, it is about wealth, but here the color purple is associated with wealth in order to define and use it for the employment of the Word of God, as I've been saying over and over.

Go to Isaiah 61:10 and then I will go to Luke. This is the kind of robe that I want to wear. This verse is about those who endure affliction will be exalted.

***“I will greatly rejoice in the LORD, my soul shall be joyful in my God; for he hath clothed me with the garments of salvation, he hath covered me with the robe of righteousness, as a bridegroom decketh himself with ornaments, and as a bride adorneth herself with her jewels.”***

The translation should read: *he hath covered me with the robe of righteousness, as a bridegroom to adorn with priestly dress.* In the Hebrew the word decketh meant *to adorn with priestly dress.* We are the bride; the church is the bride today. We are the bride and we are to be adorning ourselves with priestly dress. What was the priestly dress? The ephod, the fine linen, all the colors and jewels that are associated with it, including the metal gold. But this breastplate, here the robe of righteousness, is the breastplate of righteousness in the New Testament. We are to be decked out in it. In other words, we are to be adorned with the priestly dress that Christ puts on us.

That was just a quick reference. Now go to Luke 15. That robe of righteousness also had in it the color purple, and also symbolized the breastplate of righteousness and the breastplate of judgment in the Old Testament. This is a familiar story in Luke for most of you. It talks about the best robe and the lost son and begins in verse 11,

***“And he said, A certain man had two sons:  
And the younger of them said to his father, Father, give me the portion of goods that falleth to me. [“Give me what is mine.”] And he divided unto them his living.  
And not many days after the younger son gathered all together, and took his journey into a far country, and there wasted his substance with riotous living.  
And when he had spent all, there arose a mighty famine in that land; and he began to be in want. [He spent it all chasing his own way.]  
And he went and joined himself to a citizen of that country; and he sent him into his fields to feed swine. [He is reduced now to feeding swine.]  
And he would fain have filled his belly with the husks that the swine did eat: and no man gave unto him.”***

He would be happy at this point in his life if he could just eat what the swine were eating. That is how low this son fell. That is how low we fall without living our life through Christ by faith in

Him and His blood. That is how low we fall and most of us don't realize it. The world doesn't want to realize and recognize that they are in there with the swine and on their best day they would be lucky to eat what the swine are eating. Verse 17 continues,

***“And when he came to himself, he said, How many hired servants of my father's have bread enough and to spare, and I perish with hunger! [He starts reflecting on how good he had it.] I will arise and go to my father, and will say unto him, Father, I have sinned against heaven, and before thee, [That is the right attitude. That is asking for forgiveness and realizing where redemption would come from.]***

***And am no more worthy to be called thy son: make me as one of thy hired servants.***

***And he arose, and came to his father. But when he was yet a great way off, his father saw him, and had compassion, and ran, and fell on his neck, and kissed him.”***

This is a beautiful picture. I can see Jesus Christ at the throne of God saying, “Just tell me when! Just tell me when!” Do you think the speed of light is fast? It was a mad dash to come here in a tent of human flesh to stand in for us. Because of His compassion, Christ came without hesitation and He came quickly to our rescue when God told Him to go.

***“And the son said unto him, Father, I have sinned against heaven, and in thy sight [He knew where his sin was first against. Not so much his father, but unto thee, O Lord, I have sinned just as David recognized in the Old Testament.] and am no more worthy to be called thy son.***

***But the father said to his servants, Bring forth the best robe and put it on him; and put a ring on his hand, and shoes on his feet:”***

In other words, in our day and age and in this person's day and age after Christ, (if this was a true story, but I think it was just a parable), to bring forth our best robe is to bring forth Christ and what He has done for us. He will put on the robe of righteousness and the best robe is how it is defined here. ***“Bring forth the best robe.”*** The best robe in scripture has always been the robe of righteousness, the breastplate of righteousness; in the Old Testament, the breastplate of judgment. That best robe always had the symbolism of royalty, because we are God's royalty. Yes, I am royalty, you are royalty. You might not think you are royalty, because you compare it to a physical system that evaluates how rich you are and how much you have. But that is not the way God sees us. God sees us as a spiritual son and daughter. He sees us with the best robe. He sees what we are wearing, and we are wearing Christ. We are clothed and covered by Christ, and everything that is represented in that breastplate of righteousness and the breastplate that the high priest wore now symbolizes what Christ is to all mankind. He ran speedily to the rescue of fallen man, so fallen man through Him can now live the rest of their days if they faith in Him with their best robe on. Christ puts that robe on us. We cannot do it ourselves. He has to do it.

Verse 24 tells us, ***“For this my son was dead, and is alive again; he was lost, and is found.”***

Once he was found, and once we are found, that best robe, that breastplate with the symbolism of purple on it means that we are part of God's royalty and there's nothing mankind can do to change it and there's nothing that the devil and his minions can do to change it. That's why the devil cringes when he sees the color purple because he sees us now as royalty. Like it or not Satan, I'm part of the chosen. There are royal benefits that go with it, but there is also responsibility, like Lydia took on. God clearly says and makes it a point to show what she did for



a living. The valuable purple dye that she sold was no more than a means for her to get involved with the employment of the Word of God. Once you become royalty, you have responsibility, and therefore purple symbolizes that we are to get the Word out so others can join this royal group. That's all I have to say for now on the color purple.

To be continued....

## Scarlet

I'm still on this part of the verse in Ephesians 6:14, *“and having on the breastplate of righteousness;”* The entire verse in Ephesians 6:14 tells us, *“Stand therefore, having your loins girt about with truth, and having on the breastplate of righteousness;”*

As I have said many times, this is not the breastplate used by the Roman soldiers when they dressed for battle, as has been commonly taught, whether in a commentary or in a book. That's a good starting point, but nowhere is it only what God, using Paul, intended the breastplate to be. The breastplate goes a lot farther than that. Like I said, God's Word must be verifiable, because this is an unseen spiritual armor that we are wearing, designed specifically for us by God, by Jesus Christ. He knows what we are facing in the unseen world. We might not have all the information now and, in fact, we don't. We only have a drop in the bucket of understanding about what is facing us in the unseen world, but Christ knows what we are facing, and He also knows Satan is looking for any weak link in the armor that he can penetrate to bring us down. Not understanding all the pieces of this armor and all the deep riches in God's Word has really been Christianity's failure.

I've said over and over, and I will keep saying it, probably to the last word that I ever preach, that Christianity and scholars are stuck. I don't know why it has happened. I have a few theories that I'm not going to get into, but I know it has happened. There was an outburst of knowledge between 1850 to about the turn of the century where the Holy Spirit was turning minds loose and they were starting to explore and press on, using both the Old and New Testaments and other sources related to the Bible, to dig deep into the riches of God's Word. Then, at the turn of the century, as soon as the Pentecostal and other movements appeared, especially what happened on Azusa Street here in Los Angeles, learning was diverted away from understanding God's Word to satisfying emotional needs through worship.

Do I have anything against worship? No, not at all, but when it becomes the primary focus, understanding God's Word takes a back seat. I know when it happened, but I still don't quite understand why it took place and why so many have followed that pattern. For the most part this ended the understanding of languages used in the Bible. Some people have taken language and almost treated it as the Mosaic Law would be treated if we were still under the law. They worship the language. I've said many times, I can take you from one scholar to another where they have differences of what Koine Greek and even the Hebrew truly meant, including the tenses and the moods. So, who are you going to believe? I say research it all to see who is the closest in verifying God's Word from front to back in His book. People have begun idolizing languages in ministries across this world, more in this country and in Britain than anywhere else. Of course, it creates division, differences in opinions, and confusion. I try not to bring that here. I try to sort it all out so the message stays pure and clear about what God's Word is trying to say today and what it has said throughout the millenniums.

With that, we are back to the breastplate of righteousness. We've looked at the breastplate that the high priest wore in Exodus 28 as part of the priest's clothes, and we've also been looking at it through Exodus 39. In this chapter we will stay with Exodus 28:15, which begins,

***“And thou shalt make the breastplate of judgment [Which is no more than the breastplate of righteousness or what some prophets have declared the robe of righteousness. They are all the same. Each term is there to point out the uniqueness of why we must be spiritually clothed with this garment.] 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.”***

It isn't by accident that God's Word specifically says what colors to use. Colors have meaning. In previous Spiritual Warfare messages, I talked about the invisible and visible spectrums of light. This is not the invisible spectrum of light. We see mostly the visible spectrum of light and we measure it in nanometers. Anything that falls between 400 and 700 nanometers is the visible spectrum of light that we see; for instance, in the color's gold, blue, purple and scarlet. If it falls below the 400-nanometer measurement or above the 700-nanometer measurement they are classified as invisible spectrums of light.

Now, this is just my theory, and I can't prove it with the Word of God, but I believe when Adam and Eve were created, they had the ability to see both invisible (which we can't do now) and visible light spectrum. That's my opinion. Whether you believe it or not, it won't make any difference. We don't need it to have faith in God's Word. It's just my theory. I believe Adam and Eve were complete. Everything was at their feet. They had access to all of God's creation and all the abilities that God allowed them to have at that time. They walked and talked with God and I believe they could see the heavens, but that's just a theory and my opinion. Just the same, I believe that someday in our new bodies the scales will be lifted from our eyes and we'll be able to see both visible and invisible light. Light that is just above the 700 nanometers range in the invisible spectrum of that scale is ultraviolet. One of the ways it is used is with a black light. Some of you police officers or former police officers, or those of you who watch these popular detective programs called *CSI* and others, will see some type of ultraviolet black light. If a room has been painted over, these detectives show how they can discover blood on a wall. We can't see the blood on the wall or the floor, but with a specific light, the invisible now becomes visible. They're using a spectrum of light that falls beyond the 700 nanometers spectrum to see the invisible. They're using an invisible source to make something visible. And in my opinion, one day we'll be able to see the visible and invisible, just as I believe Adam could. We could see angels coming, for instance. It's not that difficult to imagine. I am not some lunatic. I believe we will have what Adam and Eve had before they fell, when all things become right and there is no sin and no devil. We will have a new body throughout eternity to serve God and the purposes He has for our lives.

That is why I've been taking a look at these colors that fall in the visible spectrum of light: gold, blue, purple and scarlet, which is what this chapter is about. The Hebrew word for scarlet is ***towla***. This word has several different meanings, but the word used over and over in the Old Testament is usually referencing royalty, purifying and cleansing. You will find it in Leviticus 14 and other parts of the Old Testament and the Torah where this color was used, along with the other thing, like hyssop, for instance, as people would go and purify themselves. So basically, this color symbolizes royalty, purification, and cleansing, but more importantly, redemption. Translated correctly, the real color in the visible spectrum of the rainbow, is crimson, and it is associated with red. That's why so many times it is associated with the blood of Jesus Christ and

the blood of the Old Testament, seen in the offerings. To repeat, this color represents royalty, purification, cleansing and redemption.

I want to focus on the most important part I believe this color symbolizes in the breastplate of righteousness, and the way God sees us through Christ, the clothing He has put on us, and the way the devil perceives us when he comes against us. I could go to many different places in the Old Testament, but I want to go to a very familiar story that is worth a review. Then I will go into other interesting areas of how God's message of Jesus Christ is even being proclaimed through insects. Yes, bugs! No one has an excuse as Romans 1 says; no one. As I have said before, you do not have faith because you did not hear. Hearing comes first. Faith comes by hearing and hearing the Word of God. That is why it is the primary purpose of this ministry to keep proclaiming that faith comes by hearing and hearing the Word of God. How can you hear if a preacher is not sent? That is the Romans message. Hearing leads to trusting on what you just heard. Therefore, you have two choices, either act upon it or not. I will take you to a story where somebody acted upon God's Word because of what they heard.

Go to Joshua 2:1, where God charges Joshua. Moses is now out of the picture and they are marching towards the promised land. In chapter 2, verse 1, Joshua sends spies out. If you are very familiar with this story, I guarantee I'm going to a place where you probably have never been before, not necessarily with this story, but the one that follows this one. Joshua 2:1 begins,

***“And Joshua the son of Nun sent out of Shittim two men to spy secretly, [the last time they did that was 30 or 40 years prior, but it wasn't very successful. They didn't go with the attitude that they were going to spy on that city to see how to overtake it, to find its weakest points, or how they could penetrate, overtake and overcome, and do what God wanted as they marched through dozens of cities. They had the attitude that they were going to find out; not if they were going to do it, but **how** they were going to do it. Of course, they might have been acting too soon because God always gave instructions. In this case, in Jericho, He was very specific], saying, **Go view the land, even Jericho. And they went, and came into an harlot's house, named Rahab, and lodged there** [the Hebrew says *they laid there*].”***

There have been a lot of preachers, especially in the last 100 years, who try to clean up this story, but I am putting flesh and blood on this. There were two reasons why they went to Jericho, and whether the reasons were right or not isn't even the point. These people were travelling in this desert for 38 years and being flesh and blood they didn't just fall upon this house by accident. These were two male spies. It doesn't say if they were married, if they had children, or if what they did was right or wrong. As some Christians would put it, we just assume because they went to a harlot's house that they were not living in God's will. Some try to even clean it up by saying God led them to that harlot's house because it would be the line where David, and eventually Jesus, would come from. That could be true, but I guarantee flesh being what it is, that is not what these two spies were thinking. Am I condoning their behavior? No, I am not, but it happened, and I am not going to try to cover it up either. Every time you try to cover up what you think is sin, it just leads to more sin. Let God enter in and do His work no matter what the circumstance. I'm not your judge. The story continues in verse 2, where we see the king being in the flesh, knew exactly what these travellers were probably thinking once they got to a city that provided those kinds of services.

***“And it was told the king of Jericho, saying, Behold, there came men in hither to night of the children of Israel to search out the country. [The king got word that there were spies in their city.]***

***And the king of Jericho sent unto Rahab, saying, Bring forth the men that are come to thee, which are entered into thine house: for they are come to search out all the country.***

***And the woman took the two men, and hid them, and said thus, There came men unto me, but I wist not whence they were:”***

Rahab didn't have to do that. In fact, by doing it she risked her own life, but she did it based on faith in what she heard. (By the way, if you're going to spy on a certain city, just look at Washington, DC today in our own country and the scandals that come from that area, the seat of knowledge of our country, and how it operates versus how it should operate. Look at all the surrounding scandals because of infidelity.) The bottom line is, in my opinion, the primary purpose of these spies was not to gather information. However, once they were there, what better place to gather that information. What better place for people to relax and do what people do best: gossip and talk about what they are involved with in their lives, knowing very well the people who operate these types of businesses keep secrets. If they didn't, they would lose their business. It still happens today; nothing has changed.

***“And the woman took the two men, and hid them...”***

***And it came to pass about the time of shutting of the gate, when it was dark, that the men went out: whither the men went I wot not: pursue after them quickly; for ye shall overtake them.”***

Not only did she hide them, but she also lied. Here is a harlot, running a business and covering up this event at risk of her own life and now lying about it. Wow, she is not really a strong candidate for a father in today's Christianity, but according to God, she was not only a good candidate to become a father in His Word, but also had the privilege of being an ancestor of Jesus.

This story shows the critics and judgmental people for who they are. As Jesus said, when He dealt with something similar, those of you without sin cast the first stone. I've said it before, and it's worth repeating, the one who could cast the first stone, Jesus Christ, didn't cast or even pick up a stone at all. We have a compassionate and long-suffering God who is not that eager to condemn anyone to eternal damnation. If He was, He would never have sent His Son and His Son would never have been willing to suffer what He did for our benefit. Those of you without sin cast the first stone. The problem is too many in the Christian world, and other sects of religion, think they are pure. We are only pure through Jesus Christ and I will take my lead from Him. He didn't pick up a stone to cast at anyone, specifically the woman that the mob was willing to murder by stoning her. That would have taken place if Jesus did not interrupt it and stop it.

In Joshua 2:5, once the gate was shut Rahab lied and said, “They took off. They went that way. You better go. Go get them. Go chase them.” She put on the illusion that she was on the king's side, the government's side. I'm not saying to be anti-government. In fact, if you read Paul's letter, he says to honor it, but when honoring the government means putting God in the back seat,

instead of the priority that you should worship, you have to make a choice. You shouldn't worship any government, and if your government is asking you to do something that takes you away from honoring God, then you have to make a choice. God is first, government is last. In verse 6 we read,

***“But she had brought them up to the roof of the house, and hid them with the stalks of flax, which she had laid in order upon the roof.”***

There are so many messages in this chapter, but I have to press forward because this chapter's subject is the color scarlet or crimson. These men were confused, chasing ghosts, because they believed this harlot Rahab and they went and pursued exactly where she said to, as we read in verse 7.

***“And the men pursued after them the way to Jordan unto the fords: and as soon as they which pursued after them were gone out, they shut the gate.***

***And before they were laid down, she came up unto them upon the roof;***

***And she said unto the men, I know that the LORD hath given you the land*** [She is making a faith declaration], ***and that your terror is fallen upon us, and that all the inhabitants of the land faint because of you.*** [or melt because of you in the Hebrew.]

***For we have heard*** [There is no faithing without hearing. Hearing must come first, then faithing. She heard, and faith comes by hearing.] ***how the LORD dried up the water of the Red sea for you*** [40 years prior to this event here], ***when ye came out of Egypt; and what ye did unto the two kings of the Amorites, that were on the other side Jordan, Sihon and Og*** [the giants], ***whom ye utterly destroyed.”***

Rahab made her decision based on what she heard about these children of Israel and about how their God went before them. She made the choice that she wasn't going to be loyal to her government or her king, but loyal to the God of these Israelites, based on what she heard. Some of the things she heard had happened decades before she ever met these two spies.

***“And as soon as we had heard these things, our hearts did melt, neither did there remain any more courage in any man, because of you: for the LORD your God, he is God in heaven above, and in earth beneath.”***

She stepped over and drew a line in the sand and said, “To heck with these people and the gods they serve. I am going to serve the God of the Israelites.” And why not, based on the stories she heard? She had faith on what she was hearing, without seeing. Hearing comes first, then trust comes because of what we heard, then we must make a choice. Rahab acted upon the choice. Some call her a liar; I call her a hero of faith because she chose the right side. She chose God's side, not the side of God's enemies. Give me people like Rahab. I'll take them every day of the week. You can keep the self-righteous ones who don't sin and go around in their self-made pure white robes. I'll take these types of sinners who recognize that when it comes time to draw the line, they're going to be on the right side of God, not joining the enemy's camp. Verse 12 goes on to say,

***“Now therefore, I pray you, swear unto me by the LORD, since I have showed you kindness*** [love and loyalty is a better translation], ***that ye will also show kindness unto my father's house,***

***and give me a true token*** [or *a sign* is a better translation]:

***And that ye will save alive my father, and my mother, and my brethren, and my sisters, and all that they have*** [not just them, but all that they have], ***and deliver our lives from death.***”

I get prayer requests almost every week and sometimes several times during the week. I have questions such as, “I am a father and trusting and acting upon God's Word. I have children and they are not necessarily following God right now, but I have taught them the Word. I try to be a living example of a father with all my flaws, through the ups and downs trying to make them understand that when I put my focus back on God, it reminds me that He never really left me. He is just waiting for me to play catch up and He did not let me fall completely. He was there to catch me to preserve my ways; the ways that benefit Him, not serve my purposes so I can get up again and start being a soldier of Jesus Christ.”

They are worried about their children. All you can do is keep teaching the Word and hopefully they have listened to a preacher or pastor who has also preached the Word, because sometimes they, especially youth, listen to outside sources more than their parents. This message also stated, “I do not believe my faith can save you but I do believe, or else you might as well throw the next few verses out of this chapter, that God will honor my faith and keep exposing the truth to my children or loved ones. They still have to act upon what they have heard, but I claim the promise until the day that I go to the grave.” That's the best advice I can give any of you. God will honor your faith by keeping them exposed to God's Word, one way or another. It might be through some hard times but keep them exposed to God's Word and the path they should follow. That is a promise every parent, or if you are claiming that promise for another loved one in your family, should claim without exception. And that is what Rahab did here. She was just not concerned for her own flesh and blood; she was concerned about the ones in her household. That is what we see in verse 13,

Rahab wanted a sign, ***“And that ye will save alive my father, and my mother, and my brethren, and my sisters, and all that they have, and deliver our lives from death.”***

Verse 14 continues,

***“And the men answered her, Our life for yours, if ye utter not this our business. And it shall be, when the LORD hath given us the land, that we will deal kindly and truly with thee.”***

These men were representatives of Joshua, and Joshua was representing God. Some don't like authority, but that's just the way it is. And because they were acting representatives of Joshua, they could make that statement for the children of Israel to be responsible for what is being declared in this verse. Joshua did the right thing.

***“Then she let them down by a cord [or rope] through the window: for her house was upon the town wall, and she dwelt upon the wall.***

***And she said unto them, Get you to the mountain, lest the pursuers meet you [She knew what direction she sent the pursuers. Now she is telling the Israelites to go in a different direction]; and hide yourselves there three days, until the pursuers be returned: and afterward may ye go your way.”***

This chapter is a picture of Jesus Christ, just as it is a picture of what Rahab's faith did and what she accomplished by trusting in God's Word. It also points out the flaws of human beings and shows the hope that we all have.

***“And the men said unto her, We will be blameless of this thine oath which thou has made us swear.***

***Behold, when we come into the land, thou shalt bind this line of scarlet thread [The same color that is also used in the breastplate.] in the window which thou didst let us down by: and thou shalt bring thy father, and thy mother, and thy brethren, and all thy father's household, home unto thee.***

***And it shall be, that whosoever shall go out of the doors of thy house into the street, his blood shall be upon his head, and we will be guiltless: and whosoever shall be with thee in the house, his blood shall be on our head, if any hand be upon him.”***

If they left Rahab's household and decided to save themselves, they would die. But if they stayed in Rahab, the harlot's household, they would be saved. There were no exceptions.

***“And if thou utter this our business, then we will be quit of thine oath which thou hast made us to swear.***

***And she said, According unto your words, so be it. [They both made commitments] And she sent them away, and they departed: and she bound the scarlet line in the window.”***

That scarlet line was to symbolize redemption, which is not the royalty part, but the redemptive part of God's nature represented by Jesus Christ for all mankind. This was a picture of what was still yet to come. Those under the scarlet thread would be redeemed and saved and those that are not are destined for eternal damnation.

***“And they went, and came unto the mountain, and abode there three days, until the pursuers were returned: and the pursuers sought them throughout all the way, but found them not.***

***So the two men returned, and descended from the mountain, and passed over, and came to Joshua the son of Nun, and told him all things that befell them:***

***And they said unto Joshua, Truly the LORD hath delivered into our hands all the land; for even all the inhabitants of the country do faint [or melt] because of us.”***

These spies didn't come back with a message of doom and gloom. They did describe them as giants and themselves as grasshopper, but they didn't say they would be destroyed. They came back full of faith, even after visiting a harlot's house. I believe they came rejuvenated with even more faith because they saw an outsider trusting God on what she heard, and she wanted the opportunity to act upon it and she did. Talk about becoming energized for Jesus. They really became re-energized and if anything, the visit at that harlot's house rejuvenated their faith and understanding about the victory that was still ahead.

If you move along in Joshua, we see that this did not happen the next day and it did not happen the day after. They still had to cross Jordan and once they crossed Jordan, they still had to be circumcised. Then once Jericho falls, they get instruction on how they would take Jericho and



that lasted for a period of time. When we come to chapter 6:25, Joshua remembers the two spies and their commitment. Joshua had to honor it, and he did. Read about it in 6:22,

***“But Joshua had said unto the two men that had spied out the country, Go into the harlot's house, and bring out thence the woman, and all that she hath, as ye sware unto her.”***

God did not forget her. He made sure Joshua remembered the event and He made Joshua remember who He was going to deliver outside the camp of the Israelites.

***“And the young men that were spies went in, and brought out Rahab, and her father, and her mother, and her brethren, and all that she had; and they brought out all her kindred, and left them without the camp of Israel.”***

Then in verse 25, ***“And Joshua saved Rahab the harlot alive, and her father's household, and all that she had; and she dwelleth in Israel even unto this day; because she hid the messengers, which Joshua sent to spy out Jericho”***

This wasn't the only reason she was delivered. These verses in the Old Testament don't give the full picture about why she was delivered. Not only did she hide the messengers, she also faithed. Paul, looking back in Hebrews 11:31, says, ***“By faith the harlot Rahab perished not with them that faithed not, when she had received the spies with peace.”*** It wasn't just because she delivered the messengers. Just as I say over and over, we use the whole book for a complete understanding. So, we can see that she was saved most importantly because she trusted on what she heard. Once she got the instruction, she acted upon it. In this case she was to put a piece of scarlet thread outside her window, so that when they returned in the future her redemption would be on the Israelites blood, just like Jesus Christ's redemption was on his.

I have a little note in my Bible about the story of Rahab: ***“Many writers have said that throughout Scripture this concept of the ‘scarlet thread’ can be found: the line of the blood atonement began in the Garden of Eden, was exemplified in the Passover, and was finally fulfilled in Christ's sacrifice on the cross. Here the thread was the means of deliverance for Rahab and her family. All who were to be delivered had to trust Rahab and stay in her house.”***

As Rahab trusted what she heard and eventually showed that trust by acting on what the spies told her to do, Rahab's household would also have to trust her. They had to believe, or in this case, begin trusting on what they heard from Rahab. Rahab's family didn't hear the stories she heard as a result of being in a harlot's house. What better place to get an understanding of the events that happened in prior decades? Then Rahab told her family, and her family had to faith and believe that what Rahab was saying was true. Then they had to act by staying in her household instead of trying to escape.

The scarlet color as a sign of redemption is quite clear in the story of Rahab. It is what Jesus Christ did for us when He spilled His blood. And because of the blood of Jesus Christ we are recognized by God. It's very simple. Satan also sees us, and he sees that same blood, our covering. Just as Rahab heard and acted, we must hear and we must keep on hearing. We must faith, and we must keep on trusting God. We must act, and we must continually keep acting

based on what we know about God's Word. It's very simple. The scarlet color symbolizes redemption. This story about the color scarlet isn't just here in Joshua. We also find it in nature. I do not really like bug, especially spiders. I don't like ants either. In fact, I don't like anything that really creeps around. Although I dislike some things more than others, they are still part of God's creation, and they are yet another way that God has clearly stated His message. If Jesus tarries and the years go by as I keep preaching, I will keep pointing out all the ways that God shows how His Son would be the redeemer.

I wonder how many of you have heard of the coccus ilicis? It's a worm, but it's not just any kind of worm. The life of this worm has a purpose. If you wonder why I'm using this as an illustration, it's because the Bible does. This kind of worm has a very unique way to protect its young. It also has an interesting process it goes through to give it life. I'll just read it.

***“When the female of the scarlet worm species was ready to give birth to her young, she would attach her body to the trunk of a tree, fixing herself so firmly and permanently that she would never leave again. [As Christ did.] The eggs deposited beneath her body were thus protected until the larvae were hatched and able to enter into their own life cycle. As the mother died, the crimson [or scarlet] fluid stained her body and the surrounding wood. From the dead bodies of such female scarlet worms, the commercial scarlet-colored dyes of antiquity were extracted.”***

What a powerful symbol or picture of what Christ would do on that cross.

***“From the dead bodies of such female scarlet worms, the commercial scarlet-colored dyes of antiquity were extracted. What a picture this gives of Christ, dying on the tree, shedding his precious blood that He might ‘bring many sons [and daughters] unto glory’ [and eternal life].”***

That is one of the messages of Hebrews; to bring us into eternal life. By dying, this worm shed its fluid and this fluid would stain the wood and would form a protective covering while the eggs were hatching, allowing these eggs to come into existence and to live its life, until it goes through the same process again. Without Jesus Christ attaching himself to that tree, we could not spring into eternal life. We would just exist in eternal death. Jesus was even described by David as a worm in Psalms 22. Psalms 22, 23 and so forth are considered Messianic Psalms. Go to Psalms 22:1 to begin.

***“My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me? why art thou so far from helping me [or better yet, why art thou so far from my salvation], and from the words of my roaring?”***

That is what Jesus Christ said, but I'm sure plenty of you have wondered in your weaker moments, “Why have you forsaken me, O Lord? Why is your salvation so far from me? Why do I keep on roaring, but you are not listening?” Verse 2 continues,

***“O my God, I cry in the daytime, but thou hearest not; and in the night season, and am not silent.***

***But thou art holy, O thou that inhabitest the praises of Israel.  
Our fathers trusted in thee: they trusted, and thou didst deliver them.***

***They cried unto thee, and were delivered: they trusted in thee, and were not confounded. But I a worm, and no man; a reproach of men, and despised of the people.”***

A worm, this coccus ilicis, in the Greek are called *kermes*, is where we get our English word crimson. David described Jesus as a worm as he looked forward into the future in the Messianic Psalm in verse 6, ***“But I a worm”***. Jesus died on a tree, on a piece of wood, that He was nailed or stuck to and bled all over it, just as that worm does. David knew this, or he was inspired by the Lord to know it, to use an example in nature for another source of understanding of what was still yet to come. Now we benefit by looking back and not only seeing God's Word, but God's nature giving us example after example, so man would not have any excuse. Jesus is described by David as a worm. He died on a tree and He bled all over it. Now we see even the natural world has drawn a picture of Jesus' blood being shed for us. That crimson scarlet color represents that. The color that came from this worm would eventually come as Jesus Christ, flesh and blood like us and to be, in a sense what David was saying, a worm to give us eternal life and the chance to even have eternal life. By having that ability, a covering needed to happen and that covering was a spilling of the blood. Just as that worm had to spill its blood and stain the wood and the eggs, this eventually would be illustrated in the person of Jesus Christ as He shed His blood on that tree.

The color crimson represents Jesus' blood that was spilled for our benefit. It's the color that symbolizes redemption and Satan knows it. When he sees that color in our spiritual breastplate, he sees a person who has been redeemed. With that, I want to summarize the four colors we covered in this breastplate of righteousness. In Exodus, color is important, and even in the Colossian letter Paul uses that illustration.

**Gold** represents God's divine nature, purity and presence. It reminds us that like gold, we are tried in the fire. We are shown to be pure in our faith, holy unto Him and faithful, pure in our faith and our faithfulness to God, His Son, and His Word.

**Blue** is the color of the sky and the heavens. It is there as a reminder for us to remember where Jesus descended from to save mankind from eternal death. It also reminds us how Jesus Christ satisfied the requirement for righteousness that was established by the Father. We can never fulfil that. Now the highway of righteousness is flowing once again, not by our works, but by Jesus Christ and what He did; not what we can do, not what we did in the past, and not what we can do in the future; only by what He did on that cross.

**Purple** symbolizes royalty and the robe of righteousness. That type of robe is only put on us by Jesus Christ. Satan cringes and he is angered when he sees that robe on us. It is no different than what happened to Joseph.

That is in Genesis 37:4, ***“And when his brethren saw that their father loved him more than all his brethren, they hated him...”*** because of verse 3, ***“Now Israel loved Joseph more than all his children, because he was the son of his old age: and he made him a coat of colours.*** [Colors have always been a symbol for something.]

***And when his brethren saw that their father loved him more than all his brethren, they hated him, and could not speak peaceably unto him.”***

When they saw that their father not only loved him, but also what he put on him as a symbol, they hated him. That is what Satan is thinking and going through when he sees Christ putting that robe of righteousness on us. Hate is a weak word to describe what he is going through and what he is feeling. The robe of righteousness is the last thing he wants to see. That's why purple symbolizes that we are the royalty of God. We are a prize possession because of what Christ did. If we live in faith, we have this righteousness imputed in us, and Christ puts His robe of righteousness on us to symbolize our royalty with God once again. Just as Joseph's brothers hated him, Satan hates us and will not speak peaceably to us. In fact, he is at the throne of God accusing us.

**Scarlet**, the last color, is for purification and cleansing. It also symbolizes royalty. More importantly, it symbolizes redemption by the blood of Jesus Christ, just as David pointed out, not by accident, this particular worm, the *kermes* in the Greek. By the way, it was a very valuable fluid that came out of this worm that formed this crimson or scarlet dye. It was expensive. That is why I hate anyone who teaches or preaches on the blood of Jesus Christ and tries to cheapen it by attaching what we can do to improve on it. We cannot; it is impossible.

Because of these colors, you hopefully have a better understanding about why we live in the visible light spectrum. Just as God recreated Earth, He allowed us to be recreated. Just as the light recreated Earth, we are recreated by the light of Jesus Christ. That is what Colossians 1 is saying. It is important to point it out because most of you have read right through this and obviously applied the first meaning to it, but there are other meanings that need to be applied to this verse. Just start with verse 15, the pre-eminence of Christ.

***“Who is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of every creature:  
For by him were all things created, that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers: all things were created by him, and for him:  
And he is before all things, and by him all things consist:”*** Including the light.

Back up to verse 12: ***“Giving thanks unto the Father, which hath made us meet to be partakers of the inheritance [Joint heirs once again with God through Christ.] of the saints in light:”***

The Greek word used there is *phos*, meaning ***“Light as seen by the eye*** [What we physically see of the visible light spectrum.], ***and metaphorically, as reaching the mind, whence to make to appear. ‘Primary light is a luminous... force, from certain bodies, which enables the eye to discern form and colour.’*** Through Christ and the form, He took in human flesh, we now can perceive the light that He revealed and how that light recreated us, so we are new creatures born in Christ. But also, this light took shape in color and it has since the beginning of creation or the recreation. Color declares the light of God's Gospel to all mankind and the symbolism of what this light produces, the different colors it produces, and what those colors mean. ***“Light requires an organ adapted for its reception.”*** This particular organ, the eye, is adapted right now to the physical light spectrum.

Verse 12 in Colossians 1 tells us, ***“Giving thanks unto the Father, which hath made us meet to***

***be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light.***” This is not only the visible word, but the visible spectrum of colors formed between 400 and 700 nanometers, to make us see, not just hear, and then to eventually understand what these colors mean. Usually when Paul was writing, there were multiple meanings, because he understood the Old Testament like no other apostle. By taking a look at it in a different perspective, not just the perspective that traditional Christianity sees, we have a better understanding of what Paul was trying to say in all the aspects of what he was proclaiming and declaring and to give us knowledge about God's Word.

I will live as a partaker of God's inheritance because I am a saint who is living in the light, living in the Word, and living in the understanding of the Word, including what the Greek word says, the colors of the Word. And colors play a very important part. In fact, as I said before, it was the covenant with the colors of the rainbow that was made between God and mankind. We like to say Noah, but it was Noah and the rest of creation from that point on, until the new world and the Earth and a new universe are recreated once again.

I hope that you have a better understanding of what all these colors mean in the breastplate. I guarantee Satan does. He knows what gold means; he knows what blue, purple, and scarlet or crimson symbolizes. He knows all of it and he has done a pretty good job in disguising all its symbolic meaning. It's a shame that it has been hidden, but I'm here declaring and proclaiming it to give notice to Satan and his minions, 'if God be for me who can be against me?' That includes both visible and invisible beings. I know what these colors mean, and I know what they symbolize and not just the colors in the breastplate. We will move forward in this teaching and look at the other aspects of the breastplate. But if I had nothing else but these colors, I thank God that He has given me a little more insight and knowledge that, as my mentor used to say, because he made up the word, “*concretionizes*” my faith about where to put my trust. I will keep on hearing; I will keep on trusting His Word and I will keep on acting on that faith. Hopefully you will also, because we are royalty that has been cleansed by the blood of Jesus Christ. We know where our Lord came from and where He descended from, and we know that the trial of our faith will produce something more precious than gold. I hope this series on the colors has enlightened you.

To be continued...

## Precious Stones and Righteousness

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

Do not fall into the trap of producing your own righteousness, which is very easy to do, but be clothed with the righteousness of Christ, wearing His robe of righteousness, and putting on the breastplate of righteousness that we see even back in Exodus 28:15. That verse tells us,

***“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.”***

Since teaching this, I received many messages saying that you weren't aware what this fine twined linen consisted of. One message said, *“We are people of flaxness.”* That's right. And it includes all the processes flax goes through, not only to be separated, but also prepared before it can be sent to the spinners to produce the linen that is worn as described here in verse 15, ***“and of fine twined linen, shalt thou make it.”***

Verse 16 goes on to describe the linen, ***“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 [actually, and thou shalt fill it in fillings of stone], even four rows of stones:”***

Then the verses begin listing the four rows: the first-row topaz, the carbuncle; the second row emerald, sapphire and so forth; the last row, the jasper. They are all ***“set in gold in their inclosings”*** or fillings. Not just any kind of stones were used. They are jewels, precious treasures, and they all have a name of the children of Israel written on them.

These stones all have meaning, including the names of the children of Israel. God didn't just make up some haphazard design to make it all look good. I'll not only get to the meaning as far as the children of Israel – in this case, the 12 sons, according to the 12 tribes and what it means – but also more importantly what this breastplate means and the symbolism of those names and stones in the church, the age of dispensation. We now have a wonderful opportunity because we live in that age of dispensation. In fact, we are coming to the end of it, because I believe the end is near. I'm not a doomsayer. I don't live my life in gloom and doom. I know what happens just before the end and I cannot wait to be taken as the bride up to feast at that marriage supper of the Lamb with the groom, Jesus Christ. In this part of the series, I will show how this breastplate of righteousness also has meaning and definition, not only what righteousness looks like through Christ, but also the message it has for the church.

***“And thou shalt set in it settings of stones [or fill it in fillings of stone]”*** Not just any stone, but precious stones, certain types of jewels. For centuries there have been arguments: which jewels, what type of jewels, and no one really knows for sure, because there are so many different translations and opinions about which jewels were used and the supposed names of some of

these ancient jewels. As time went on, in their opinions, others renamed the jewels and now here lies the confusion. I'm not so much interested in the definitions and the meanings of the jewels themselves, I'm more interested in the names of the jewels and what they represent, not only for the 12 tribes, but also for the church and that is how I will approach this as I move forward.

These jewels have colors and I will touch on some of that as I move forward with each individual row in the four rows of the breastplate. One thing is for sure, they are precious stones, and they are jewels, not just in the Old Testament but also in the New Testament. Go to I Corinthians 3, where Paul is telling the Corinthian church that Jesus is the foundation, not individuals; not people, but Jesus. In verse 4 some came and said, I am of Paul; others came and said I am of Apollos. They were following a person that they identified with instead of understanding what that person's message was and what foundation he was building on. Obviously, Jesus is the foundation, so we pick it up at verse 5.

***“Who then is Paul, and who is Apollos, but ministers by whom ye believed [or faithed], even as the Lord gave to every man?”***

***I have planted, Apollos watered but God gave the increase.”***

Paul is saying he has planted the seed and along came Apollos and watered, giving it the type of nourishment to make that seed sprout forward. Paul wasn't having an ego trip about it. He wasn't really concerned who was getting the credit when he wrote, ***“I have planted, Apollos watered”***. Ego was out the door with Paul. He was happy and satisfied when he said, ***“but God gave the increase.”*** There are a lot of plants that start off with a seed. You plant it and see it sprout through the ground, break forth, and be lifted, heading towards the sunshine in the sky, growing into a blooming flower or whatever. Some of us don't have green thumbs. I know I don't. Even though I plant and water, it doesn't grow. In fact, some of us are so bad in dealing with plant life or gardening, all we must do is look at whatever we're trying to grow, and it just keels over. I'm being ludicrous to make a point here. Paul wasn't concerned with who was going to get the credit. He was only glad he planted the Word and that someone came along when he was not there and watered and nourished it, so it had an opportunity to break forth and grow in Christ. It won't do any good and it won't last very long, no matter how much you water, unless God takes over and the message sinks into your mind and heart and doesn't get twisted into some carnal desire to manipulate the Word for some other benefit.

***“I have planted, Apollos watered; but God gave the increase.”*** If it is good seed, it will take root and grow with the necessary nourishment. It is the Word of God here that nourishes us. He gives us the increase and makes us flower into the lily of the field, if He so desires, because of the knowledge and the Word that's now penetrating our being. Then the Holy Spirit takes it and works us into a new creature in Christ. In verse 7 Paul is again saying the same thing,

***“So then neither is he that planteth any thing, neither he that watereth; but God that giveth the increase.”***

The commission is to plant and water; I can't save anyone, just as Paul couldn't save anyone, and Apollos couldn't save anyone. God does the saving. He is in control of our individual growth. He goes to work with us as individuals if we have the strong desire to be nourished as a plant, to

grow and increase even further than we thought possible. When a plant breaks forth from the ground it looks up to the heavens. It doesn't look for a limit of how much it can grow. Now, in the life of a plant there is a stopping point where it can't grow any further. And there have been some kinds of strange looking plants that grow unnaturally large. That reminds me of Christians who, being fed and watered, cannot get enough. The only reason they stop growing is because they were plucked from the roots, from the stem that was giving them the nourishment. That is what Paul was saying: God gives us the increase as long as we stay connected. There are no limitations in how far and where God wants us to go, or better yet what He wants us to become in Him, if we stay nourished through our connection to His Word, which connects us to Him, and learning His Word. Faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the Word of God, absorbing everything we can. Keep listening, keep reading, and keep studying, hopefully under a ministry or church that doesn't lead you astray, then God promises the increase. Verse 8 goes on to tell us,

***“Now he that planteth and he that watereth are one:”***

Truly we are supposed to be unified under the same purpose and the same commission. In today's church world that is hard to find. Churches go through their phony acts and pretend like they all agree, but as soon as they leave their studios, or as soon as they are outside of the church front doors, they start hypocritically criticizing each other's message or methods. (If you don't align yourself with their message, why are you there in the first place? Have the guts to go out and do your own thing if you think God is leading you with a message that's truly in line with His Word.) But we see the church world constantly stabbing each other in the back. Believe me, I've been there. I've seen a lot of criticizing of each other's methods and teaching, yet as soon as they get some benefit from the association they say, “Oh, how you doing brother? How are you doing sister? Glad to see you again. I have heard so many good things from your ministry. I have been praying for you.” They are phonies. It's the sad case of today's church world.

Paul didn't want any part of that. He says, ***“Now he that planteth and he that watereth are one [They should be one in unity in the faith of the Great Commission that they were called to commission, which is teaching people and churches God's Word.]: and every man shall receive his own reward according to his own labour.”***

Yes, you will be rewarded because of your labors. Not just preachers, but individuals called in the capacity they were called to participate in. In the Greek, *labour* is a very definite word that proclaims we will be rewarded through all our toils and troubles. This is the kind of labor that comes along with preaching the Word of God or participating in the Word of God. I haven't misled you. I pray to God constantly not to let any of my desires slip into the preaching, except the desire to preach it correctly, which is verified in His Word. So, another way to read this verse would be, ***“and every man shall receive his own reward according to his own toils and troubles.”*** Paul does not give any illusion that this is going to be an easy task. It is going to come with toils and with troubles, whether you are a preacher, or supporting the preaching in a church in the capacity you were called. That could be through giving, participation or other means, and you'll receive your share of toils and troubles. My mentor used to say, “Cheer up saints, it is going to get worse.” Paul was saying in this verse that we are to expect it. Verse 9 continues,



***“For we are labourers together [in this Commission] with God: ye are God's husbandry, ye are God's building.”***

This verse should read *ye are God's cultivated field* because it was written in the time where a piece of land could have a building that gave you a covering, a place to live, but also had space around the building to cultivate for food. ***“For we are labourers together with God: ye are God's cultivated field, ye are God's building.”*** You are not Paul's, you are not Apollos', you are not anyone's. You are God's and you are going to build a temple of the Lord on this field.

***“According to the grace of God which is given unto me, as a wise masterbuilder, I have laid the foundation, and another buildeth thereon. But let every man take heed how he buildeth thereupon.”***

Paul, being the master builder here in this Corinthian church, is saying he has laid the foundation. He goes on in verse 11 to explain what that foundation is. He knows another will come and build on that foundation. When building, start with the foundation. That's what Paul is talking about here. He built that foundation, and another will build thereon. The end of verse 10 contains a warning,

***“But let every man take heed how he buildeth thereupon.”***

In verse 11 Paul goes on to explain,

***“For other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ.”***

Again, he is saying he has laid the foundation and the message was based on Jesus Christ. Jesus Christ is the perfect completed rock or foundation that any building should be built on, spiritually speaking. Jesus Christ is that rock and foundation. It is why he warns in verse 10 to be careful how you build on that foundation. The Lord, looking on, warns the one who is building on that foundation that they'd better stay true to the message of the Good News of the Gospel of Jesus Christ, without twisting it to somehow benefit from it, or to achieve their present desires. There is only one desire that I have for this ministry. I would like to have a studio and I'm still praying about it. I'm still looking for a studio somewhere locally that we can call our home, even though it is just temporary for here and now while we are fighting the good fight of faith on this planet Earth. I pray this studio would be where it has the necessary seating so I could open it up on occasion, for not only the locals, but for the ones who are visiting so I could meet you face to face. We've already talked about it behind the scenes and it would also be big enough to have areas in this studio where you could participate and help with some of the things that need to be done. I have other things that I want to do as part of it, but I am still trusting God for it. I was saying that I only have one concern and that is to keep preaching God's Word correctly, not some definition, explanation or theory that I think God's Word says, but what I find in His Word.

I've said many times and I will keep saying that the message must be verifiable in God's book from the front cover to the back cover; all 66 books. I believe there are more than 66 books. For almost 2,000 years, the Apocrypha was included and not until we got to the 1800s was it taken away from the Holy Bible. Someday I'll go into all its history. I have used it before when I

preached on Esther to bring out some of the points that you don't find here in God's Word. I don't need the Apocrypha to make God's Word verifiable, but it belongs in there. In the original 1611 King James Version it was included. Like I said, it was included all the way up to the 1800's and was included for 1400 years prior to that from about 200 BC to the 1800 AD period. That is the way I preach, and I ask God continuously to keep me close to His Word, because I take very seriously what I communicate to you. I think He has done that, and according to the messages from people who have written in, even though some of you are very well taught, you are getting things out of God's Word now that you weren't aware of before. Like I said, there is not any one single ministry or person that can even come close to covering all the riches in this book.

What Paul was saying here, is whether it is Paul or Apollos, we must build on a foundation that is none other than Jesus Christ, The Rock, and the ones preaching about the Good News of the Gospel of Jesus Christ. Verse 12 continues,

***“Now if any man build upon this foundation gold [I have taught what gold symbolizes in the Bible], silver [which symbolizes redemption], precious stones [or jewels], wood, hay, stubble;”***

This verse leads us to Exodus 28, and the next subject matter I will address on the breastplates of judgment and righteousness. That is the precious stones, those special treasures of God with the 12 tribes of Israel named on them. Through these stones, I will also show how they symbolize what Christ is to the church in the New Testament.

Paul lists six different elements in this verse, saying that these are elements that can be tried in the fire. In fact, you can refine gold and silver in the fire. It says it in Malachi and other places. ***“Now if any man build upon this foundation gold, silver, precious stones, [or jewels, which can be tried in the fire] wood, hay, stubble;”*** However, if you build on those last three elements, they will be destroyed by fire. They cannot survive in the fire. We have too many Christian churches today built today on wood, hay and stubble. I'm not talking about the physical elements; I'm talking about the spiritual elements. When tried in the fire, wood, hay and stubble would be destroyed. Imagine what would happen in a hurricane to a building of hay, stubble or wood. With wood you might have a better chance but imagine hay or stubble. They would not last five minutes. That is what some of the church world is doing today. Read what Paul says in verse 13,

***“Every man's work [or ergon, employment of the Word] shall be made manifest [or evident, whether you are a pastor, a preacher, or someone who is participating along with those ministries.]: for the day shall declare it [or it shall be revealed], because it shall be revealed by fire;”***

Just as gold, silver and those precious stones go through the refining process of fire to produce a certain quality, those elements have the necessary properties to last the fire, go through the fire, and be refined by the fire, for an end product, just as our employment of the Word of God will also be evident. It shall be declared and revealed by fire just as those precious stones, gold and silver.

***“...and the fire shall try [or test or prove] every man's work [ergon, employment of the Word] of what sort it is.”***

This is for each preacher or congregation member, there are no exceptions. The employment of the Word will be evident in your life, it shall be declared in due season, and it shall be put through the fire. The fire is used to reveal if we had the substance to go through that fire; if we were tested and proved while going through that fire and came out more precious than gold, as Peter said. We shall be tried and proved.

With that understanding, read verse 8 again, ***“every man shall receive his own reward according to his own toils and troubles.”*** In verse 13, it is the fire that reveals whether you built upon wood, hay or stubble, or whether you built upon gold, silver or precious stones, all of which have symbolism back to Christ and His qualities, which are far superior to anything we can produce. That's what I have been trying to preach in the last few chapters. Moving on to verse 14 we read,

***“If any man's work [if any man's employment of the Word] abide which he hath built thereupon, he shall receive a reward.”***

In other words, if you built upon the gold, silver and precious jewels or stones, you will receive a reward because you stayed true to the message, knowing that Jesus Christ is the foundation and the rock. You didn't drift away from it, but you built upon that foundation and you shall receive a reward. But in verse 15,

***“If any man's work [employment of the Word of God] shall be burned, he shall suffer loss: but he himself shall be saved; yet so as by fire.”***

There will be the employment of the Word of God that was nothing more than wood, hay or stubble, and it will be burned. Think about how so much of the Christian world is wrapped up right now in preaching wood, hay and stubble, even though they are sincere. I'm not talking about the phonies who intentionally mislead others. It is easy to read these verses and be confused. In Matthew 7, Christ said, “I never knew you” to the ones who said, “I preached in your name.” Read verse 21,

***“Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will [the thelema] of my Father which is in heaven. [The will of the Father begins by denying yourself, taking up your cross and following Christ.] Many will say to me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name? and in thy name have cast out devils? and in thy name done many wonderful works? And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you: depart from me, ye that work iniquity.”***

How can Jesus say “I never knew you” in these scriptures to the ones who are supposedly professing the Word of God and casting out devils? (Casting out devils isn't hard to do; you don't even need the Word of God to cast out devils and I will prove it when I go into demonology. It would not be as effective and as permanent, but it can be done.) But Christ tells them, ***“I never knew you.”*** So how can we read verse 15 in I Corinthians 3 and combine it with these verses in Matthew and make any sense of it? ***“If any man's employment of the word of God shall be burned, he shall suffer loss:”*** because he obviously didn't have a grasp of what God's Word truly says, even though there was sincerity and belief. In Matthew 7, Christ was speaking of the

hypocrites who put on a mask instead of their faith in Christ and did it for their own gain and for the approval of the people. ***“If any man's work [employment of the Word of God] shall be burned, he shall suffer loss: but he himself shall be saved; yet so as by fire.”*** Returning to I Corinthians 3, verse 16 tells us,

***“Know ye not that ye are the temple of God...?”***

From this verse many are surprised to find that although a preacher or person employs the Word of God with good intentions, they won't receive a reward and will suffer loss because they put their trust on nothing more than wood, hay and stubble, and still shall be saved ***“yet so as by fire.”*** That's why I preached the message *Woe to the Shepherds*. I'm hard on the preachers, the shepherds, and I'm not the only one. I have a whole record in the Bible of individuals assigned by God to come down hard on these false preachers, false teachers and false prophets, because they preach a doctrine that literally destroys any opportunity to learn, as described in the Bible, about what faith in His Word truly is. Also, the prosperity doctrine occupies a minimum of 50% of the church; give to get, give to get rich and give to force God to give you His blessings. In the meantime, people are giving to get while they become rich and then leave a stream of gullible people. They might as well just lay them down on the open road and let the traffic run over them. False teachers are exposing people to doctrine that does nothing but destroy faith and makes a mockery of God and His Word. I don't care if the world thinks the Word is nothing but foolishness. I'm not talking about those individuals. I'm talking about how Satan has grabbed hold of individuals, some of them very talented, to supposedly preach God's Word, but they are nothing more than a bunch of false doctrine preachers. They are preaching another Jesus and another gospel. There are sincere preachers; I'm not talking about the message that Jesus was referring to in Matthew 7, ***“I never knew you.”*** It is the false preachers who are the ones that completely twist God's Word for the intention of gain, not just materialistic gain, but the gain of also pleasing their congregation, their well-being and how the congregation perceives them. That is who Jesus was talking to. Remember, He was talking about the Pharisees and Sadducees and the other religious hypocrites of His day who did everything to show off their holiness among men.

For myself, I know that some of you admire what I'm doing here, but I'm not concerned with that. Admire and fall in love with what is being preached and more importantly, fall in love with how it is being applied in your life, and see how the Holy Spirit is working to increase your knowledge, to nourish you, so you can bloom like the lilies in the field.

That is why verse 15 tells us, ***“If any man's employment of the word shall be burned, he shall suffer loss: but he himself shall be saved;”*** I know someone who spent a life sincerely teaching and preaching in the church world. Unfortunately, because of the lack of knowledge in God's Word, it kept this person at a certain plateau and the message was, more than likely, built on wood, hay and stubble. But there is still compassion and redemption for those preachers who have preached on wood, hay and stubble. Paul never says the wood, hay and stubble is another gospel, another Jesus or a false doctrine. When he gets to this verse Paul is talking about the heart of the individual doing the preaching, or those who believed what they learned from the teachings of individuals who didn't know any better. ***“If any man's work shall be burned, he shall suffer loss: but he himself shall be saved; yet so as by fire.”*** So, I only hold condemnation

or judgment for those ones that I see who have so severely twisted God's Word that it is literally not built on the foundation using any of the six elements described in verse 12. That foundation is who Jesus was also talking about in Matthew 7:21-23.

There are the ideal elements of gold, silver and precious stones that are to be used to build on the foundation and then there are the undesirable elements of wood, hay and stubble. I will be preaching against the individual churches and individual preachers that Jesus mentioned in Matthew 7:21-23, but not the ones who are sincere and don't know any better than what they have been taught themselves. Then we read verses 16 and 17, and they have been used for everything under the sun, from smoking cigarettes to eating sugar and so forth.

***“Know ye not that ye are the temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you? If any man defile the temple of God, him shall God destroy; for the temple of God is holy, which temple ye are.”***

How many times have you been beat over the head with this verse? Things to do and not to do for fear of defiling the temple of God. The word is really *destroy* and should read, ***“If any man destroy the temple of God, him shall God destroy; for the temple of God is holy, which temple ye are.”*** Paul is not talking about your physical body. People have taken and misapplied the meaning of this scripture. In context, Paul is still talking about the Word that was employed in his day, and what I'm preaching today, what I will be preaching, and anyone else around the world will be preaching in the future.

***“If any man destroy the temple of God...”*** We destroy the temple of God by not truly understanding the meaning of how to employ the Word of God, and instead design our own methods outside of this Word to achieve our own agenda. I'm not going to complicate it. It is what it is. It is not your physical temple. How can I destroy something that from the day I was born is deteriorating in the flesh? The minute we're born, time starts ticking towards the end where we'll no longer will be in this body, but out of this body in a new body, one that is clothed with the robe of righteousness throughout eternity, which is our legal right through Christ. This verse is not about a physical temple in the flesh. It's about the spiritual temple of God, the one the Spirit dwells in, that some would call the soul. ***“If any man destroy the temple of God,”*** means he destroys God and the spiritual temple in our life by employing the Word of God incorrectly. That is when we really are destroying our hope and salvation and the spiritual temple that God's Spirit would dwell in. If you grieve the Holy Spirit enough, He will leave you.

That is why Paul said in verse 18, ***“Let no man deceive himself. If any man among you seemeth to be wise in this world, let him become a fool, that he may be wise. For the wisdom of this world is foolishness....”***

Don't take on a worldly definition or worldly gospel. Take on the Good News of the Gospel of Jesus Christ. It might seem like foolishness, but the truly foolish employment of the Word is one that looks like the same business being conducted across the street. What I am trying to say is there is one church here and one church there. They both say they are of Christ, yet one is preaching close to the true Gospel of Jesus Christ and the other is preaching nothing but a false doctrine. Which one do you think will be a better representative that the world will accept? We

have more and more churches like that today. For example, one of the fastest growing churches in America preaches nothing more than a 'power positive' principle message about how God is so great and will always be great for you, and preaches the message of how God is your constant bellhop. Just ring a bell and God comes running to cater to you. This church teaches Christians should constantly live with this happy-go-lucky sense of the definition the world defines, instead of truly in the joy of the Lord. It makes me sick. If your personality is to go around constantly smiling, I have nothing against it, but theirs is a phony and forced smile. They are nothing more than a Tony Robbins for Jesus, constantly trying to lift you up, to make you feel good, but do nothing to bring you closer to Him through your toils and the troubles, through the fire. Their doctrine is not even wood, hay or stubble. They are nothing more than what the world produces with a religious name attached to it. That is the foolishness Paul was talking about.

***“For the wisdom of this world is foolishness with God. For it is written, He taketh the wise in their own craftiness.***

***And again, The Lord knoweth the thoughts of the wise, that they are vain.***

***Therefore let no man glory in men. For all things are yours;***

***Whether Paul, or Apollos, or Cephas, or the world, or life, or death, or things present, or things to come; all are yours:***

***And ye are Christ's; and Christ is God's.”***

What I wanted to focus on is the foundation of what verse 12 said, ***“Now if any man build upon this foundation gold, silver, precious stones, [or jewels] ...”*** Three elements that are tried by the fire, tested and proved in the fire, that come out of the fire more precious than gold. Do you know why? Because as you are coming out of that fire, even though it was a heated situation, you are still employing the Word of God and you will still receive a reward yet to come. Those who do not but are sincere – the wood, hay and stubble people – there is still hope for you because you shall be saved. You will not receive the rewards described here in verse 14, but you shall be saved because of your sincerity, which is your hope and salvation. That's why I don't judge anyone or any ministry that preaches the Word of God, even though they don't measure up to what I or somebody else knows about the Word of God. It is between them and God. I just come against the false doctrines and the false prophets.

I want to now return the focus to the precious stones. They're not just in the New Testament. Go to Malachi 3:17,

***“And they shall be mine, saith the LORD of hosts, in that day when I make up my jewels [or precious stones]; and I will spare them, as a man spareth his own son that serveth him.”***

Once again, there is gold and all these colors (except silver), because Christ did wear a breastplate of redemption, which brings up another point. Silver is not in the breastplate because Christ did not need redemption. We are the ones who need redemption and we put on Christ, who provided that redemption. But Christ did not need redemption. That is why there is no silver in the breastplate, but there are jewels. I have taught about what the colors represent, including the gold and the gold color, but now we are dealing with the precious stones. If you go through all of scripture, you will see these precious stones mentioned over and over again from authors of these books, inspired by God, reminding us of the qualities of precious stones and what their

symbolism truly means, whether they revealed it at the time or not. Returning to Malachi we read,

***“And they shall be mine, saith the LORD of hosts, in that day when I make up my jewels; and I will spare them, as a man spareth his own son that serveth him. Then shall ye return, and discern between the righteous and the wicked, between him that serveth God and him that serveth him not.”***

These verses are about a time yet to come, but I find it interesting that one of the expressions of righteousness is giving, which we can see back in verse 3,

***“And he shall sit as a refiner and purifier of silver: and he shall purify the sons of Levi, and purge them as gold and silver, that they may offer unto the LORD an offering in righteousness.”***

An expression of righteousness through giving is how you give. Of course, the Israelites drifted away from it and here, Malachi, as a representative of God, is criticizing them. In verse 6 we read,

***“For I am the LORD, I change not; therefore ye sons of Jacob are not consumed. Even from the days of your fathers ye are gone away from mine ordinances, and have not kept them. Return unto me, and I will return unto you, saith the LORD of hosts. But ye said, Wherein shall we return?”***

They were asking, “What have we done wrong? What do you mean we have gone astray or gone away?” In Hebrew it is *departed and rejected you*. In verse 8 Malachi gives the answer,

***“Will a man robe God? Yet ye have robbed me. [“You are robbing God.”] But ye say, Wherein have we robbed thee? In tithes and offerings. [Obviously they stopped doing it.] Ye are cursed....”***

A better translation is *ye are rendered powerless*. You may think if you stop tithing and giving offerings, then you are powerless. Yes, and although Jesus referred to it when He was talking to the hypocrites in the religious world, there's no reference to that in the New Testament. As I told you, it goes beyond tithes and offerings. God wants to see your hilarious heart and if you think the measurement is going to be anything less than tithes and offerings, you are a fool and convinced yourself of a lie and are controlled by the devil's thoughts. Re-read verse 9 with the Hebrew translation,

***“Ye are rendered powerless: for ye have robbed me, this whole nation. Bring ye all the tithes into the storehouse, that there may be meat in mine house, and prove me now herewith, saith the LORD of hosts, if I will not open you the windows of heaven [or the gifts of heaven], and pour you out a blessing, that there shall not be room enough to receive it.”***

But that's not what scripture says! I have looked up what scholars think on this scripture. I

looked at it and I looked at it over the years and it has never said ***“and pour you out a blessing, that there shall not be room enough to receive it.”*** In fact, the King James Version *'there shall'* and *'be room to receive it'* is not even in the originals, whether you get a theological dictionary of the Old Testament or the many other versions of what these scriptures are saying according to certain scholars. People think there is a Bible of Hebrew and Greek languages that is 100% correct and pure. I have news for you, that is the furthest thing from the truth. That's why after I do all the research and do all the work that can be done on those verses with the available manuscripts and research, then I line it up with God's Word and see if it is verifiable.

Let me show what this says. What we have here in verse 10 states, ***“... I will not open you the windows of heaven, and pour you out a blessing, that there shall not be room enough to receive it.”*** That's not what it says. In fact, the Septuagint is the closest to what is being said here, which is *until it suffice* and the cleanest translation is: *or be enough*. So, to read this verse again we see, ***“I will pour you out a blessing, that it will be enough.”*** Now stop to think about that. Without knowing what it truly said, you may have been expecting blessings from heaven. You may have been building a room so large to make sure God knows how much you really want and need. But show me where in God's book it says that. Now I know some of you will say there are other verses like this, but it should read, *I will pour you out a blessing that it will be enough or it shall suffice*. In other words, this verse is telling us that God will give us what He thinks we need, and His promise is that He will get us through this day.

To verify this in God's Word, go to Matthew 6. In this chapter we are told to put the kingdom of God first and take no thought for our lives. I preached a message on it called *“Where is Your Heart.”* Earlier in this chapter, Jesus teaches about the treasures in heaven and where to store them; not the things of this earth where moth and corruption does its havoc but put them in heaven where you receive your rewards. He then goes on to explain how He takes care of the fowls in the air and the lilies of the field, and even how much more precious we are to Him than those things. Then in verse 31 we are told,

***“Therefore take no thought [or therefore be not anxious], saying, What shall we eat? or, What shall we drink? or, Wherewithal shall we be clothed? (For after all these things do the Gentiles seek:) for your heavenly Father knoweth that ye have need of all these things.”***

He knows what you need. He knows what you get into and some of you get into more things than you should, including our financial problems as individuals and as a country, so Christ is saying in verse 33,

***“But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you. [Clothing, food, housing. He never said He would put you in a Taj Mahal. The promise is you will have a roof over your head.] Take therefore no thought for the morrow: for the morrow shall take thought for the things of itself. Sufficient unto the day is the evil thereof.”***

God will take care of you. He will give you enough, which is the same message in Malachi when he wrote, ***“I will pour you out a blessing [or a gift, or in this case, enough of what you need]***



*until it suffice* [or *that which is enough*].” Jesus had the same message. Those verses in Malachi are not your opportunity to become rich by giving tithes and offerings, because then everyone would become rich.

This is the same message Jesus had and it's the same message here in Malachi. Psalms 112 verifies why God's provision is that He will give you enough. Christ promised to give you a blessing that will sustain you, because He wants you to keep trusting the one that gives the gifts, not the gifts themselves. I don't care who you are, it doesn't take very much for anyone to get off track once you start living on Easy Street. I tell God constantly, “There are big plans Lord. You need to really start increasing the storehouse because there is still a lot of work to be done,” but He has His certain timing; I just have to wait patiently and keep preaching the message of God. If God has certain things that He wants you to do in your lifetime as a follower of Jesus Christ, including blessings you so you can employ the Word of God, then He is going to do it in His set time. I have no doubt about it. Some are giving now what you never thought you would give, but the promise is still the same. It does not say **“that there shall not be room enough to receive it.”** It never did say that in scripture. Like I said, the Septuagint gets closest to it with, *until it suffice*. He will be the builder of the room until His purposes are carried out through you as an instrument. He will give you the necessary blessings, like material goods in tithes and offerings to carry out His purposes, not only as an individual but as you employ the Word of God. He has poured you out a blessing and it will be enough, just as Jesus was saying in Matthew. Let me paraphrase it. Christ said, “I will take care of you, so keep your pursuit and your focus on me. Let me use you as an instrument of righteousness. (Paul calls us a weapon unto righteousness.) And as you do that, I will give you the necessary things you need, not to only give you the promise of keeping you clothed, under a roof and fed, but also to employ the Word of God.” You rob God because you came to the opinion that you know better than God what is enough, and you hold back tithes and offerings because you need them for your own purposes. The message of Malachi cuts through the flesh when Jesus says, “Trust in me. Throw your whole life upon me.”

I have had my peaks and valleys in life and right now I kind of sit in a valley because of circumstances, but I am still confident and still trusting in God that He knows what I need. He knows the intentions that I have about employing this Word of God and He will release the blessings from heaven to achieve His purposes when He is good and ready. Some ask about the promises of Psalms 112, so read those verses. Verse 1 begins,

***“Praise ye the LORD. Blessed is the man that feareth the LORD, that delighteth greatly in his commandments.***

***His seed shall be mighty upon earth: the generation of the upright shall be blessed.***

***Wealth and riches shall be in his house: and his righteousness endureth for ever.”***

Here we see righteousness is another expression of giving, but it is not what scripture says in the beginning of the verse. Do your homework. There have been a few scholars who have debated about what these verses in Psalms 112 are trying to communicate. The Hebrew word is very clear in one of the expressions that should be applied here, and they argue which definition of the Hebrew word should be used. One of those definitions is *enough*. So, over the years as I combed through the scholarly debates, especially the ones that translate the languages of what words

should be used, I came to a conclusion that God's Word proves itself and is verifiable about what it is saying, so I applied what God's Word has said in other scriptures. I only gave two references about riches in this chapter, both in Matthew and Malachi, but it doesn't change if translated correctly, using the Word of God as the last source. It should say in verse 2 and 3,

***“His seed shall be mighty upon earth: the generation of the upright shall be blessed. Enough riches will be in his house: and his righteousness endureth for ever.”***

Look up *enough riches* for yourself and you will see one of the Hebrew words used in this particular scripture is *enough*. So, without contradicting what Jesus said, which is my main source, and without contradicting what Malachi said, as well as in a few other areas, I choose to use the translation *enough riches* because it lines up with the Word of God in the *epignosis* way, *the precise and correct knowledge of the Word of God*.

***“Enough riches shall be in your house: and his righteousness endureth for ever.”***

This is showing another expression of giving and is why we will be clothed by Christ's righteousness. He was the true and most pure expression of giving. To leave what He had, and to come and suffer what He suffered for our benefit, shows no greater expression of a giver and His righteousness, one of the expressions of giving. Verse 4 continues,

***“Unto the upright there ariseth light in the darkness: he is gracious, and full of compassion, and righteous.***

***A good man showeth favour, and lendeth: he will guide his affairs with discretion.”***

God will give you enough riches and put His Spirit in you to be a true giver, not only a giver to God's Word and His programs in the employment of the Word, but He will also have you deal with others in a gracious manner.

***“Surely he shall not be moved for ever: the righteous shall be in everlasting remembrance. He shall not be afraid of evil tidings: his heart is fixed, trusting in the LORD.***

***His heart is established [It is fixed], he shall not be afraid, until he see his desire upon his enemies.***

***He hath dispersed, he hath given to the poor; his righteousness [His giving] endureth for ever; his horn shall be exalted with honour.”***

He hath dispersed for the purposes of the Lord, and then he shall give it to the poor. The reason I know it is giving for the Lord's purposes is because of what is mentioned here. Jesus put His purpose as the priority and then leaving enough for the poor. It is saying the same thing here in Psalms 112. If you are a true giver, you shall disperse to the things of God and then you shall give to the poor; ***“his righteousness endureth forever; his horn shall be exalted...”*** God's Word is verifiable. He will give you enough riches so you can also experience one of the expressions of righteousness and that is giving. He sees it as a jewel, a gift; one of the meanings when I get to the breastplate and one of the jewels placed in the breastplate in Malachi 3:17,

***“And they shall be mine [We shall be His], saith the LORD of hosts, in that day when I make up my jewels [special treasures]; and I will spare them, as a man spareth his own son that***

*serveth him.”*

That is why we need to be clothed with Christ's righteousness. Giving is just an expression of it, and it is an expression that is also represented in the breastplate of righteousness in one of the jewels. Paul says to build upon gold, the foundation of Jesus Christ, the rock. And as you build the first storey, the second storey, the third storey, and the skyscraper in spiritual terms and sense of the meaning; build upon gold, silver and precious stones and what they symbolize, which goes back to Christ and what we are part of today.

All of this was really an introduction in moving on in the breastplate in Exodus 28; row after row of precious jewels and the names that are written on those stones and what they symbolize and mean. I covered all of this because I believe God led me. I didn't plan any of it. As I showed the foundation of symbolism in these stones and the names on the stones, the one true thing no matter what row on that breastplate, what stone or what name; God gave gifts as an expression of righteousness to all the tribes and to the church. Giving is second nature to Him and it should also be with us. We shouldn't even have to think about it. We should give hilariously, as Paul said, to truly be givers the way God wants us to be.

This was a long trek to say, as I move on in the breastplate of righteousness and the breastplate of judgment described in Exodus 28, that I will show layer by layer, row by row, all the wonderful gifts that God has given us, along with all the wonderful promises and how truly He has taken care of His people. He has done this from the day He told Moses how to put together this breastplate, how to make it, what to make it from and its design to send us a message of righteousness and what righteousness looks like. Even though we cannot achieve it in our own strength but wear it through Christ. Jesus Christ fulfilled the righteousness of God, and we now can identify with God, through Jesus Christ, and wear that breastplate of righteousness, that robe of righteousness, that breastplate of judgment. I will continue making the trek to show what a giver Christ truly was, and that same giver wants us to have the same expressions of righteousness that giving represents throughout scripture. Some of you are not experiencing that joy because you are so wrapped up in today's environment and world situations, both economically and in desires of the flesh. God is not a cosmic killjoy. He allows us to have some of these desires, but He wants us to put Him first.

I know Christ will see us through, but you will miss the opportunity if you don't come to the realization that one of the true expressions of righteousness in God's book started with giving. He gave Himself and He is only asking a small percentage in return to allow someone else to hear the Word that saved you. The next step is yours.

This is just an introduction. I didn't know where I was going with this message, but maybe some of you needed to hear it again, or maybe some needed clarification because a lot of you have raised your fist to God. You finger pointed to God and said, “God, I have tithed. I have given you offerings, yet my storehouses are not filled, and I do not see the promise being fulfilled that there is not enough room to store it.” That hasn't happened because it was never promised. If you look at God's Word accurately all He has ever promised is to give you enough. Now, the day might come where enough is \$100,000 a week for you because God has seen your heart because He knows what you are going to do with that kind of money, which is obviously putting Him first.

That is why I am not a popular preacher. I preach deny yourself, take up your cross and follow Jesus. I preach that one of the expressions of righteousness is giving. I preach you don't get rich by giving to God. What you get are promises that He will take care of you in the ways that He has described. Jesus made it quite clear to His disciples and the message is the same for us as it was for them. He will take care of you. Jesus mentions the lilies of the field and how they bloom with all their lustre. He takes care of them! You don't see a lily with a hundred other lilies growing from it. It is a single individualized plant that God takes care of. Modern prosperity doctrine preachers would use the example of a lily with a hundred other lilies attached to it as a demonstration how God has blessed it. God doesn't need to show off. Paul could have shown off more than anyone. He had the ability to trick the church world if he desired, but he did not. His desire was to build upon the foundation of gold, silver and precious stones. Malachi says that we will be His jewels, His precious stones, His precious treasure and the breastplate gives us a glimpse of what those precious stones through Christ symbolizes. God willing, that is where I'll go next time.

To be continued...

## Sardius

Ephesians 6:10 reads, ***“Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord, [endunamoo, be strengthened in the Lord] and in the power [or force] of his might.”*** You must be strengthened by the Lord in His force and through His power of His might. Remember that.

The focus of the last several chapters has been on the part in verse 14 which states, ***“and having on the breastplate of righteousness;”*** I've been taking this verse and looking at the breastplate of judgment in the Old Testament, the breastplate of righteousness and everything in between. In the end of scripture in the Book of Revelation, it is the robe of righteousness. In this chapter 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; gold, blue, and purple, and scarlet, and fine twined linen, shalt thou make it.***

***Foursquare it shall be 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 [a better translation, fill it with stones], even four rows of stones: the first row shall be a sardius ....”***

The sardius stone will be the focus of this chapter, and verses 17 to 20 go on to list all the different stones or jewels and where they were placed in the breastplate. Then in 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.”***

There's some material that tries to define what these stones mean, and they go from one extreme to another. Most of it is silly. If we are going to get a definition and understanding about this breastplate and how God defines these stones and what He wants them to mean, we have to look at the children of Israel, the 12 tribes according to their names, one for each of the stones. I find it ironic that in Ezekiel 28:13 when this chapter talks about Satan, it says,

***“Thou hast been in Eden the garden of God; every precious stone was thy covering, the sardius, topaz, and the diamond, the beryl, the onyx, and the jasper, the sapphire, the emerald, and the carbuncle, and gold: the workmanship of thy tabrets and of thy pipes was prepared in thee in the day that thou wast created.”***

It's interesting that only nine of the twelve precious stones listed here in verse 13 are part of Satan's covering. I know the verse says, ***“every precious stone was thy covering,”*** but in Exodus 28:19, the third row of stones is not included in the verse in Ezekiel. I don't believe this is just coincidence. The Targum says regarding this verse, ***“all precious stones were set in order upon thy garments,”*** speaking of Satan's covering. Remember, God created the garments that Satan wore, so the question is: why are three stones missing and why are the three missing stones

found in the third row of the breastplate of judgement? But that's a subject for a different time.

In this chapter, I will point out the names of the stones placed specifically in Exodus 28:17-21. They fit in these organized rows, not just because God wanted to create something that looked good for the High Priest to wear. No, it all has symbolism and meaning. It all sends a message not only to these people who wore it at that time, but to the church, and also the unseen powers. They know exactly what these stones mean. Satan knew why God made such a covering for him. He knows the symbolism regarding these stones. More importantly, he knows what the names on the stones truly mean. Even more importantly, he knows what the stone was made of and that there are promises, not only to the children of Israel, but to the church that goes with these stones. With that, we will begin with the first stone.

As you may know, Hebrew reads from right to left, so if to read verse 17, ***“And thou shalt set in it settings of stones, four rows of stones: the first row...”*** In this case, reading from right to left, the first stone is the sardius. The first name on that stone, the ruby stone, was Reuben. The ruby is a red gem with a certain hue. I know there are different kinds of rubies, but the ruby we're talking about here in the Old Testament (and also in the New Testament), is a red stone. It is also the sixth foundation stone in the New Jerusalem in Revelation 21. The stone's redness is symbolic in definition to the blood atonement, the sacrifice and blood in general. Because this stone also symbolizes the first born, Reuben, we must remember Christ was the first born of God and the church. Likewise, Christians are the firstborn of Christ. So, this stone symbolizes the blood atonement, the sacrifice, blood in general, and since it is the first stone listed here in Exodus, it represents the beginning; in this case, the firstborn as the beginning.

These things stand out in scripture as I study God's Word and try to understand more and more about Reuben and all the different sons of Jacob. There are four things I want you to remember about Jacob's son Reuben:

1. The name Reuben literally means *behold a son*, the firstborn son, not just any son.
2. This son was a sign of God's compassion for Leah.
3. Reuben fell out of favor with his father and lost his birthright privileges because he slept with one of his father's concubines.
4. Reuben was responsible for saving Joseph's life when his brothers wanted to kill him.

I have a bit of a different take on it and I will quickly review some of the history leading up to that event. I don't think he was all that concerned for his brother, but since he already fell out of favor with his father, he was looking to hide his involvement. So, we'll go back to Genesis to quickly lay down some foundation to where I'm heading.

Everyone knows the story of Jacob; he works to pay for two wives. Laban, being a conniver, somehow tricked Jacob into thinking that Leah was Rachel, and he married Leah first without even realizing it. Then he worked additional time to marry Rachel. We join the story in Genesis 29:30, where Jacob is already married to Leah, then finally married to Rachel, and she was given Laban's daughter Bilhah, his handmaid, to be her maid.

***“And he went in also unto Rachel, and he loved also Rachel more than Leah, and served with***

*him yet seven other years.* [Remember, he had to pay for two wives over time, which was another seven years. Fourteen years has passed.]

***And when the LORD saw that Leah was hated, he opened her womb: but Rachel was barren.”***

There must have been some sibling rivalry that would really make a great soap opera. If you read all of chapter 30, you see the drama between the two sisters and their handmaids. Of course, Jacob was not resisting their solutions to bearing children. If the wives couldn't bear children, they would just say, “Okay, take my handmaid and have children with her, but they will be classified as my children.” I don't have time to go into it and it's not the point, but read through chapters 29 and 30, especially chapter 30. The two sisters are competing to see who could produce more children so Jacob would love them more than the other. But Leah was hated, and I can see the reason why. (Really, Laban is the one who should be hated, if they wanted to hate someone. Laban is the one that really caused the problem. Jacob was too stupid, too gullible, or too drunk on his wedding night to realize that he was tricked by Laban as he switched the sisters. Leah is the one he knew first and then he had to work the additional years to get Rachel.) Because of these events, Leah was hated, probably by Jacob, though not as much as by Rachel. But God used Reuben as a sign of God's compassion for Leah. God responded by keeping Rachel barren and He had Leah produce children. That's what we read in verse 31,

***“And when the LORD saw that Leah was hated, he opened her womb....***

***And Leah conceived, and bare a son; and she called his name Reuben [or behold a son]: for she said, Surely the LORD hath looked upon my affliction; now therefore my husband will love me.”***

Leah kept conceiving and conceiving and when she couldn't conceive, and when Rachel couldn't conceive, they had others conceive for them. Like I said, all through chapter 30 back and forth they go. It's quite a soap opera; it would make probably a very interesting series the way Hollywood produces things, with these two sisters and this family quarrel going on back and forth, trying to receive Jacob's acceptance and love through childbearing.

However, *behold a son* was a sign of God's compassion for Leah. These two things stand out right from the beginning with Reuben's life if you read on in chapter 35. Then, the next time we hear about Reuben is in Genesis 35:22,

***“And it came to pass, when Israel dwelt in that land, that Reuben went and lay with Bilhah his father's concubine: and Israel heard it. Now the sons of Jacob were twelve:”***

That is all we know about Ruben until Jacob prophesied about Reuben's future. We do know that Bilhah was the mother of one of his brothers because chapter 30 begins,

***“And when Rachel saw that she bare Jacob no children, Rachel envied her sister; and said unto Jacob, Give me children, or else I die.***

***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?***

***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, and hath given me a son: therefore called she his name Dan.  
And Bilhah Rachel's maid conceived again, and bare Jacob a second son.”***

Here we see part of the competition back and forth between the handmaids and the wives as they were bearing sons left and right. In chapter 35:22, Reuben went ***“and lay with Bilhah his father's concubine: and Israel heard it.”*** He lay with the mother of one of his brothers. Think about it! The next thing you hear about Reuben after, *behold a son*, Jacob's firstborn, a sign of God's compassion for Leah, is that he has fallen from his father's graces. He is out of favor with his father and has lost his birthright and privileges. Moving along through Genesis 37, Joseph comes on the scene. He is loved by his father more than any other child, any other son, Jacob gives him a coat, and Joseph dreamed dreams. Basically, his dreams were that everyone was going to serve him, which came to pass in Egypt. His brothers didn't like the dreams or him. They hated him because he was his father's favorite, and also because he dreamed these dreams that they would all bow down to him. Then, as the brothers are out shepherding, Joseph is with his father, and Jacob sends Joseph to see where they were. They saw Joseph coming from a distance, so they started plotting against him in Genesis 37:18,

***“And when they saw him afar off, even before he came near unto them, they conspired against him to slay him. [They had murder in their hearts.]  
And they said one to another, Behold, this dreamer cometh.  
Come now therefore, and let us slay him, and cast him into some pit, and we will say, Some evil beast hath devoured him: and we shall see what will become of his dreams.  
[Now we see Reuben again] And Reuben heard it, and he delivered him out of their hands; and said, Let us not kill him.  
And Reuben said unto them, Shed no blood, but cast him into this pit that is in the wilderness, and lay no hand upon him; that he might rid him out of their hands, to deliver him to his father again.”***

Put yourself in Reuben's place. Most people think this is Reuben's compassion or love for his brother. I've read what some people have written about this. I'm saying put flesh and blood on it. If Reuben was really that concerned for his brother, he would have made a stand with a little more perseverance and endurance against the evil that was presented as a solution to get rid of Joseph, but he didn't. Basically, he just said, “Okay, time out. Let's just put him in this pit right now and then we will figure out what we are going to do later. Let's not harm him but deliver him back to his father.”

What do you think was going through Reuben's mind? That he had compassion, concern, love for his brother Joseph, or knowing that he was the firstborn, that he had really screwed up by laying with one of his father's concubines, the mother of one of his brothers? He couldn't afford another mistake. He was probably trying to cover up his rear end, making sure that these brothers wouldn't do anything hastily. Come on, most of you who have brothers and sisters, if your younger brother or sister does something wrong and your parents hear of it, what do they say? “You are the oldest one. You should know better.” I mean, over and over you hear, “You are the



oldest one, you should know better.” Being the first born carries some responsibilities, even in our day and age. It is something that is dwindling, but even today it happens and more so in this period of Biblical history. Bottom line is, Reuben said, “Wait, let's stop here. You guys can put him in the pit, but let's not harm him.” In fact, I am sure what was going through Reuben's mind – this is just opinion and not the Word of God – but flesh being flesh, Reuben is trying to convince his brothers, “Let's not harm him. Let's just scare him and warn him stop this nonsense that we are going to serve and bow down to him some day because of his silly dreams.” I'm sure Reuben was going through all this. He knew very well that he had already made a mistake with his father. He couldn't afford a second, especially with what they had in mind to do to this innocent victim, a kin flesh and blood brother, for no cause. And somewhere along the line between verses 22 and 29, Reuben goes off and probably does some shepherding or whatever he was doing. His brothers were eating and then, suddenly, some Ishmaelites came along and the brothers come up with a plan to get rid of Joseph by selling him into slavery. Now, in verse 29, Reuben returns,

***“And Reuben returned unto the pit; and, behold, Joseph was not in the pit; and he rent his clothes.***

***And he returned unto his brethren, and said, The child is not; and I, whither shall I go?”***

Do you think he was renting his clothes because of the sorrow he was feeling for his brother? Or flesh being flesh, was he renting his clothes because he knew how it would affect him and his relationship with his father? It is also clear in verse 30 that Reuben was thinking about himself with no concern for his brother and what happened to him. Don't be fooled; don't let Christians who massage God's Word try to convince you that Reuben had any compassion at this time. He didn't have any compassion for Joseph. He just didn't want anything to happen to him, because he felt responsible being the firstborn. And now he is saying, “Whither shall I go now? You think I am going to go back to the camp where our father lives and tell him such an event happened under my watch?” Think about it. ***“The child is not; and I, whither shall I go?”*** “What is going to happen to me” is another way to say this.

***“And they took Joseph's coat, and killed a kid of the goats, and dipped the coat in the blood;”***

Reuben had an opportunity here to say, “You guys can do what you want, but when I get back to our father, I will tell him what I know. I stopped them, but when I was gone something happened to him.” (Obviously, his brothers told the father what supposedly happened.) “Therefore, our father needs to know the truth and we need to see what we can do to rescue our brother Joseph.” Now, God had other plans and some way or somehow Joseph would end up in Egypt. He went as a slave, but eventually he became second only to the Pharaoh in power. In fact, he demonstrated more power than the Pharaoh by controlling all the events and money and food in the land of Egypt.

For Reuben, there are four events however that lead to this point. First, *behold a son* Jacob's first born was a sign of God's compassion for Leah because she was hated. Just the same, *behold a son*, God's Son, His firstborn, because God had compassion on us because we are hated daily by the unseen world. So, God had compassion and said, “Behold a Son. This is my Son; He will redeem you; He will be your Saviour from the destruction that Satan has planned for you.”

Through Adam, we lost our birthright privileges and we came under the control of Satan, under the bondage of sin and death, but one would come that would save our lives, but not half-heartedly like Reuben. Christ put all His being into it to give us that opportunity for eternal life.

In Genesis 42, Pharaoh makes Joseph a ruler. Then food is running out in Israel, but not in Egypt because they stored it. Jacob sends his sons to seek and buy food there. Joseph recognized his brothers, but they didn't recognize him. He planned and devised his own plot where he would keep one of his brothers until the rest of them would bring the youngest of all the sons, Benjamin. So, Joseph keeps one of the brothers, and they go back with the food. Joseph told them to bring Benjamin if they didn't want anything to happen to the brother that was kept in Egypt. They leave Joseph and then he said to them in 42:20,

***“But bring your youngest brother unto me; so shall your words be verified, and ye shall not die. And they did so. [Here, Joseph was accusing them of lying and scheming against Egypt and him.]***

***And they said one to another, We are verily guilty concerning our brother, in that we saw the anguish of his soul, when he besought us, and we would not hear; therefore is this distress come upon us.***

[And now Reuben speaks up] ***And Reuben answered them, saying, Spake I not unto you, saying, Do not sin against the child; and ye would not hear? therefore, behold, also his blood is required.”***

What Reuben is saying here is very hypocritical. After what happened, Reuben could have done something about it and at least told his father the truth, but he didn't. Now he is pointing his finger back to his brothers saying, “Well, you know, what comes around goes around. Didn't I tell you not to sin against the child and you would not hear? Therefore, his blood is required.” Obviously, it was the furthest thing from the truth, because it was not the first thing that was required here and that's not what happened, but Reuben was the first one to say, “I told you so! You should have listened to me, but you didn't and now look at us. How are we going to explain this one away?” Joseph's name was changed, so his brothers did not know him by his name, and obviously so many years had passed that they no longer recognized him. Joseph creates his own plot accusing his brothers of lying and he's keeping one of the brothers until they bring the youngest one to him. Now they can't figure out how they are going to explain this to their father. So, they get back to the land of Canaan and tell their father what happened, and he didn't want any part of it. He had already lost Joseph and he wasn't about ready to lose Benjamin. Chapter 42 verse 33 continues with the story,

***“And the man, the lord of the country [Joseph], said unto us, Hereby shall I know that ye are true men; leave one of your brethren here with me, and take food for the famine of your households, and be gone:***

***And bring your youngest brother unto me: then shall I know that ye are no spies, but that ye are true men: so will I deliver you your brother, and ye shall traffic in the land.***

***And it came to pass as they emptied their sacks, that, behold, every man's bundle of money was in his sack: and when both they and their father saw the bundles of money, they were afraid.***

***And Jacob their father said unto them, Me have ye bereaved of my children: Joseph is not, and Simeon is not, and ye will take Benjamin away: all these things are against me.***

[Then Reuben spoke up. It is a beautiful picture here.] ***And Reuben spake unto his father, saying, Slay my two sons, if I bring him not to thee: deliver him into my hand, and I will bring him to thee again.***

In other words, “Give me Benjamin and if I do not return him, slay my two sons.” Reuben wasn't going to make another mistake or the same mistake he did with Joseph. He wasn't going to let his brother Simeon be left in Egypt just as he let the Ishmaelites take Joseph away. Like I said, he had the opportunity to do something about it. At the very least he could've told his father the truth, but he did nothing. He learned from his mistakes and now he speaks up to his father to say, “Let me have him and if I do not come back you can slay my two sons.” No matter what the cost this time, he wasn't going to allow another brother to die or, as in this case, be taken into slavery. It was the possible conclusion because he did not know Joseph was his brother. Think about it. He makes a full turnaround here and he is not going to allow past mistakes to be repeated in this particular present. He said he was willing to give up his two sons for the sake of his brother. That's why Jacob prophesies over Reuben, but God overturns that prophesy to a certain extent when Moses prophesied over all the 12 tribes of Israel over 400 years later.

In this story, we see a picture of *behold a son*, Jacob's firstborn, a sign of God's compassion for Leah, but Reuben fell out of favor with his father and lost his birthright privileges. Reuben was responsible for saving Joseph's life, but he was also responsible for his slavery and bondage, even though he did manage to stop his brothers from killing him. Now, years later, he wasn't going to make the same mistake and allow another brother to be taken into slavery and possibly die, without doing anything. Here in this story we see a beautiful picture of a man turned around, because the events and circumstances of life had brought him this far and now, in my opinion, he is relying on the God of his fathers to somehow make all this work. Eventually he convinces his father because they were running out of food. We all know once you run out of food and see everyone starving, something must happen, and that is what happened. You know the story. I have preached before that Joseph reveals himself to his brothers, takes Jacob in along with the rest of Israel and they live in Egypt. As long as Joseph was alive, they had the best of the best and they were taken care of. Then, in Genesis 49:1, Jacob is giving blessing to all his sons.

***“And Jacob called unto his sons, and said, Gather yourselves together, that I may tell you that which shall befall you in the last days. [I believe this means from that point until the very last day of time as we know it before the New Jerusalem and the new earth.]***

***Gather yourselves together, and hear, ye sons of Jacob; and hearken unto Israel your father. Reuben [the first stone, the ruby or the sardius stone], thou art my firstborn, my might, and the beginning of my strength, the excellency of dignity, and the excellency of power: Unstable as water, thou shalt not excel; because thou wentest up to thy father's bed; then defiledst thou it: he went up to my couch.*”**

So, even though Reuben is “*my firstborn, my might, and the beginning of my strength, the excellency of dignity, and the excellency of power*”, he will be “*Unstable as water, thou shalt not excel; because thou wentest up to thy father's bed; then defiledst thou it: he went up to my couch.*” Moses would later change part of this, but, as I said, up to this point the first prophesy and the first definition of what the tribe of Reuben, or the Reubenites, would come to symbolize is listed here in chapter 49, verse 3. How does this relate to the church? More importantly, how

does it relate to Christ? We know if we are in Christ, we can rely on all the promises and blessings listed here and throughout God's Word concerning these tribes. We are looking at Reuben, so how does he compare to Jesus, the Son of God, the firstborn?

Firstborn sons in Biblical history were given many responsibilities and privileges, which goes without saying, and since we are the firstborn of Christ, the same is applied to us. We are given many responsibilities and privileges, but how do we know we are the firstborn of Christ and Christ is the firstborn of His Father? Go with me to Colossians 1:15, which is about the pre-eminence of Christ. Then in verse 18 we read,

***“And he [Christ] is the head of the body, the church: who is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead; that in all things he might have the preeminence.”***

I tell you Christ is in the breastplate, Christ symbolizes the breastplate and the breastplate symbolizes Christ, in all the different colors, in all the different rows of stones, in all the different names of the tribes of Israel, and what it was made of, the fine linen, the gold; everything points to Christ. The breastplate symbolizes Christ. Here, Reuben being the first, the privileged one, with the responsibilities that went along with that privilege is a sign that also points to Christ, because He was the firstborn of the church and also the firstborn from the dead.

We see this in Revelation 1:5, ***“And from Jesus Christ, who is the faithful witness, and the first begotten [firstborn] of the dead, and the prince of the kings of the earth. Unto him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood.”***

Romans 8:29 shows another reference of Jesus Christ, just as Reuben, as the firstborn.

***“For whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brethren [The church].”***

Christ was the firstborn of God the Father, with all the responsibilities and privileges, if He remained faithful, which He did, and we can see that in the record of it. So with the understanding that He was the firstborn, go back to the prophesy in Genesis 49:3, ***“Reuben, thou art my firstborn...”*** In the New Testament, Jesus was the firstborn of God and is the beginning and the end; He is the author and finisher of faith; He made the whole trip. Christ is the firstborn of the Father and we are the firstborn of the Son and joint heirs through Jesus Christ. That's what the name of that stone is saying, and figuratively speaking, in the spiritual sense, we wear it on the breastplate, and Satan knows it. When Satan sees that stone, he is told immediately that we are Christ's firstborn; we are the church of the firstborn, as Hebrews says. We are Christ's firstborn and because we are Christ's firstborn, we are given the benefit of many privileges, but with those benefits and privileges come the responsibilities of what we were called and chosen to do. That's not all, but that in itself is enough to know that, through Christ, by faith in Him and His blood, we are the firstborn of Christ. We are kin to Him. He is our redeemer. He is Lord and Master, and if we make Him lord and master of our lives we are now in relationship with Him and since He is in relationship with His Father, through Him we are now also in relationship with His Father, because we are Christ's firstborn.

With some of the privileges that come with that are some of the promises and is what the phrase **my might** means. Christ finished the journey and that's why I read earlier in Ephesians 6:10 that we are strengthened by His might, His force, His power. That phrase is saying the same thing through the prophesy of Reuben, which is also a future symbolic event that they could point to, looking forward to what Jesus Christ would be to the church. We actually have God's strength and might through Jesus Christ to finish the journey, as Christ did to finish the journey. We have the ability to finish the journey, and if we stay in Christ, He will provide enough might for us. No matter where we are or wherever our cross takes us, we will have the might to endure it.

Now, the word *might* also come with strength, so the next promise we have is **the beginning of my strength**, but that is not what it says in the Hebrew. That is why you must understand that **might** means enough might and strength to finish the journey, just as Christ did, as he said in Hebrews 12:1-2. He endured the trip, He endured the cross, and He finished His journey for the sake of our salvation. He did it and He has promised to give us the might and strength to allow us to finish the journey, no matter what we face. Wherever the cross takes us, we will be able to endure it, but the key is that we must stay focused and tap into Christ's strength and might. That is what Ephesians starts with in verse 10, **“Finally, my brethren, be strengthened in the Lord.”** To be strengthened in the Lord is what Genesis 49:3 is saying. Once you understand that you are now the firstborn of Christ, you will be hated just as Leah was hated. However, Leah was promised Reuben, just as we were promised Christ to step into the gap for us to take the brunt of sin, and in Leah's case, she was accepted back into the fold and loved again. So now we are reconciled through Christ back to the Father because of what Christ did for us. Once we understand that we are firstborn and joint heirs through Christ back to the Father, we can tap into the second promise. The church can also do that, and Christians today can tap into what was said thousands of years ago; we are Christ's firstborn because Christ was God's firstborn. He finished the trip and now He has also given us the strength and might to do the same; to endure the cross, to deny ourselves, take up the cross and follow Him. The key is to stay in focus and tapped into Christ's might and strength.

The next promise is in Genesis 49:3, **“and the beginning of my strength”**. Strength here is something totally different from the strength and might found in the second promise in this verse. This strength is that through Christ there is generative power. Christ gave us the ability to have generative power, which is eternal life. We're not just going to die, be forgotten and never exist anymore, anywhere once our time here is done. God's promise here **“the beginning of my strength”** in the Hebrew is *the beginning of generative power*. This power is not only to be reborn and have eternal salvation, but also the firstborn would produce and multiply joint heirs in the kingdom of God. I know there's a lot of information going around now about the kingdom of God. Recently I heard five silly men around a table on a Christian TV show trying to explain what the kingdom of God is. I said to myself, “Oh my God, no wonder people are being misled.” They have reduced the kingdom of God down to what they *think* the kingdom of God is. I don't think anybody will have a full understanding of what it really consists of. We can get an idea through scripture, but they reduce the kingdom of God to what they think it should be here, especially how it relates to the church. Instead, we are to get the Word out, multiplying joint heirs. We gain momentum and generative power by getting the Word out.

Reuben was promised **the beginning of my strength**, so that he wouldn't just fade away, even

though later in history the Reubenites just kind of disappeared into another tribe, the promise was still there. No matter where this tribe went or whatever would become of them, they wouldn't go out of existence and be forgotten. The firstborn would produce and multiply. That is the promise, the generative power. Through Christ we have a new type of generative power; we will never die no matter what happens to this body. We might lose this body, this flesh, but some day He will give us a new body. Until then we must exist in our soul or spirit in the third paradise, He might put us in, but we will not go out of existence. We will not go into a soul sleep where everything becomes darkened and we don't even know we exist. That's hogwash! The spirit, the soul will keep on going even if Jesus tarries. But when that time comes, it will come back for its seed and you'll receive a new body that will be retained throughout eternal life. Our responsibility in this **beginning of my strength**, or *the beginning of my generative power*, is to do what the church is commissioned to do, which is to multiply joint heirs into the kingdom of God. Not all will be preachers or pastors, but we all have a responsibility to multiply, because those responsibilities and privileges come with firstborns by doing what Christ wants us to do. We are to have God's strength, God's generative power, to produce ones that He has called, not with our own hands, but to produce the means to get the Word out so others can hear it. Faith comes by hearing, and hearing the Word of God, and as Roman's says, "How will you do that unless a preacher is sent?" Likewise, how will you do it unless the Word gets out? Also, you won't have generative power unless you understand the responsibility behind it. You are placed here as firstborns of Christ to carry out a duty and responsibility, which is to produce other joint heirs, not in the flesh, but in the Spirit. Then they have the opportunity of having their lives changed by the Word of God, to be enlightened and follow Him in a new direction as we follow Christ.

So, the promise given to Reuben, as the firstborn, is that God will strengthen him to finish the journey. That's also the promise to the church, and the beginning of God's strength or generative power is also our promise. If we understand our responsibilities, God will give us the means to make sure it gets done. However, until we understand that God wants us to be recipients of His Word and take His Word so others can hear, then we'll never understand the second part of this promise, and you need to understand it. God is sending a message in that breastplate, "I will give him the might and strength to finish the journey. Through Christ, he will have that might and strength. Through Christ, he will also have the generative power to keep getting my Word out. The Word is not going to die with him. He will be responsible and understand the privilege that he has in participating and getting it out to others." That is the Great Commission. I almost hate to use the words Great Commission anymore, because it has been so misused, but that is the Great Commission. It is all our responsibility to make sure it gets carried out. Now, most Christians don't see it that way. They think 'once saved, always saved' and just sit on their butts in the pew and do nothing except show up, but it takes more than that.

His next promise in Genesis 49: 3 is "***the excellency of dignity***". In this case, dignity means *exaltation in character or rank*. Now, think about what Christ is saying and what message Satan receives when he sees this breastplate. Satan sees a person saved by grace, living a life of faith, understanding the privileges and responsibilities. He knows not to come against that person with any accusations or lies against character. Think about it, "***excellency of dignity***" means *exaltation in character or rank*. Christ was that as the head of the church. That is what Colossians 1:18 says. Christ was the head of the church, but He is also the ruler of the universe. Because He finished the trip, every knee must bow down to Him. He didn't lose His rank. In fact,

He fulfilled it and His character was pure and clean. Satan could not find fault, because He made that trip. Because He is the head of the church and ruler of the universe, Christ is saying through the breastplate of righteousness, “Hands off Satan! Don't come to me with any accusations. I paid the price and don't think I'm going to demote them because of your lies and accusations. Because of what I have done, my Father sees them differently now, and they sit, as I sit as the head of the church, as my firstborn with their heads up high. If they live their life through me, I will develop the character that I want to develop in them. I am molding their life. Oh, they might have their stumbles, they might get tripped up along the way, but if they focus back on me and put their eyes on me again, they are right there. They did not lose a step. They just have to get back on the path that I want them to take.”

I'm so tired of hearing people say, “Oh, I was so bad here; I am so bad this; I am so bad that.” If you're saved by the blood of Christ, then Christ doesn't want to hear it any longer. Take your pity party and your attitude of how bad you were and tell it to someone else, because you are insulting my Lord. You are putting Him back on the cross, crucifying Him afresh, because the first time He did it was not enough for you. I don't buy into the belief that we are a bunch of worthless individuals. If you are in Christ, you are the most precious jewel in His eyes. If not, then you are a bunch of – put in any explicative you want – but through Christ, no matter what you think of yourself, stop putting yourself down, because it is not the way Christ sees you and it is definitely not the way God sees you any longer. Through Christ you are a jewel; you are gold tried in the fire and once you go through that fire you are going to come out more precious than that gold, so quit putting yourself down, because that is Satan talking. Instead, say, “You know, I might have my bumps in the road, but Christ is working through me and molding me and He knows once in a while He will have to spin me around a little faster or shake me a little more over the rough edges, but I am a work in progress and through Christ I will have the character that He develops in me. He will not demote me in any way because of Satan's lies or accusations or of any of my guilt.” There is no condemnation. How many times do I have to say it? Romans 8:1 begins by telling us there is no condemnation for the ones that are in Christ Jesus. Therefore, if you are in Christ Jesus, then you have recognized that Christ is the head of the church and the ruler of the universe and no matter what Satan says, he cannot bring an accusation to the throne of God, because he will have Christ there saying, “Back off. Hands off. Get away.” That is what Satan and his army sees in the breastplate. When he sees this first jewel, the ruby, or sardius, and understands what the name Reuben means, what it symbolizes and how God has defined it, then he sees God's strength and might. He sees God's generative power in you, and he sees the excellence of dignity which Satan cannot take away through accusations or lies.

There is also the last part of this verse, “*the excellency of power*”, which literally means *strength over something*. Christ displayed that power over the devil in several different ways when He took the keys of death and the grave away from him. That is:

- He displayed that power over sickness.
- He displayed that power over sin.
- He displayed that power over death.
- He displayed that power over the grave.

That is the kind of strength Christ had. The prophecy for Reuben, his tribe, and his descendants

from Moses, was that through Jesus Christ there would be an excellency of power, meaning the strength over something. Eventually, Christ would have that kind of power over the devil for everyone to see, because He made the trip and not only died, but He rose and was resurrected from the grave. Satan doesn't hold the keys to sickness and sin any longer and he doesn't hold the keys to death or the grave. That doesn't mean we're not going to die or sin, or even that we won't get sick. It means that Christ has the power over those elements, and He has given the church the power. Sooner or later we all will die, unless we are caught up in the rapture. God will decide when it's time to let go of this body and we will have our perfect healing and be completed over there. We will not feel pain; we will not feel sickness or illness any longer in the Spirit. Then definitely when we come back for that new body, it will be pain free, with no more ailments, sickness, tears, or sorrow. That is the kind of strength that Christ has over Satan and the enemy. It is another reminder when Satan sees that jewel, he sees Christ's power displayed over him that the saints could tap into, if they stay in Christ, and Satan hates it.

We also have those promises in the breastplate of righteousness and the breastplate of judgment. The promise is the same promise that Reuben had since his name is on that ruby stone, the sardius stone. We have the promise of God's strength and might, we have the promise of generative power, we have the promise of the excellency of dignity and the excellency of power. I hope you realize the kind of privileges that we can tap into if we live up to the responsibility. You'll have eternal salvation by Trusting in Christ and His blood and by doing that you have God's righteousness imputed in you. The problem with the Christian world is that it stops there, because they never had an understanding that righteousness involves your participation in all the privileges and blessing that God has not only given to you but promised you. We are the church of the firstborn.

To see that, go to Hebrews 12:23, where Paul is writing. He begins,

***“To the general assembly [or the festive assembly] and church of the firstborn which are written [a better translation is enrolled] in heaven, and to God the Judge of all, and to the spirits of just men made perfect.”***

The *general assembly* are the ones who have already gone on and are in that rejoicing period because they don't see or feel the sorrow and they don't see or feel the pain. They are in that third heaven in paradise, waiting for their new bodies, yet celebrating in joy that they overcame and now receive all of God's promises while they're in that holding period. The *church* here in this verse are the called-out individuals that are to carry out the Great Commission of the Lord Jesus Christ. Paul wrote this to the great assembly and church of the firstborn; the ones who have already gone and the ones still here. We are the church of the firstborn. We are still here and through Christ, all these other promises go along with that. They are our benefits and privileges. They are what we should be claiming today once we understand what the name Reuben means on that stone, especially as it is worn as a spiritual covering on the breastplate of righteousness. It is God's might, God's strength, and excellency of dignity and power.

That what Ephesians 6:10 says and why I started with verse 10. ***“Finally, my brethren, be strong [or strengthened or empowered, endunamoo] in the Lord, and in the power [or force] of his might.”*** That is what the Reubenites were to recognize when they were given this prophesy.



Unfortunately, they would never come to the knowledge of the truth, but they didn't have all the understanding of God's Word that we have. We are lucky as a church to have a record to look back on, but we also look forward and see in the present how God wants us to apply His Word. We are the church of the firstborn. Reuben was the firstborn. Christ is the firstborn of God; we are the firstborn of Christ; we are the bride of Christ; the church of the firstborn. Along with being the firstborn the promise has come in our lives if we faith and claim and really apply His might, His strength, the excellency of dignity and the excellency of power.

Now go to Genesis 49:4, because the story does not end there. Moses comes on the scene and just before his departure we read,

***“Unstable as water, thou shalt not excel; because thou wentest up to thy father's bed; then defiledst thou it: he went up to my couch.”***

Because of Reuben's horrible sin against his father and more importantly, against God, he shall be *unstable as water*. Jacob is telling him that he had all these promises, but unfortunately because of what he did, he will be as unstable as water. Just as Reuben was transformed and wouldn't have any part in a second brother being lost to slavery or possible death, I believe – and there are not that many who believe this – that God gave him a second chance, because God is a God of second chances. You're just going to have to take my word for it unless you want to do the research. Most people would have Reuben condemned and never be able to recover what Jacob prophesied over him and his tribe.

Go to Deuteronomy 33:6. In these verses Moses is blessing Israel and giving a blessing to all the tribes from this point on. In verse 6 we read,

***“Let Reuben live, and not die; and let not his men be few.”***

I really believe God was looking back and saw that Reuben was willing to give up the lives of his two sons if he didn't bring Benjamin back. Reuben was a transformed person. He fell short the first time when he allowed the brothers to do what they did without trying to correct or redeem the situation. He could have at least told their father the truth. But he wasn't going to allow that to happen again. Therefore, he was a changed person, willing to give up what was probably closest and dearest to him, to see that the first mistake wouldn't happen the second time. And now Moses says, ***“Let Reuben live, and not die;”*** However, in the rest of this verse, scripture was really butchered; ***“and let not his men be few.”*** But that is not what it says. Read this verse again,

***“Let Reuben live”***- he is my firstborn and has all the promises. And just as Reuben, because we live through Christ the firstborn of God, we are promised eternal life. We are the sons and daughters of the Living God. That is what God promised us.

***“and not die”***- Christ lived and rose from the dead. We are His firstborn and because of that we will never die if we faith in Him. We might lose this body of flesh that holds us back now, but our spirit will not die and one day we will get a new body.

*“and let his men be few.”*- should more accurately be translated, *though his men be few.*

In comparison, it is in John 11:25-27 where Lazarus dies. Those verses tell us,

***“Jesus said unto her [Martha], I am the resurrection, and the life: he that believeth [a better translation is faitheth] in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live: And whosoever liveth and faitheth in me shall never die. Believest thou this?” She saith unto him, Yea, Lord: I believe thou art the Christ, the Son of God, which should come into the world.”***

So, if we faith in Him, we are promised eternal life. Again, just as Reuben was the firstborn of Jacob, we are the firstborn of Christ and are promised eternal life. That is what Satan knows when he sees this stone on the breastplate. We are promised eternal life because we are the sons and daughters of the Living God and Christ promises us life. That is the message of John 11.

What does that have to do with Deuteronomy 33:6, *“and let his men be few”*? Well, the answer is short and simple: many are called, but few are chosen. In Matthew chapters 20 and 22, twice in Jesus' own words we read, many are called, few are chosen. We are the elect of God and Reuben, being the firstborn of Jacob with all the promises that came with that, was Jacob's elected son. He lost his privileges, but God redeemed him and gave him a promise of eternal life, the privilege of being the firstborn, and he wouldn't die, and in this case, his tribe wouldn't die. Although this differs from Jacob's prophesy, we also see that throughout scripture, on occasion, God has a change of heart, and here is an example of that. He isn't going to let this tribe of Reuben just die out and disappear. Even though they mingled in with another tribe, they still exist, and God knows exactly where they are, even though there aren't that many of them (they are few). The same message is also to the church. We are the elect of God; many are called in the church, but few are chosen to be God's servant to carry out the Great Commission. In addition, few are chosen to carry out God's will, which is to deny yourself, take up your cross and follow Jesus. Few are chosen to engage in spiritual warfare. When you are called to be a servant of God, a slave of Christ, you are called into the battlefield that will involve a lot of spiritual warfare in the unseen world that affects us here and now. Finally, few are chosen to carry out the Great Commission's responsibility.

We are a special people. We are God's elect and God's chosen. We are privileged and a great responsibility comes with those privileges. We are to multiply, just as Reuben would multiply, which is why they would not die out. It is why more than 400 years later Moses would say, “Reuben, you shall live and not die. Your clan will be small, just as few are chosen. Many are called in the church world today, but you will still carry out what God has designed and planned for you to do.” For us, the church, that is the Great Commission. We are special, we are privileged, and we do have a great responsibility to get the Word out and keep multiplying it as well. Along with that, you must not only claim it, but you must also proclaim it, “Behold, the Son of the Living God;” just as Leah said, “Behold, a son,” we say, “Behold, the Son of the Living God in me.” It is what that breastplate and that stone are saying; “Behold, he has the Son of God living in him.” God is pleased when His Son dwells in us and Satan is displeased when he sees us wearing the breastplate of righteousness, with the sardius stone, the ruby stone, with the name Reuben on it.

If you fast forward thousands of years, the name of Jesus Christ is on the breastplate that represents us, the firstborn of God. We are the firstborn of the church of Jesus Christ. What a privilege we have, but some still don't recognize that privilege. You must realize you are not here just to wake up in the morning, go through your day and close out at night, saying, another day done. You must ask yourself what you have done today to advance the cause of Christ, including being obedient as an individual to Christ, and also obedient to the ministry or church you're involved in to carry out that cause of Christ. If you are a part of this ministry, it's very simple: give, in the right way, as an obedient servant to God. I've also made it very simple for you; be ready as a prayer warrior when people need prayer. Also be ready to email, call, or do whatever needs to get done when the opportunity comes.

You are a chosen and a privileged people. You need to start realizing that, applying it and wearing the right clothing that says to Satan, "Hands off! God's might and strength is in me. I have this generative power to reproduce, not just in the fruitful loin type reproducing, but reproducing other joint heirs, not by my own means, but through the Word of God, in the way I participate."

With that there is excellency of dignity and there is excellency of power. God oversees this universe. He is preeminent over all of it and He will give you the strength, the power and the might, dignity, and generative power. If you stay in Him, all of Christ's promises follow to the ones of the firstborn of Jesus Christ and the church. Satan knows it. That stone declares it in the first row from right to left. He knows it and it is about time you became aware of what it truly symbolizes and means in God's Word, and that is just the beginning.

To be continued...

## Simeon, the Second Stone

Ephesians 6:14 tells us, ***“Stand therefore, having your loins girt about with truth, and having on the breastplate of righteousness.”*** The focus of this chapter is still, ***“and having on the breastplate of righteousness;”***

I'm not going to do much review. In previous chapters we looked at Exodus 28 and related the breastplate of righteousness in the New Testament to the breastplate of judgment in the Old Testament. Most preachers and scholars tell us the Roman soldier's armor was what Paul was describing when it comes to putting on the armor of God. That's okay for a basic message, but it is very incomplete and doesn't help you really understand that our spiritual armor is fashioned by Jesus Christ Himself. Many preachers try to be poetic in defining the Roman soldier's armor and they become very creative, but still it falls short in the spiritual meaning. Yes, Paul was very aware of that armor, but that's just the starting point. In Hebrews, Paul's intention was for us to go back and understand once again the oracle of God, also called the breastplate. If you haven't read or listened to those messages, then go back and do that, because they build up to the point, we're at now. This chapter begins with 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.***

***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 [or fill it in fillings of stones], even four rows of stones: the first row shall be a sardius, a topaz, and a carbuncle....”***

Moving on to verse 21, we read,

***“And the stones shall be with the names of the children of Israel, twelve, according to their names [of Jacob's sons and the tribes that came from him], like the engravings of a signet; every one with his name shall they be according to the twelve tribes.”***

Last chapter we began with Reuben. He is the first name on the breastplate and the first son of Jacob who became Israel. We covered sardius and the name Reuben, on the sardius stone. To put it in a one-sentence review, Reuben's name on that stone symbolizes ***“Behold the Son of the Living God in me. I am the firstborn of Jesus Christ.”*** This is what our spiritual enemy sees when we wear this spiritual breastplate that was fashioned by Jesus Christ. The first message he receives is, ***“Behold the Son of God living in me. I am the firstborn of Jesus Christ.”*** Christ has claimed His possession on our lives and our beings and Satan sees that and dislikes it, which is why the name – the first son of Jacob or Israel – was placed on the first stone, the sardius stone.

We are going to move on from that to the second stone, topaz, that is engraved with the name of Simeon. The Hebrew name is *Shimon*, but I like Simeon better. He was the second son of Jacob from Leah. The topaz stone with Simeon's name on it symbolizes the second message that Satan and all the spiritual evil enemies see when they come to do battle with us, and it's important. The

first message is *Behold the Son of the Living God in me. I am the firstborn of Jesus Christ*. Now we move to the second stone. When all the other children of Israel were lined up receiving their blessings before Moses' death, Simeon didn't get a blessing from Moses. There's a reason for that, and most, if not all readers of the Bible have never stopped long enough in Deuteronomy to ask why. Before we get to the reason, we'll review some history.

In Genesis 29:33, Jacob works to pay for two wives. He was tricked and he married Leah first and then he had to work another seven years for Rachel. We pick it up at chapter 29, verse 30:

***“And he went in also unto Rachel, and he loved also Rachel more than Leah, and served with him yet seven other years.***

***And when the LORD saw that Leah was hated, he opened her womb: but Rachel was barren.***  
[The Lord had compassion on Leah and opened her womb.]

***And Leah conceived, and bare a son, and she called his name Reuben: for she said, Surely the LORD hath looked upon my affliction; now therefore my husband will love me.***

***And she conceived again, and bare a son; and said, Because the LORD hath heard that I was hated, he hath therefore given me this son also: and she called his name Simeon.”***

In Hebrew, Simeon means *heard* or *hearing*. God heard Leah's plea and saw that she was hated and opened her womb. Because Leah was hated, God blessed her. So, Simeon translated means *heard* or *hearing*; God heard Leah. However, throughout scripture not much is written about Simeon until Genesis 34:1. Here we read,

***“And Dinah the daughter of Leah, which she bare unto Jacob, went out to see the daughters of the land.***

***And when Shechem the son of Hamor the Hivite, prince of the country, saw her, he took her, and lay with her, and defiled her.*** [In the Hebrew it says, *and he humbled her.*]

***And his soul clave unto Dinah the daughter of Jacob, and he loved the damsel, and spake kindly unto the damsel.*** [He raped her and then fell in love with her, but that does not excuse what he did. In fact, it was awful.]

***And Shechem spake unto his father Hamor, saying, Get me this damsel to wife.***

***And Jacob heard that he had defiled Dinah his daughter: now his sons were with his cattle in the field: and Jacob held his peace until they were come.*** [That took some restraint. I do not know what I would have done, but it probably would not have been that.]

***And Hamor the father of Shechem went out unto Jacob to commune with him.***

***And the sons of Jacob came out of the field when they heard it: and the men [Jacob's sons] were grieved, and they were very wroth, because he had wrought folly in Israel in lying with Jacob's daughter, which thing ought not to be done.”***

And they were right. It should never have happened, even though he fell in love with her afterward. For some reason, after he raped her, he had some affection for her, as if that justifies anything. It did not. It was a crime and he should have been punished. I don't even know why Jacob waited, but he did, and his sons were grieved over it and they were very angry. Verse 8 continues,

***“And Hamor communed with them, saying, The soul of my son Shechem longeth for your***

*daughter: I pray you give her him to wife.*

*And make ye marriages with us, and give your daughters unto us, and take our daughters unto you.*

*And ye shall dwell with us: and the land shall be before you; dwell and trade ye therein, and get you possessions therein.*

*And Shechem said unto her father and unto her brethren, Let me find grace in your eyes, and what ye shall say unto me I will give.*

*Ask me never so much dowry and gift, and I will give according as ye shall say unto me: but give me the damsel to wife.* [He was willing to pay whatever the price was for his son to have Jacob's daughter as a wife.]

*And the sons of Jacob answered Shechem and Hamor his father deceitfully, [They weren't pleased with what was going on so they tricked them, lied to them and were setting them up.] and said, because he had defiled Dinah their sister:*

*And they said unto them, We cannot do this thing, to give our sister to one that is uncircumcised; for that were a reproach unto us:*

*But in this will we consent unto you: If ye will be as we be, that every male of you be circumcised;* [“Sure, we will agree to this, but get circumcised first.”]

*Then will we give our daughters unto you, and we will take your daughters to us, and we will dwell with you, and we will become one people.*

*But if ye will not hearken unto us, to be circumcised; then will we take our daughter, and we will be gone.*

*And their words pleased Hamor and Shechem Hamor's son.*

*And the young man deferred not to do the thing, because he had delight in Jacob's daughter: and he was more honorable than all the house of his father.*

*And Hamor and Shechem his son came unto the gate of their city, and communed with the men of their city, saying,*

*These men are peaceable with us; therefore let them dwell in the land, and trade therein; for the land, behold, it is large enough for them; let us take their daughters to us for wives, and let us give them our daughters.*

*Only herein will the men consent unto us for to dwell with us, to be one people, if every male among us be circumcised, as they are circumcised.*

*Shall not their cattle and their substance and every beast of their's be our's? only let us consent unto them, and they will dwell with us.”*

Basically, he is trying to convince them to become circumcised, saying they could gain materially from this business transaction.

*“And unto Hamor and unto Shechem his son hearkened all that went out of the gate of his city; and every male was circumcised, all that went out of the gate of his city [They agreed to it.];*

*And it came to pass on the third day, when they were sore, that two of the sons of Jacob, Simeon and Levi, Dinah's brethren, took each man his sword, and came upon the city boldly, and slew all the males.”*

This is where their deceit came to fruition. They waited until the men were helpless and couldn't defend themselves. They couldn't even walk, and Simeon and Levi knew it! I'm sure the rest of

the brothers and Jacob concluded, “Well, what happened, happened.” I don't necessarily agree with the conclusion that came about as a fair solution to the problem, but they were either going to go to war or they were going to try to do a peaceable thing in their eyes. As I read, Simeon and Levi didn't agree to it, and I'm not so sure I'm against what they did. God was, but He gave a way of escape also.

If Jacob decided, along with his sons, to go to war with this rapist, I'm sure God would have intervened and come up with another plan to resolve this situation. It could have been through war or some other solution, but we don't see anybody consulting God during this whole ordeal described in these verses. I have read all the other Hebrew history on this, and not once does God give an answer or instructions about how to deal with the situation. However, neither Jacob nor his sons go to the Lord. You just see man taking into his own hands the problem that faced them with Dinah's rape. So, Simeon and Levi came up with their own plan. They waited for the perfect moment to strike, when the men who were part of Hamor and Shechem's clan couldn't move, and probably couldn't even stand; they were helpless. Then they slew every single male in sight. Verse 26 continues the story,

***“And they slew Hamor and Shechem his son with the edge of the sword, and took Dinah out of Shechem's house, and went out. The sons of Jacob came upon the slain, and spoiled the city, because they had defiled their sister.”***

Now, how come the rest of the sons of Jacob didn't receive the same kind of punishment that God would give to Levi and especially Simeon? All the other sons, including Levi, received blessings from Jacob and Moses, but not Simeon. First, if you know anything about Simeon, he was the strong-minded son in this group. If you do any research on the Hebrew, whether it is mythology or honorable scholars like Josephus and others, you'll find in their records that Simeon was not only a strong headed individual, he was also very strong physically; he was overpowering. I'm sure he brought Levi into his plan because he wasn't going to do this alone, and they struck down every male. Then the other sons of Jacob came upon the slain, ***“and spoiled the city, because they had defiled their sister.”***

In my eyes, they were just as guilty, but not in God's eyes, because they kept the agreement of their father Jacob. They elected not to go to war and came up with the agreement for everyone to become circumcised rather than go to war. What happened to their sister, Dinah, was a shame and horrible, but Jacob and his sons chose to move on and live in a peaceable manner. Once an agreement is made, if you are a representation of God here on earth, you'd better live up to it. However, if you decide to change the plan and break that agreement, and you're God's representative, then you have the wrath, the heat of heaven on you, so watch out. That's what happened to Simeon and Levi. The reason it didn't happen to the rest of Jacob's sons is because they weren't the ones who originally broke the agreement, even though they looted the city. That is what we see in verse 28,

***“They took their sheep, and their oxen, and their asses, and that which was in the city, and that which was in the field. And all their wealth, and all their little ones, and their wives took they captive, and spoiled***

*even all that was in the house.*

*And Jacob said to Simeon and Levi, Ye have troubled me to make me to stink among the inhabitants of the land [In other words, you have dishonored our family and what we represent, the Living God.], among the Canaanites and the Perizzites: and I being few in number, they shall gather themselves together against me, and slay me; and I shall be destroyed, I and my house.*

*And they said, Should he deal with our sister as with a harlot?"*

Simeon and Levi had an excellent point, and God would have protected them if they decided to go to war because of what happened to their sister, but that's not what happened. Jacob and his sons came up with this agreement, and once they did, they should have lived by it, because they were God's representatives. There is no record that they decided to ask for God's counsel and instruction. Jacob and his sons took matters into their own hands, and because they did, they had to live with the agreement they made. In this case, when they tricked the enemy that they were trying to deceive from the beginning, God was displeased in it and because God was displeased, it affected Jacob and future events.

With that bit of history, we will move to some more history in Genesis 42. The text is long, but the message is short. You know the story. I covered it in the story of Reuben, the first stone, the sardius stone. Joseph's brothers, Jacob's sons, were jealous of him. They disliked Joseph and they saw an opportunity when they had Joseph alone and plotted to kill him, but instead he was sold into slavery in Egypt. Time went by and Joseph eventually became second only to Pharaoh in power in Egypt. He received that position because he translated Pharaoh's dreams of seven years of plenty followed by seven years of famine. Literally, he saved the known world at that time, with the center point being in Egypt. As scripture says, God sent a man and that man was Joseph and because he was in Egypt and the famine was so great, eventually Jacob and all his clan, moved down to Egypt. Joseph gave them the best lands because he had that kind of power to give them those territories. Jacob, his sons and his clan were running out of food, so they decided to go down to Egypt. They didn't know who Joseph as at this time, where he went or if he was still alive. They had no idea of Joseph's position in Egypt, but they went down, seeking to buy food in chapter 42. We pick up the story in verse 19. Here we see Joseph's brothers who sold him into slavery, although they really wanted to kill him. Reuben talked them out of that and now Joseph is second to none except the Pharaoh, ruling in Egypt. Now they are in front of Joseph, not knowing who he is.

*"If ye be true men, let one of your brethren be bound in the house of your prison: go ye, carry corn for the famine of your houses:"*

Joseph knew they were his brothers and he knew the reason they were in Egypt, and he is planning his own deception. Joseph gives them provisions to take back to their father and the people waiting to be fed, but because Benjamin didn't come along with the rest of the brothers, he makes a condition that he would give them the supplies, but he was going to keep one of them because he wanted to see Benjamin. So, until Benjamin came before him, he was going to keep one of his brothers as a hostage.

*"But bring your youngest brother [Benjamin] unto me; so shall your words be verified, and ye*



*shall not die. And they did so.*

*And they said one to another, We are verily guilty concerning our brother [Joseph], in that we saw the anguish of his soul, when he besought us, and we would not hear; therefore is this distress come upon us.*

*And Reuben answered them, saying, Spake I not unto you, saying, Do not sin against the child [Speaking of Joseph many years before]; and ye would not hear? therefore, behold, also his blood is required.*

*And they knew not that Joseph understood them; for he spake unto them by an interpreter. [They had no idea that this man was their brother Joseph.]*

*And he turned himself about from them, and wept; and returned to them again, and communed with them, and took from them Simeon, and bound him before their eyes.”*

Joseph took Simeon. He could have chosen any other brother, but he chose Simeon, and we really don't know why. I researched this as much as I could, and scholar after scholar really doesn't know either. Some of them have theories that didn't make sense to me and they will be the first to admit that they are just theories, but most will admit they don't know why Simeon was chosen. I also had the same opinion; I really didn't know why Simeon was chosen to be held as a hostage instead of one of the other brothers. I researched and and I couldn't find any help. Then I decided to read the Testament of Simeon again. Even though it is not in the Bible, the Testament of Simeon and all the brothers who wrote their testaments date to around the same time the Septuagint was written or translated into the known language at the time, which was about 175 BC to 100 BC [Before Christ]. Even Paul, by some traditions, carried these testaments of the 12 brothers with him. I thought the Testament of Simeon was worth a second look, to maybe get some insight into why Simeon was chosen, keeping in mind that Joseph was a type of Christ in the Old Testament. By the way, while Simeon was being held captive, do you think he was treated like any other prisoner? Do you think he was treated badly? This is my opinion, but I believe he wasn't in prison at all. For some reason, I don't think Joseph told him who he was at this point. Maybe he was kept under house guard, but he didn't suffer or go through anything like Joseph did, all because of the jealousy and anger these brothers had towards him.

The following is a quick synopsis of the Testament of Simeon. As I already told you, Simeon is the second son of Jacob and Leah. He was known as the strong man. Not only was he a hard head and a hothead, but his physical aspect was one of strength.

*“1:1 THE copy of the words of Simeon, the things which he spake to his sons before he died, in the hundred and twentieth year of his life, at which time Joseph, his brother, died.*

*2 For when Simeon was sick, his sons came to visit him, and he strengthened himself and sat up and kissed them, and said:-*

*3 Hearken, my children, to Simeon your father and I will declare unto you what things I have in my heart.*

*4 I was born of Jacob as my father's second son; and my mother Leah called me Simeon, because the Lord had heard her prayer.*

*5 Moreover, I became strong exceedingly; I shrank from no achievement nor was I afraid of ought. For my heart was hard, and my liver was immoveable, and my bowels without compassion.”*

Because of this, he was probably wondering why Joseph was his father's favorite son, more loved than any other son. Simeon became exceedingly strong and shrank from no achievement, so why was Joseph loved more than Simeon?

***“6 Because valour also has been given from the Most High to men in soul and body.***

***7 For in the time of my youth I was jealous of many things of Joseph, because my father loved him beyond all.***

***8 And I set my mind against him to destroy him*** [I can see some saying Joseph kept Simeon under guard or in prison because he wanted revenge and wanted to teach Simeon a lesson. No, I do not believe that at all and I will get to the reason why.] ***because the prince of deceit sent forth the spirit of jealousy and blinded my mind*** [That is a confession of being demonized.], ***so that I regarded him not as a brother, nor did I spare even Jacob my father.***

***9 But his God*** [At this point, he is looking back at history and God was not Simeon's God. He said “his God” meaning Joseph's God.] ***and the God of his fathers sent forth His angel, and delivered him out of my hands.***

***10 For when I went to Shechem to bring ointment for the flocks, and Reuben to Dothan, where were our necessities and all our stores, Judah my brother sold him to the Ishmaelites*** [While he was gone on an errand Judah sold him to the Ishmaelites].

***11 And when Reuben heard these things he was grieved, for he wished to restore him to his father.***

***12 But on hearing this I was exceedingly wroth against Judah in that he let him go away alive, and for five months I continued wrathful against him.”***

Simeon was angry with his brother for selling Joseph into slavery and not allowing him the opportunity to commit murder. Simeon would have been the one who stepped up to say let me slice his throat. I know it sounds gruesome and awful, but that is what kind of character he was before he got back on track with God. And he was mad at his brother for five months. True, this book is not in the Bible, but there are other historical documents that tell the same story over and over with very little variation from the Bible. That's why I believe there is some truth in it, and it's probably more accurate than some of the silly theories' scholars make up to explain some of the events during this time. Also, there is plenty of evidence that Paul carried these testaments with him. He wrote in one of the letters to Timothy to bring his parchments to him in prison, because he wanted to reflect on everything that he could get his hands on. Which parchments did he ask for? Paul had a lot of time, since he didn't have many visitors, if any, in the last prison he was in. He only had these parchments to console his soul, knowing that he was facing a martyr's death. Paul didn't do any wrong but was still facing a martyr's death because he proclaimed the Word of God. So, outside of communication with God, what better way to build up his faith than by studying the Word of God, including history and previous events? Returning to the Testament of Simeon, we read that he sits for five months, stewing in his own wrath against his brother Judah.

***“13 But the Lord restrained me, and withheld from me the power of my hands; for my right hand was half withered for seven days.*** [God gave him withering his hand for seven days.]

***14 And I knew, my children, that because of Joseph this had befallen me, and I repented and wept; and I besought the Lord God that my hand might be restored and that I might hold aloof from all pollution and envy and from all folly.”***

Simeon wanted to repent, and it took a withered hand to get his attention long enough to ask himself, “Wait a minute! What am I doing here? I am not going against Joseph; I am going against God.”

***“15 For I knew that I had devised an evil thing before the Lord and Jacob my father, on account of Joseph my brother, in that I envied him.***

***16 And now, my children, hearken unto me and beware of the spirit of deceit and envy.***

***17 For envy ruleth over the whole mind of a man, and suffereth him neither to eat nor to drink, nor to do any good thing. But if ever suggesteth to him to destroy him that he envieth; and so long as he that is envied flourisheth, he that envieth fadeth away.***

***18 Two years therefore I afflicted my soul with fasting in the fear of the Lord, and I learnt that deliverance from envy cometh by the fear of God.***

***19 For if a man flee to the Lord, the evil spirit* [The one demonizing him] ***runneth away from him and his mind is lightened.*** [Not only lightened because the evil spirits no longer control his mind, but his burden is lightened because he now has rolled his burden onto God.]**

***20 And henceforward he sympathiseth with him* [or *has compassion with him*] ***whom he envied and forgiveth those who are hostile to him, and so ceaseth from his envy.”*****

So Simeon came to the conclusion that God had compassion on him. “... ***and forgiveth those who are hostile to him, and so ceaseth from his envy.***” ***He received forgiveness*** from God for a life of doing things his own way; breaking agreements, pulling Levi into his evil plans, not living up to the agreement that his father established, taking matters in his own hands, and committing murder. I know some will say, “Well, if somebody raped my daughter that is what I would feel too.” That is okay. Feel that way and ask God to deal with you because obviously murder is not the right choice, even though you feel like it. I'm not blaming you. I would probably feel the same way, but don't deceitfully make an agreement, knowing it will be broken and then commit murder.

In my opinion, Simeon became demonized after his sister was raped and those demons stayed on him. That is what spiritual warfare is all about and it's why we need this armor to resist all the attacks, including being demonized. But Simeon didn't resist. Instead, he fell into Satan's trap, and Satan was governing his life and controlling every move. He hated his brother, probably more than any other brother did, and he agonized for two years after what he did to Joseph. Then in the next chapter,

***“2:1 AND my father asked concerning me, because he saw that I was sad; and I said unto him, I am pained in my liver.*** [His father noticed it and he would not even tell him the truth even though he was suffering in pain and anguish because of what he did.]

***2 For I mourned more than they all, because I was guilty of the selling of Joseph.”***

Simeon took all the blame and didn't even blame his brothers after he was forgiven. He saw that his brothers had a solution so Joseph would not be murdered. If Simeon came back and Joseph was still in that pit, his brothers concluded that Simeon would kill him, so it was better he be sold into slavery than die. Simeon took on 100% of the guilt rather than blame his brothers.

***“3 And when we went down into Egypt, and he bound me as a spy, I knew that I was suffering justly, and I grieved not.***

***4 Now Joseph was a good man, and had the Spirit of God within him: being compassionate and pitiful, he bore no malice against me; but loved me even as the rest of his brethren....***

***6 All his days he reproached us not concerning this thing, but loved us as his own soul, and beyond his own sons glorified us, and gave us riches, and cattle and fruits.”***

Simeon struggled with God for two years and the evil spirits he struggled with finally broke loose and his mind was lightened. And henceforth God had compassion on him and forgave him for the terrible sins he committed up to that point; not to just Joseph, but what he did with Levi in murdering the males, including the males that had no participation in the rape. In my opinion, Joseph picked Simeon because Joseph, like David, was a man after God's own heart. In fact, his connection with God was unbelievable. God knows what he dreamt. God knows what kind of communication he had just like at Saqqara. I preach that Joseph was Imhotep and one of his gifts was healing sickness and disease. He also built fabulous monuments, pyramids, palaces, and dams, in ways that nobody had ever constructed before or even seen any kind of design like them. It is well known that Joseph had communication with God that goes beyond reason. In my opinion, he also knew the type of suffering that his brother Simeon went through, so he kept Simeon. God knows what Simeon would have done if he had to go back to Egypt. Obviously, Simeon went through a great state of depression and anxiety in that period of struggling. We know through the Testimony of Simeon that it lasted for at least two years, if not longer. Joseph wanted to keep Simeon safe, because God knew what Simeon would have done if he had to face his father again with one less brother, while that brother was kept hostage until Joseph saw Benjamin. This shows us that, just as Christ has compassion on us, and has forgiven us from our misery, our sin, our anger, our wrath, and our deceitful ways, Joseph, as the type of Christ, entered into the situation and someone who would be cursed and not even issued a blessing by Moses, would be under Joseph's care. I believe Joseph knew what Simeon felt and didn't want him to experience that again. Joseph kept him safe under his protection, just as we are safe and protected under Christ's shield. Yes, we will go through struggles and could possibly live a martyr's life, but we are still under the covering of Jesus Christ. But this is not where this story ends! In Genesis 49:1, Jacob gathers his sons to give them a blessing before he moves on and dies. Here we read,

***“And Jacob called unto his sons, and said, Gather yourselves together, that I may tell you that which shall befall you in the last days.***

***Gather yourselves together, and hear, ye sons of Jacob; and hearken unto Israel your father. Reuben, thou art my firstborn, my might, and the beginning of my strength, the excellency of dignity, and the excellency of power:***

***Unstable as water, thou shalt not excel; because thou wentest up to thy father's bed; then defiledst thou it: he went up to my couch.”***

Now we get to Simeon and Levi in verse 5:

***“Simeon and Levi are brethren; instruments of cruelty are in their habitations [referring to the rape].***

***O my soul, come not thou into their secret; unto their assembly, mine honour, be not thou***

***united: for in their anger they slew a man [more than one man], and in their selfwill they digged down a wall.***

***Cursed be their anger, for it was fierce; and their wrath, for it was cruel: I will divide them in Jacob, and scatter them in Israel.”***

In the next chapter I will get to why the Levites, the tribe of Levi, would never own any territory in the promised land. In fact, they would be spread out among 48 cities in that land as servants of God, to instruct the Law of Moses and to carry out the sacrifices and offerings. That was their commission. They wouldn't own anything, but Simeon would. Simeon is the only tribe here that really gets a blessing that turns out to be a curse up to a certain point in history. I have read scholar after scholar that take this all the way to the end, where Simeon would never see any inheritance that would turn into a blessing, but they are wrong. I'm telling you they are flat out wrong and the proof of it is because Moses bypassed them when he was giving out the blessings. This was just before the tribes would cross over and head in the promised land and conquer all the inhabitants occupying the land.

It is in Deuteronomy 33:1, where Moses blesses Israel. Here we read,

***“And this is the blessing, wherewith Moses the man of God blessed the children of Israel before his death.”*** [He had them gather also.]

Then, in verse 4, ***“Moses commanded us a law, even the inheritance of the congregation of Jacob.”***

Moses begins issuing these blessings to one tribe and another. The first one obviously is ***“Let Reuben live, and not die; and let not his men be few.”*** The next blessing is in verse 7, ***“And this is the blessing of Judah:”*** So the blessings go from Reuben to Judah, then to Levi, and from Levi he gives blessing to another of Jacob's sons, but he skips Simeon. In fact, Simeon is the only tribe without a specific blessing from Moses. This is where most scholars say Simeon didn't receive a blessing because of his cruelty and anger, and in fact, the only thing he received from his father, Jacob, was a curse and therefore he is still under the curse. I am saying he is not under the curse any longer because Joshua and the Book of Joshua make it very clear. These verses show that the Levites and the tribe of Levi were spread throughout 48 different cities in all of Israel to serve as God's servants, but Simeon would come under the control of Judah.

In Joshua 19:1, Joshua was giving each tribe its portion once they were in the promised land; he was dividing up the land among the tribes.

***“And the second lot came forth to Simeon, even for the tribe of the children of Simeon according to their families: and their inheritance was within the inheritance of the children of Judah.”***

Verse 9, ***“Out of the portion of the children of Judah was the inheritance of the children of Simeon: for the part of the children of Judah was too much for them: therefore the children of Simeon had their inheritance within the inheritance of them.”***

In fact, the tribe of Simeon was assimilated into the tribe of Judah and in history they became lost before they even left that land much later, and the tribe of Simeon became no more. Actually,

however, God knows exactly where they are. They have been lost in history, but they were given a chance to have redemption, and to be able to claim an inheritance. It clearly says, ***“and their inheritance was within the inheritance of the children of Judah”*** in both verses 1 and 9, and in other areas. Here, when Joshua was giving out the portions, he gave Simeon a portion within the tribe of Judah and their inheritance was within the inheritance of the children of Judah.

So, who came out of Judah's line? Christ! And here we have the beautiful picture of Simeon being redeemed again, not losing his inheritance, but is promised his inheritance would come within the children of Israel. This is the forefront of what happened much later in time when Jesus Christ came. Where is our inheritance now? Go to Romans 8:14. This is where we read in verse 1, ***“There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus”***.

And in verse 14 we read, ***“For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons [or the offspring] of God.***

***For ye have not received the spirit of bondage again to fear; but we have received the Spirit of adoption....”*** That is what Simeon received as part of the tribe of Judah. The tribe of Simeon received their inheritance from Judah. They would be adopted by Judah, and here in scripture it points to us, ***“but we have received the Spirit of adoption, whereby we cry, Abba, Father. The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God: And if children, then heirs; heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ; if so be that we suffer with him, that we may be also glorified together.”***

Just as Simeon regained an inheritance although his father cursed him and Moses bypassed him, God straightened it all out and gave the tribe of Simeon a second chance, and that second chance would come through Judah. Where does our second chance come from? Through Jesus Christ who came out of the tribe of Judah in the New Testament, and He has now inherited us back into the fold to reconcile us back to the Father. That is why we are joint-heirs with Christ and we have now been inherited by Christ.

The first stone, the sardius stone with the name of Reuben on it, declares *Behold the Son of the Living God. I am the firstborn of Jesus Christ.* The message to Satan on the second stone with the name Simeon on it says *I am forgiven.* That is why Simeon declares throughout the rest of history, *I am forgiven, and my inheritance is through Jesus Christ.* Now our inheritance, when we put on that breastplate, is through Jesus Christ. Paul knew exactly what he was doing when he wrote it down in Romans 8:1; he was guided by the Holy Spirit. If our inheritance is through Christ Jesus, then there is no one that can condemn us and that includes the spiritual enemy we fight day in and day out.

The message on the first stone is *we are the sons of the Living God, firstborn of Jesus Christ.* The second message is *I am forgiven.* Satan cannot forget that I am forgiven because I recognize what the blood of Jesus Christ has done for me. My inheritance is through Him, just as Simeon's inheritance was through Judah, the line where Jesus Christ came from. This second stone is declaring a prophetic message that began all the way back in Joshua and happened when Christ came on the scene. To not understand this breastplate is to miss the wonderful opportunity we have to know how we go into battle and what we are wearing when we do. There is nothing that we can fashion, but everything that Christ has made available to us and He fashions for us. It is

not of our merits, not of our hands, not of our doing, but only through Jesus Christ.

To repeat: stone number one tells us *Behold the Son of the Living God in me. I am the firstborn of Jesus Christ.* And stone number two announces *I am forgiven.*

With Joseph as a type of Christ, he literally proved to Simeon, “Yes, you are forgiven.” He could have been treated miserably or have been tortured in prison, but he wasn't. Don't let anybody ever tell you differently. Simeon was forgiven as we are forgiven, and as Simeon's inheritance lies through Judah, and so does ours, because Christ came out of Judah. We are forgiven and our inheritance is through Jesus Christ. This is why Satan has blinded the world for 2,000 years to what this breastplate symbolizes. It is why all the silly definitions and explanations about the breastplate using the Roman armor to make their points fall short. It is ***milk and not meat*** to use Paul's words. That is also why we must go back, using Paul's words again, to ***understand the oracles of God.***

Those are the first two stones. Do not forget that the Son of the Living God is living in you and you are the firstborn of Jesus Christ. You are forgiven and your inheritance is through Christ Jesus. We are joint-heirs, and what a wonderful privilege that is. Know that for the rest of your days, as you do battle with these unseen forces.

To be continued...

## The Carbuncle

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

I've been taking us back to Exodus 28, and I've said so many times that it's okay to have the basic understanding about what this Christian armor is. Just about all preachers, teachers and scholars compare the type of spiritual armor listed here in Ephesians 6 to the Roman armor that was worn by the soldiers in Paul's day. It's okay for a starting point. I don't have a problem with that, but it falls short of what Paul was trying to say. Remember, he was a scholar of the Old Testament. We see all through his writings about the Old Testament that everything was fulfilled through Christ. We are not to go back to the Old Testament and try to live the Law because Christ has lived it for us. We just must faith in Him so the imputed righteousness of God can once again dwell in us through Christ by faith. Paul was a scholar of the Old Testament, and he knew exactly to what he was referring. However, we must go back to the Old Testament to have a better understanding of what this spiritual armor is all about. And that is what we have been doing, so go to Exodus 28:15.

***“And thou shalt make the breastplate of judgment [in the Hebrew *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.***

***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 [in the breastplate] settings of stones, even four rows of stones: the first row shall be a sardius, a topaz, and a carbuncle:”***

We are at the carbuncle in this message. (Someone asked if I am going to make a chart of some sort listing all the stones and what they symbolized, when I'm done with these 12 stones. Yes, I'll probably try to knock it down to a paragraph each and put it in chart form so you can have it as a quick reference. It won't replace the messages, but it will give a synopsis of what these particular stones mean on that breastplate.) Verse 21 continues,

***“And the stones shall be with the names of the children of Israel, twelve, according to their names, like the engravings of a signet; every one with his name shall they be according to the twelve tribes.”***

This carbuncle stone is a red gem, which represents blood, sacrifice and atonement. I'm coming back to this gem at the conclusion of this message to bring out another important point and how we are to take it to the New Testament to symbolize why this stone is what it is; not just the red color, but the particular attribute of the stone and what it does. The name on this particular stone that represents one of the tribes of Israel is Levi. Levi was Jacob and Leah's third son, which is why it is the third stone.

In the last message I told you what happened to Levi and Simeon. Their actions after their sister's



rape caused Jacob's wrath to be turned on them. It took Simeon and it took Joshua, in the Book of Joshua, to take them from a place of wrath to a place of inheritance once again. Levi never inherited his own land, but he would be part of something wonderful that the Messiah would come from. Levi went along with his brother, Simeon, in getting vengeance (against Jacob's wishes) because of what evil individuals did to their sister. Again, Levi was Jacob and Leah's third son. The name Levi means *join* or *joined*. Leah believed that Levi would be genuinely joined to her because, even though she felt hated, she was able to produce three sons. Now go back to Genesis 29. This is where Leah in verses 31 to 34 conceives the sons. In verse 34 it says,

***“And she conceived again, and bare a son; and said, Now this time will my husband be joined unto me, because I have born him three sons: therefore was his name called Levi.”***

Moving along in Genesis, we come to Genesis 34:25-27 and 30. This is where Levi and his brother Simeon went against their father's wishes, causing them to miss out on some blessings. Eventually, Moses would bring Levi back and then it took Joshua to bring Simeon back so they both ultimately received an inheritance. Genesis 34 is another place in God's Word where Levi is unfortunately caught up along with his brother Simeon in an act that went against their father's wishes. We also see Jacob's sons in the Joseph story, but it's not until Genesis 49:5 that we see Levi again, as Jacob is giving out the blessings to all his sons. Chapter 49, verse 5 says:

***“Simeon and Levi are brethren; instruments of cruelty are in their habitations. O my soul, come not thou into their secret; unto their assembly, mine honour, be not thou united: for in their anger they slew a man, and in their selfwill they digged down a wall. Cursed be their anger, for it was fierce; and their wrath, for it was cruel: I will divide them in Jacob, and scatter them in Israel.”***

The Levites and the tribe of Simeon were assimilated by the tribe of Judah. The Levites were not given any land as an inheritance, because of their actions after the rape of their sister. In the flesh, I probably would have reacted the same way, and many would probably have done the same thing also. But just because Jacob cursed their act, it didn't mean that God wouldn't have compassion and forgiveness if they would change their ways, and they did. I have already covered that with Simeon. In this message, we will see how Levi gets to the point of having favor with God once again. After all, in Numbers 18:21, God said that He would be Levi's portion and that has never changed throughout scripture. They did receive 48 cities, scattered throughout Israel, from the other tribes to live in, although they could never own their own land. There was also a condition with that, because the tribe of Levi was given much responsibility.

Now, with that brief introduction, I'll read the whole story to lay the groundwork. Most of you know it. You have heard it or read it many times, and we'll start with Exodus 32:1. This is where they have been delivered out of Egypt and Moses is getting instruction from God, but the people were getting anxious and impatient. They didn't demonstrate any type of endurance, even though generations had been through much suffering and hardships; they saw all the miracles and the plagues did not affect them. Through all of that, God kept them protected and safe, but they still became impatient lacking faith, with no endurance all, because Moses was delayed by God up on the mountain. Verse 1 begins,

***“And when the people saw that Moses delayed to come down out of the mount, the people gathered themselves together unto Aaron, and said unto him, Up, make us gods, which shall go before us; for as for this Moses, the man that brought us up out of the land of Egypt, we wot not what is become of him.”***

In other words, they were saying, “We have not heard from him for a while and now we are concerned.” However, not once did they run to the God who delivered them from their bondage or remember what He did for them. The only things on their minds were the leeks and garlic of Egypt. They even forgot all the sufferings, hardships and torture they experienced, with no hope for future generations without the deliverance of God through the hands of Moses. That all went by the wayside and because Moses was delayed, they called Aaron and said, “What happened to Moses? We do not know what happened to him! What has become of him?”

***“And Aaron said unto them, Break off the golden earrings, which are in the ears of your wives, of your sons, and of your daughters, and bring them unto me.”***

Well, Aaron sure had the answer! Not once is there any mention of, “I know it has been awhile but let's give him some more time. God is obviously busy with him up there. Remember we are heading to the promised land. We have to get this together and Moses is getting the marching orders.” Instead, everybody wanted instant satisfaction. God was in control and knew what He was doing. After delivering them all from the hardships and afflictions of Egypt, He wouldn't abandon them at this point. He wouldn't have demonstrated miracle after miracle, plague after plague, leaving that bondage with not one feeble person in the camp, only to bring them out and desert them. It doesn't make any sense. People are what they are, and they are fickle. It is the nature of individuals that take their eyes off the prize. Returning to Exodus, we read in verse 2 Aaron's solution,

***“And Aaron said unto them, Break off the golden earrings, which are in the ears of your wives, of your sons, and of your daughters, and bring them unto me.***

***And all the people brake off the golden earrings which were in their ears, and brought them unto Aaron.***

***And he received them at their hand, and fashioned it with a graving tool, after he had made it a molten calf: and they said, These be thy gods, O Israel, which brought thee up out of the land of Egypt.”***

Just think how evil this verse is. ***“These be thy gods, O Israel,*** not the God that Moses had been preaching and telling them about, but instead a stupid golden calf made from their earrings. Throw it into the fire, grave it with a tool, and lo and behold here comes this calf and now this is your god, ***“which brought thee up out of the land of Egypt.”***

***“And when Aaron saw it, he built an altar before it; and Aaron made proclamation, and said, To morrow is a feast to the LORD.”***

The arrogance, stupidity and evil coming from Aaron at this point is unbelievable. I'm surprised that God didn't strike him down with lightning right then and there, but He had a purpose with Aaron. He would turn Aaron around so he would become the High Priest, but here he is anything

but that. Not only did he make this calf, he built an altar so this calf could be presented to be worshipped. Then he says, ***“Tomorrow is a feast to the LORD,”*** thinking somehow that God would be pleased with any of this. Verse 6 continues,

***“And they rose up early on the morrow, and offered burnt offerings, and brought peace offerings: and the people sat down to eat and to drink, and rose up to play.”***

I don't think it was the whole camp, although this verse gives that impression. However, it was not the whole camp that was rejoicing, playing around and living it up, thinking that this altar and this calf, this false god, this imitation, would please God or more importantly, please Pharaoh as they made their way back to Egypt.

***“And the LORD said unto Moses, Go, get thee down; for thy people, which thou broughtest out of the land of Egypt, have corrupted themselves:***

***They have turned aside quickly out of the way which I commanded them: they have made them a molten calf, and have worshipped it, and have sacrificed thereunto, and said, These be thy gods, O Israel, which have brought thee up out of the land of Egypt.***

***And the LORD said unto Moses, I have seen this people, and behold, it is a stiffnecked people:”***

No matter what God does, what He delivers some people from, what opportunities He gives them to be covered under the blood of Jesus Christ, they fall back in the same camp. That's part of the Parable of the Sower. Seventy-five percent of the soil mentioned in the Parable of the Sower is eliminated. There's plenty of soil that think they are living a good Christian life just because they say they are a Christian. I know people who say they are Christians and have no idea what it means, and what's really expected from them as far as obedience and faith, let alone even understanding what denying yourself, taking up your cross and following Jesus means. Returning to verse 10,

***“Now therefore let me alone, that my wrath may wax hot against them, and that I may consume them: and I will make of thee a great nation.”***

God was ready to eliminate them. I don't really believe – and I think this is the error with many scholars – that God was talking about wiping them all out, because later in this chapter, certain ones are commissioned to eliminate the bad seed. God wanted to eliminate the bad seed who were looking for an alternative god, for an alternative place to worship this god, looking to present their offerings because they were pleased in what they had done – the ones who would worship and then rise up to play. No, I don't believe God was going to wipe out the whole camp, but He was ready to wipe out the ones that were stiff-necked.

***“And Moses besought the LORD his God, and said, LORD, why doth thy wrath wax hot against thy people, which thou hast brought forth out of the land of Egypt with great power, and with a mighty hand?***

***Wherefore should the Egyptians speak, and say, For mischief did he bring them out, to slay them in the mountains, and to consume them from the face of the earth? Turn from thy fierce wrath, and repent of this evil against thy people.***

***Remember Abraham, Isaac, and Israel, thy servants, to whom thou swarest by thine own self,***

***and saidst unto them, I will multiply your seed as the stars of heaven, and all this land that I have spoken of will I give unto your seed, and they shall inherit it for ever.  
And the LORD repented of the evil which he thought to do unto his people.  
And Moses turned, and went down from the mount, and the two tables of the testimony were in his hand: the tables were written on both their sides; on the one side and on the other were they written.”***

God was ready to wipe out the stiff-necked people, but Moses convinced Him not to, reminding Him of the promises that He gave to Abraham, Isaac and Israel. God had to think twice about it, I guess. He didn't repent of the thought, but God can do what He wants. If He wanted to wipe out those stiff-necked people, He could have and He would have, but Moses wanted these people to have a second chance. Listen to me closely now, Moses was still living under the illusion that if he would just come down with these tablets, with the testimony of these two tables of stone in he received in His presence and what God had said and declared, that even though they were stiff-necked and rebellious, (at least the ones that were), that they would have a repenting heart. That's not what happened. I disagree that God was going to wipe out all the people, and you're not going to convince me differently. I've searched scripture and everything that is available. God wasn't going to wipe out all these people and just leave Moses. Who would he reproduce with? That would have gone against the promises God gave Abraham, Isaac and Israel. No, He was ready to wipe out the troublemakers, the stiff-necked people, and the rebellious disobedient individuals who would never have a change of heart, no matter what. Moses thought he could remind them that all other gods are false gods, but they had an all-powerful God in *Elohim*; the one who brought them out of the mess of that bondage. I can see God saying, “Okay, Moses, if you think they can turn, I am going to spare them. I will control my anger long enough. But since you don't want me to destroy the troublemakers, I will let you go down and see for yourself. It is a wonderful trait of compassion Moses had in seeking forgiveness for these people to the Lord – not forgiveness for himself but forgiving them – and asking forgiveness for their sins to the Lord. It was a wonderful trait Moses had. He was willing to lose his own life if it meant sparing God's people, the chosen nation, the ones that were promised all the promises through Abraham, Isaac and Israel. God was ready to step in and take care of the problem, but He listened to Moses; He had a change of heart. But, because he didn't let God take care of it the first time, Moses would get a full understanding in the next few verses why God was so mad. Then Moses had to step in and take care of the problem, beginning in verse 15.

***“And Moses turned, and went down from the mount, and the two tables of the testimony were in his hand: the tables were written on both their sides; on the one side and on the other were they written.***

***And the tables were the work of God, and the writing was the writing of God, graven upon the tables.***

***And when Joshua heard the noise of the people as they shouted, he said unto Moses, There is a noise of war in the camp.***

***And he said, It is not the voice of them that shout for mastery, neither is it the voice of them that cry for being overcome: but the noise of them that sing do I hear.***

***And it came to pass, as soon as he came nigh unto the camp, that he saw the calf, and the dancing: and Moses' anger waxed hot, and he cast the tables out of his hands, and brake them beneath the mount. [Moses now understood why God was waxing hot and why He wanted to***

destroy them.]

*And he took the calf which they had made, and burnt it in the fire, and ground it to powder, and strewed it upon the water, and made the children of Israel drink of it.* [That is one potion I would not want to drink.]

*And Moses said unto Aaron, What did this people unto thee, that thou hast brought so great a sin upon them?"*

Aaron didn't share responsibility with the people, even though he had a chance to stop their nonsense and remind them of all God had done for them. Instead we read in verse 21,

*"And Moses said unto Aaron, What did this people unto thee, that thou hast brought so great a sin unto them?"* [Why did you allow this to happen, Aaron?]

*And Aaron said, Let not the anger of my lord wax hot: thou knowest the people, that they are set on mischief.* [He did not take any responsibility for what happened.]

*For they said unto me, Make us gods, which shall go before us: for as for this Moses, the man that brought us up out of the land of Egypt, we wot not what is become of him.*

*And I said unto them, Whosoever hath any gold, let them break it off. So they gave it me: then I cast it into the fire, and there came out this calf."*

What a deliberate liar! We just read earlier in this chapter that Aaron didn't just throw the gold in the fire; he fashioned it! Aaron created this false god, this calf. He didn't just cast the gold into the fire and lo and behold, a calf came out.

*"And when Moses saw that the people were naked, (for Aaron had made them naked unto their shame among their enemies:)*

*Then Moses stood in the gate of the camp, and said, Who is on the LORD'S side?"*

Even though Moses had them drink the melted down potion in verse 20, that was not sufficient, and Moses knew it. God was ready to eliminate them earlier in verses 9 and 10 which would have taken care of the problem, and He would have kept the faithful ones or the ones who didn't completely rebel; probably the ones who were astonished it was even happening after all they had been through. Except for a few, all these people proved to be a rebellious, non-trusting, non-bunch of Israelites. These chosen people never trusted or put their faith in God but were always looking for the back door. They proved to be a worthless bunch, but here in this verse, ***"Then Moses stood in the gate of the camp, and said, Who is on the LORD'S side?"*** They all had a choice to decide if they were on the Lord's side or on the side of the disobedient, stiff-necked people, and something very unique and important happens here in verse 26 when Moses asks, ***"Who is on the LORD'S side? let him come unto me."***

*"And all the sons of Levi [the ones who were banished without an inheritance with really nothing to look forward to] gathered themselves together unto him.*

*And he said unto them, Thus saith the LORD God of Israel, Put every man his sword by his side, and go in and out from gate to gate throughout the camp, and slay every man his brother, and every man his companion, and every man his neighbour."*

In other words, the ones on the Lord's side are to be ready to fight, and it is the same message

today. We don't necessarily fight with swords or guns, but rather a spiritual fight, against a spiritual enemy that is far worse than anything you can see or deal within the flesh. This is Luke 14 in the New Testament applied in the Old Testament in the most severe way. It means your neighbour, your friend, your acquaintance, maybe your own wife, maybe your own children, it didn't matter. We are to put on the sword and go from gate to gate throughout the camp and slay the stiff-necked rebellious troublemakers. God was ready to do it, and Moses convinced Him not to. I am sure in God's unique way He sat back and said, "You know Moses, I could have done this a lot easier. It would have been a lot less complicated and you would not have gone through this experience. But, since you thought there was hope and they would turn when they saw you coming from the mountain with what you had in your hands, hoping in your presence they would have said, 'Unto thee, O God, we have sinned' and we didn't faith and trust in Him. We didn't believe that He had things under control, and we became impatient, losing our focus and our faith." But they didn't come running. If anything, I'm sure a lot of excuse making went with the unrepentant hearts, especially as they were going around dishing out this potion they were forced to drink. Do you think they had some happy people, especially from those stiff-necked rebellious people, who caused the trouble in the first place? No, I'm sure there was a lot of grumbling and complaining and a lot of unrepentant hearts. Now Moses had to deal with it, and he said, "Who is on the Lord's side?" And who came running? Levi; the tribe of the sons of Levi came running, now with the responsibility of punishment, knowing they would be probably destroying individuals who were their friends, neighbors, acquaintances, maybe even family members because of their rebellious stiff-necked ways and unchanging hearts. So, we now read in verse 28,

***"And the children of Levi did according to the word of Moses: and there fell of the people that day about three thousand men."***

It didn't take many people to cause problems in the camp. If you really think about it, 3,000 people was a small amount compared to the many that left Egypt, but probably some of these people were in prominent tribal head positions, and they had influence to instigate the rebellious hearts. God wanted to eliminate them back in verses 9 and 10, but Moses wanted to give them a chance and God said, "Okay, but if they do not change Moses (this is the hidden message), you will have to deal with it and you better find out quickly who is on your side." And because of that, Moses discovers it is the Levites who ***"did according to the word of Moses: and there fell of the people that day about three thousand men."***

What does that mean to us today in relation to the breastplate of righteousness, or the breastplate of judgment; the *mishpat*? In the New Testament we know we are the ones gathered to Christ against a spiritual enemy, and we are called to battle with Him, to go against our spiritual enemy. Nothing has changed from the Old Testament, except that we have an unseen enemy. With the name of Levi on the carbuncle stone, the message is that we are gathered to Christ against the enemy. We have put on the spiritual armor and are ready to go to war, no matter what the cost. That is what Luke 14:26 tells us; as a representative of the chosen ones, our mother, father, brother, sister, or our own life cannot interfere as we go up against the spiritual enemy. We are the ones gathered to Christ against the enemy. We must put on our spiritual armor and be ready to go to war at an instant's notice, no matter what the cost. In verse 27, the cost was severe; even so, the Levites made the right decision. What this stone means to us is that we are gathered to

Christ, the breastplate of righteousness ready to go to war now in our spiritual battle at an instant's notice, no matter what the cost.

That is what righteousness looks like. We are the ones gathered to Christ to go to war against a spiritual enemy, who is His enemy. Now try to make a “to-do” list for that in the flesh. You cannot. It is all in the spirit, so don't even try. You would be foolish.

In Deuteronomy 33:8, we now have Moses blessing Israel and all the tribes. Here Moses says,

***“And of Levi he said, Let thy Thummin and thy Urim be with the holy one, whom thou didst prove at Massah, and with whom thou didst strive at the waters of Meribah; Who said unto his father and to his mother, I have not seen him; neither did he acknowledge his brethren, nor knew his own children: for they have observed thy word, and kept thy covenant. [In verse 9 Moses looks back at the event in Exodus 32 and says,] Who said unto his father and to his mother, I have not seen him; neither did he acknowledge his brethren, nor knew his own children: for they have observed thy word, and kept thy covenant.”***

Even family, friends, and brethren would not keep the Levites from fulfilling their commission to be at the ready as a representative of God. For us, as representatives of Christ, we must be able to go against our spiritual enemy in an instant's notice, no matter what the cost. In these verses, Moses continues to remember that event in verse 10,

***“They shall teach Jacob thy judgments [mishpat], and Israel thy law: they shall put incense before thee, and whole burnt sacrifice upon thine altar.”***

They were called to be priests in this verse. By the way, the New Testament isn't the first place we're all called to be priests unto God. That was God's original intention in the Old Testament. Yes, the Levites were separated and had specific duties that went along with their priesthood, just as it is today. We are all priests in our own household for certain duties, then there are ones called and chosen, like what I am doing, for another commission that is part of the priesthood. In this modern generation, people like to combine those two events as one. It cannot be done. Looking back in Exodus 19:6, it was God's original intention for all of us to be priests. In addition, in Exodus 19:6, where Moses was still on Mount Sinai, God told Moses,

***“And ye shall be unto me a kingdom of priests, and an holy nation. These are the words which thou shalt speak unto the children of Israel.”***

God's original intention all the way back in Exodus was that we shall be a kingdom of priests, even though some have a problem saying, “We are priests today.” Yes, we are priests and some of have been commissioned out of the priesthood that God really intended for all mankind to participate in proclaiming and ministering His Word in a certain capacity. That is the only separation. In these verses we see in a general sense that God wanted all of Israel to be a kingdom of priests. Yes, there is already a priesthood, but they were commissioned for other purposes besides the generalized purpose of the priesthood of all households. I bring this up because it is important to understand when we read Deuteronomy 33:8-11 that Christ has made

us all a royal priesthood and now the responsibility of every saint is to know and share God's Word in the capacity they were called and chosen to deliver it. Read Deuteronomy 33:8-11 again,

***“They shall teach Jacob thy judgments [the mishpat], and Israel thy law: they shall put incense before thee, and whole burnt sacrifice upon thine altar. Bless, LORD, his substance, and accept the work of his hands: smite through the loins of them that rise against him, and of them that hate him, that they rise not again.”***

That is a promise you can claim today against your spiritual enemy who also operates in the flesh but is controlled by spiritual forces. No matter what comes at you the bottom line is ***“of them that hate him, that they rise not again.”*** No matter what is coming at you, God knows it is coming and He will be there before you can even plan what to do about your circumstance, because He cherishes the royal priesthood that we all participate in through Christ. I am just called a little differently for another commission that is in the area of proclaiming, to teach Thy judgments; in this case, Thy righteousness. I don't declare or create my own, but teach what righteousness looks like through Christ, using Deuteronomy and Exodus to know that we are the ones gathered to Christ. It is what the third stone and the name of the tribe of Levi on the third stone symbolizes. It is a remembrance and also a reminder to Satan and his forces. When they see that we are gathered to Christ and against them, and we've put on this armor fashioned by Christ, we are ready to go to war against them. We know our foe. We recognize it. This series began with the message that you must understand who your enemy is and stop thinking it is some make believe fantasy creation by man. Satan is a real enemy and he exists; he is the worst rebellious created being that God ever had come against Him. But God did not produce the rebellion, Satan did.

I want you to remember what this name Levi means. It means we are joined to God, through Christ, to gather against the enemy. Satan sees a band of spiritual soldiers willing to put on the spiritual armor no matter what the cost. That is Luke 14. The name of Levi means we are ready to go to war, because we are part of a royal priesthood. We now have the responsibility to know and share God's Word. I keep saying this, like a broken record, but it must be understood. We are not called or chosen to be a Christian couch potato for Jesus. We are not called and chosen to only go through our daily lives. This calling is part of your life and it is what keeps us supplied. However, you are called to be a source that God can use to proclaim to others and to come against the enemy – His enemy – and you must recognize it. These stones are here to remind us what our responsibility is, and to also give Satan a daily reminder that we are covered by Christ, and it is Christ's righteousness that covers us.

It is unfortunate that most people don't have a clue what righteousness is. There is so much wrong information about what righteousness is, that it makes me sick. They don't have a clue what it looks like or even what it should look like, and we just have a glimpse. Righteousness is not a checklist. It is nothing that we can do on our own because it has already been done for us. We only must be a willing faithful recipient of this symbolism and these promises in God's Word means, apply it in our lives, and become part of the soldier band.

Returning to the carbuncle, it is a red gem. In the Hebrew it means *flashing*, so not only is it red, it is flashing. It is like a stop sign in the middle of the night that really flashes brightly. That is



what this stone is. This gem was known to reflect light brightly and suddenly. This stone is flashing in the face of our spiritual enemy; flashing in his face to remind him that this stone represents the glory and righteousness of God reflected through us, the saints! Different words are used for *light* in Matthew 5:13 through 16,

***“Ye are the salt of the earth: but if the salt have lost his savour, wherewith shall it be salted? It is thenceforth good for nothing, but to be cast out, and to be trodden under foot of men. Ye are the light of the world. A city that is set on an hill cannot be hid. Neither do men light [burn in Greek] a candle, and put it under a bushel, but on a candlestick; and it giveth light unto all that are in the house. Let your light so shine [that is radiate, flash suddenly and brightly] before men, that they may see your [not good works, but] precious employment of the word of God, and glorify your Father which is in heaven.”***

It is our precious employment of the Word of God, in the capacity we're called, that glorifies our Father in heaven. So, let your light shine; let your light flash; let your light flash brightly and suddenly. Don't put it underneath a bushel. Let it radiate brightly and suddenly so ***“that they may see your precious employment of the word of God, and glorify your Father which is in heaven.”***

This stone symbolizes the glory and righteousness of God which we now have through faith, and is reflected through us, the saints, to glorify our Father. When we understand what we are part of, what we have been called to be part of, it sends a flashing beam of light to the world and to our spiritual enemy, and he can't stand it. It is like in an old movie when a cross is put in front of the vampire and he cringes and just wants to disappear. That's what Satan is doing every time he sees us with our spiritual armor fashioned and provided to us by Jesus Christ. We are a red gem, and we're flashing. We are to be a shining light upon a hill that radiates the precious employment of the Word of God that we are called to participate in, with the blessing and the wonderful beauty of it all. When you truly understand that, it glorifies the ***“Father which is in heaven.”***

If you are a parent, think about when your kids do something wonderful and new, you're so proud, you can't hide the joy. What do you imagine God is doing up in the heavenlies every time He sees our flashing carbuncle, brightly and suddenly beaming in Satan's face, knowing that the precious employment of the Word of God, the Good News of the Gospel of Jesus Christ, is going out and we are faithful in that process? Remember, we're the ones gathered together to Christ against the enemy. That is the message in Exodus 32. We have put on our spiritual armor and that is why it is important to have it on every day, ready to go to war no matter what the cost. Lately some of you had to realize what the cost might be, and you are better off for it. Christ has made us a royal priesthood and now the responsibility of every saint is to know and share God's Word in the capacity that you're called and chosen, not just in your own testimony, but by putting actions to your words of support. Many have done this through offerings and tithes to the ministry that you were called to participate in. It's as simple as that. I hope I've given you a glimpse what this carbuncle stone represents with the name of Levi on it.

To be continued...



## The Children of the Light

I've been preaching on the Spiritual Warfare Series so long it concerns me at times that some of you are getting bored with the subject, but you shouldn't be. You cannot go through God's book without dealing with it, on almost a chapter-by-chapter basis. I'm still in the latter part of verse 14, ***“and having on the breastplate of righteousness ....”*** This is not self-made righteousness or man-made righteousness; not self-righteousness or righteousness that comes through our efforts, using a Christian to-do list. No, this righteousness is imputed into us. We are clothed with it because of what Christ has done and provided for us. I've told you to do the research yourself. Everyone tries to take these verses that Paul outlines for us in Ephesians 6:10 through 18 about the Christian armor and tries to say that Paul is using the Roman armor to give us an illustration what he was trying to say. That's a good starting point, but it is milk. More accurately, it is non-fat milk, not whole milk and that's where Christianity is stuck. Paul was a scholar of the law and the Old Testament. He wasn't comparing the armor of a Roman soldier or using a Roman soldier's armor as an analogy to get the message to the Ephesians. No, he was referring to the High Priest and the breastplate, including all the pieces described here in Ephesians 6.

In this part of this series, I'm going through the stones in the breastplate so you can absorb the information and knowledge of what Paul was trying to get across by using the breastplate of the High Priest, and how important this breastplate was to the Old Testament and to the Israelites. It is even more important, because that breastplate had its significance in the Old Testament and even the Old Testament saints didn't know exactly what it would prophecy for the future. And 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. It all points to Christ and what He has made available to us to protect the center seat of our emotions, the heart, the breastplate. We need to understand what Paul meant when he wrote, ***“Stand therefore, having your loins girt about with truth, and having on the breastplate of righteousness;”*** To do that, we have been going through Exodus 28, the priest's clothes. In verse 15, 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....”***

So far, we have covered all the colors and the twined linen, but we skipped verse 16. We will come back to it.

Verse 17 tells us, ***“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.”***

These stones had the names of the children of Israel on them, one for each of the 12 brothers. Now we come to verse 18, which says,

***“And the second row shall be an emerald...”*** the stone we are on in this chapter. Verse 21 says, ***“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 and green always symbolizes life in both Old and New Testament. The emerald is a bright rich green gem. It is a bright, rich, flashing green gem, like one of those flashing lights that I preached on in the last chapter. 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. I don't have time to go into too much explanation as to where I get this information. You just have to take my word for it and after 78 messages on the Spiritual Warfare Series, I believe I've gained some of your trust. The emerald 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. The chosen saints are children of light, divided from the children of darkness, because we are chosen to carry out His commission to live in the light. It's not just an Old Testament statement here in Exodus 28, but also in Ephesians 5:8, ***“For ye were sometimes darkness, but now light in the Lord: walk as children of light:”***

This emerald stone represents life, and it represents children of the light. Christ rules the light and separates light and darkness. It's like a tag on us and it can't be taken away. Satan might try, but he will be unsuccessful. 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, but children destined for peace and safety throughout eternity.

This green colored gem which symbolizes life also lets us and our spiritual enemy know that we're part of the children of light, or the day, as in I Thessalonians. We're not part of the darkness. (Satan likes to live in darkness. I'm 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 can accomplish that, then he has victory over your life. He is the one who is successful when Christ is not in the picture.) This stone represents the one who rules over the light.

This chapter begins with Jacob's fourth son in Genesis 29:35. We have already covered Reuben, Simeon and Levi, and now we are looking at Judah, the fourth brother.

***“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, Leah 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 don't see Judah again until the story of Joseph when he has his dream. Joseph became Jacob's favorite son and the brothers were jealous. We pick it up where Joseph is looking for his brothers, he finds them, they plotted against him, and wanted to kill him before they decided to sell him. We join the story in

Genesis 37:26 where we'll look at some of the 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?”***

The brothers 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?”*** Well, at least he didn't want to kill him. He wasn't 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. Verse 27 continues,

***“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.”*** Look how wonderful Judah is as he justifies not killing his own brother, and instead justifies the selling of him. “There is money involved and let's 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. The desert heat got to us.” Not only do I think Joseph would have forgiven them, but he probably wouldn't have mentioned it to his father. But we really don't know what would have happened, we just know what did happen. ***“and let not our hand be upon him, for he is our brother and our flesh: and his brethren were content.”*** Why? “Okay, we can get something out of it. We can get some pocket change from this. We will sell him as a slave.” That's what happens in verse 28,

***“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 the kid of the goats, dipped the coat in blood and told their father that Joseph was dead. They saw their father torn up and in pieces, 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. They were below scum level. That is right; you heard it from my mouth. They were worthless, arrogant, egotistic, and good for nothing. They were definitely not individuals that God could use at this point; they were fully controlled by Satan and his army.

This is where we leave the story with Joseph for now. In chapter 38, we then are given information about Judah and Tamar. It's 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 right here, and God in His compassion is going to get His way whether we like it not. They would have to change along the path, because in this case God would back them up against the wall where it is not their way any longer, but His way.

These brothers would get there, but before they did God was already going to work on the promise that He gave to Abraham. Chapter 38 concerns Judah and Tamar, and it is a very important chapter when studying the lost tribes of Israel, and about the throne, where in two places there eventually will be someone to carry out the fulfilment of God's Word and the promise to Judah about that throne.

We march across chapters 39 and 40. While in Egypt, Joseph is lied about again, and he spends time in prison. Then Pharaoh has dreams, Joseph was able to decipher the dreams and Pharaoh made him second to none in rulership. Only Pharaoh was greater on the throne and because Joseph interpreted the dream of seven years of plenty and seven years of famine, the Egyptians were able to store enough food for the entire area around Egypt. Everybody would come to Egypt, including Joseph's brothers, looking to buy food. This happens in chapter 42. In this chapter, I taught about Reuben and how his life was changed. In chapter 43, Simeon is held as prisoner – even though I don't believe he was a prisoner. Then Reuben, who had already lost his birthright, was willing for his father to slay his sons if he didn't come back with Benjamin in their second trip to Egypt. These chapters are important so we can understand how God laid the groundwork to change their lives, so they could be used by God in a prophetic way. We see Judah again in chapter 43:1, where there was famine in the land. They had eaten all the corn that Joseph sent back, and he was still holding Simeon, because he was waiting for Benjamin, knowing the brothers would bring him when they ran out of food. Jacob didn't want any part of it, but food runs out. So, we read,

***“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, 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.*** [That is Benjamin, Jacob's youngest son; the second son by Rachel. Jacob didn't want to let loose of that son. He had already been through what happened to Joseph, but Judah knew what Joseph said and he knew he wouldn't be able to bring back any food. He didn't 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*** [“We didn't offer the information. We didn't tell him we had another brother, 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?*** [It is almost like Joseph knew exactly what his brothers were thinking. The brothers didn't know his true name yet. There was no escaping, because Joseph already knew about 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:"***

You saw Reuben and Simeon not resisting and now you see Judah. You saw how the Levites 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 and each brother is finally taking responsibility and being the men that God could use, each willing to give up their own lives for the sake of others. That what John 15 is saying! I preached enough of it. 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 men are demonstrating that fact in the Old Testament. Judah now steps up and says, "We can't go back without our brother. Nothing good is going to come from it father, but I will be a surety for him. Do with my life what you want if I fail and bring 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:"***"

In contrast, Christ did not have to say it this way because He had no fault or sin. Even though He came from the line of Judah, He bore the blame for all of us forever. Our sin was placed on Him and now God looks at us differently, as without sin. Does that mean that we are not sinners any longer? Absolutely not; I sin daily. I have told you that enough and I don't 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 sins forever. And here we see another brother demonstrating that same thing, even if it included forfeiting his life. There is a change from Genesis 37 to Genesis 43. The brothers are no longer self-seeking, arrogant, egotistical Satan-controlled men, but are now tamed rebels that God could use to achieve His purposes. When they were starving, with no one to turn to, Joseph didn't look so bad. In fact, everything that he said had come to pass, and ego went out the back door and wasn't important any longer. Survival of this nation became most important. If God's Word is true and what had been promised to Abraham, (who they all knew about), these brothers had to step up and take responsibility. Even if it meant losing their own lives, God's will would be done. That is the missing story as we quickly read through these scriptures. These men stepped up to the responsibility and said no longer their way, but now God's way and they would be individuals that God could use to fulfil His purposes.

With that, go to Genesis 44. In this chapter they 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 was hidden by his staff on the animals going back to Jacob with the food and other necessities. Joseph lets them start to leave, but then he stops them, and they find the missing silver cup. Let's just read it. It is too rich not to read it.

***"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 didn't know the silver cup was there. It was Joseph's plan; one further test 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, especially Judah's, because he was the security bond for Benjamin's life. The silver cup is missing, and it is 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 didn't care about him. In fact, they lied to their father, fabricating Joseph's death, pretending a wild animal killed him and all that was left was the bloody coat that his father made for him. They didn't care how their father was suffering years prior to this event, but now these are changed men. They didn't 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 bring Benjamin back. We pick it 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 [“Let me stay. Let Benjamin go, and let me take his place.”] of the lad a bondman to my lord;”*

Judah is saying, “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 this happen without putting my best efforts forward. Replace his life with mine, I will take his place and be 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. Their lives were not controlled any longer by mischief and malicious evil but were instead lives controlled by God. They were willing to substitute their lives, not only for the sake of Israel the nation to survive, but also, their father. These are changed men and Joseph could not restrain himself any longer. 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 don't pick it up again until chapter 49, and now we are getting close to the breastplate and its significance. We will start in verse 8, 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 in verse 9. We have the 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 going to say here, but also it relates to teaching on the breastplate, because these scriptures also have other implications. I'm 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'm just trying to get us up to speed as fast as possible, seeing that I can't cover everything and don't know everything about it. Scripture is constantly revealing information to me and to others around this world, I'm sure. I'm just trying to keep up as fast as I can as things are being revealed through God's Word. Judah's blessing in verse 9 begins,

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

Those words are the 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. Both man and Satan will bow down to Jesus, including 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 and to you as a priest. They are bowing down, which is why I cannot stand Christians that run with their tail between their legs. We must not do that, even though Satan is a powerful, mighty being. Even Michael the archangel had to deal with him. However, 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 many methods. I don't even know if we can think that evil, but we have something that he does not have; we have Jesus.

That is what we read in Jude 1:9, ***“Yet Michael the archangel, when contending [really disputing] with the devil he disputed....”*** Michael was not in a physical fight at this point with the devil. I'm sure he would have liked to, but at this point I don't think Michael the archangel could. Some day God will give him the power and strength to overcome Satan, as written in. I truly believe that, but at this point, if he had that kind of power he wouldn't be in dispute with Satan, he would've just overpowered him and taken Moses' body, to do whatever he did with his body. ***“Yet Michael the archangel, when disputing with the devil he disputed about the body of Moses...”*** (I'm not exactly sure what the devil wanted to do with Moses' body, although I have my theories.) Satan wanted the body of Moses, and Michael's assignment was to get Moses' body, but he ran into Satan and they argued back and forth. Reading on: ***“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, 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, was through the Lord.

Just the same, when Satan sees our green gemstone with the name of Judah on it, he knows that this is a prophesy 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. 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 own strength and power. You are a fool, headed for devastation, but you are not a fool when you recognize what that stone symbolizes. I'm wearing the stone that is a part of my spiritual breastplate that makes the enemy recognize he doesn't 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 we really have. This is not power we create, but power that is given to us through Christ to deal with the enemy. That is why it aggravates me to see Christians, like I said earlier, running 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 Christ 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. He carried His blood as the keys of death and hell, and then ascended in victory up to the heavenlies. It is Ephesians 4:8 that tells us, ***“Wherefore he saith, When he ascended up on high...”*** ***He ascended up on high*** and ***thou art gone up***, both refer to Jesus. Yes, He is talking to the tribe of Judah, but the prophesy behind this is referring to Jesus, how He would go up after He would overcome His prey. He would descend, but He would get victory and ascend and present not only the captives that He set free, but His blood to His Father. Read the entire verses, ***“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. Satan is reminded every time he looks at that stone that Jesus had victory over ***Hades*** and after that victory He rose and sailed into the heavenlies. Now He sits at the right hand of His Father, with His blood, and I'm sure Satan sees it when he visits the throne, knowing that 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 it's Jesus and Judah in this case. If you read on in Genesis 49:9, ***“...he stooped down, he couched as a lion, and as an old lion; who shall rouse him up?”*** Jesus and Judah will not be defeated and rousing them up would be futile. That is the promise. Rousing Jesus, who now goes before us, would be futile. Through Christ, we inherit the same promise to conquer our enemies and foes. When our enemies rouse up against us, they don't 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. It is futile and 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. Gen 49:10 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 of the ruler, symbolizing his authority and power. Judah was designated as a ruler and lawgiver over Israel, and Israel would not cease from this responsibility. Even as we speak, although all things have been fulfilled through Christ, this responsibility does not cease. That's why Genesis 38 is important to understand, because the chapter about Judah and Tamar are regarding 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. What else does it say in that verse? ***“and unto him shall the gathering of the people be.”*** The people of the world will be gathering unto him, but what must happen first? ***“until Shiloh come;”*** Some people think Shiloh was Jesus' first physical body that was here on earth for 33 1/2 years. That was just part fulfilment; this verse has not yet been fulfilled completely. It will be and the people of the world will be gathering unto Him, not Satan because he will be locked up in the pit for 1,000 years. The prophecy continues in verse 11,

***“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 and this description is referring to young beasts of burden. The vine in this verse symbolizes Jesus Christ and fruitfulness. I preached enough on it in the *Fruit of the Spirit* series; I have preached on John 15 several times now. Jesus Christ symbolizes the vine and fruitfulness. As the branches or beasts of burden described in verse 11, we must stay connected to the vine to do His work by being 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 that which 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. That 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. That's why it is part of the fruit of the Spirit. Wine is a symbolism of joy in the Old and New Testament. In this case, the joy 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. Verse 12 tells us,

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

In this verse we see both wine and milk. When a man is drunk with wine, there is red in his eyes, but here this symbolizes a man not drunk with wine, but literally drunk with the Holy Spirit. In contrast, it is noticeable when a drunken man is controlled by wine, you can see it by his stumbling around. However, here in verse 12 the wine symbolizes the Holy Spirit, who is controlled by Jesus. In that case, it's not necessary to show it off, 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, but Spiritual wine affects and controls a man's spiritual eyes. There is a difference.

Milk in this verse symbolizes the Word of God. This is seen in I Peter 2:2 which states, “*As newborn babes, desire the sincere milk...*” Eventually we must graduate from milk to meat, and 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 and meat is the gaining of understanding and knowledge of the Word so “*that ye may grow thereby*”. In Genesis 49, if we want the same benefits as Judah, we must be filled with what it is saying in verses 11 and 12: that is the Holy Spirit and the Word of God. That's what Jacob blessed Judah with, although he did not even realize he was blessing Judah at the time. In that blessing there was prophesy for the future that all things would be fulfilled through the One who came through the line of Judah, Jesus Christ.

Go to Deuteronomy 33:7 where Moses blesses Israel,

***“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. This was fulfilled openly by Jesus Christ. The coming Messiah, through Judah, would save and help them from their enemies; and we are also included in that promise. Jesus faced His enemies, and they are also our spiritual enemies. 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, are the enemies that Jesus will deal with on our behalf. To find these enemies, don't just look at a neighbor, a boss or someone who is suing, as the enemy. Christ faced the ultimate enemy, which is sin in all its aspects, from the little white lies to murder. He faced all sin, and He had victory over all sin and hell. He descended but He also ascended and exalted himself next to His Father. He achieved victory and *Hades* could not keep him. We have victory over our enemies because of what Christ did for us, and because He also hears our voice, as is promised through Judah. We no longer must live under the defeat of sin, hell and death – death being the last one. Satan and his army are defeated, hell is defeated, sin is defeated, and 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. I want you to remember what this green stone with the name of Judah on it symbolizes in regard to spiritual warfare and the breastplate of righteousness. They are:

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 ingrained it in your mind by now, then there's 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, and 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 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 Christ sees that breastplate, just as the promise to Judah proclaimed, He will also see and hear our voice in battle, in whatever we face. He will save us from our enemies which include Satan and his army, sin, hell and death.

What a powerful stone! They are all powerful. Satan doesn't 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.

The Testament of Judah that was written about 100 years before Christ was born. The last chapter prophesied Christ and His coming beginning with 4:21,

***“And a man shall arise from my seed, like the sun of righteousness,  
Walking with the sons of men in meekness and righteousness; [These verses speaks of Jesus.]  
And no sin shall be found in him.***

***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:***

***[Go to verse 30] And ye shall be the people of the Lord, and have one tongue; and there shall  
be there no spirit of deceit of Beliar [Satan will be gone.], for he shall be cast into the fire for  
ever. [After the 1,000 years.]***

***And they who have died in grief shall rise in joy, and they who were 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 didn't 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, and if we 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, 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.

To be continued...

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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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