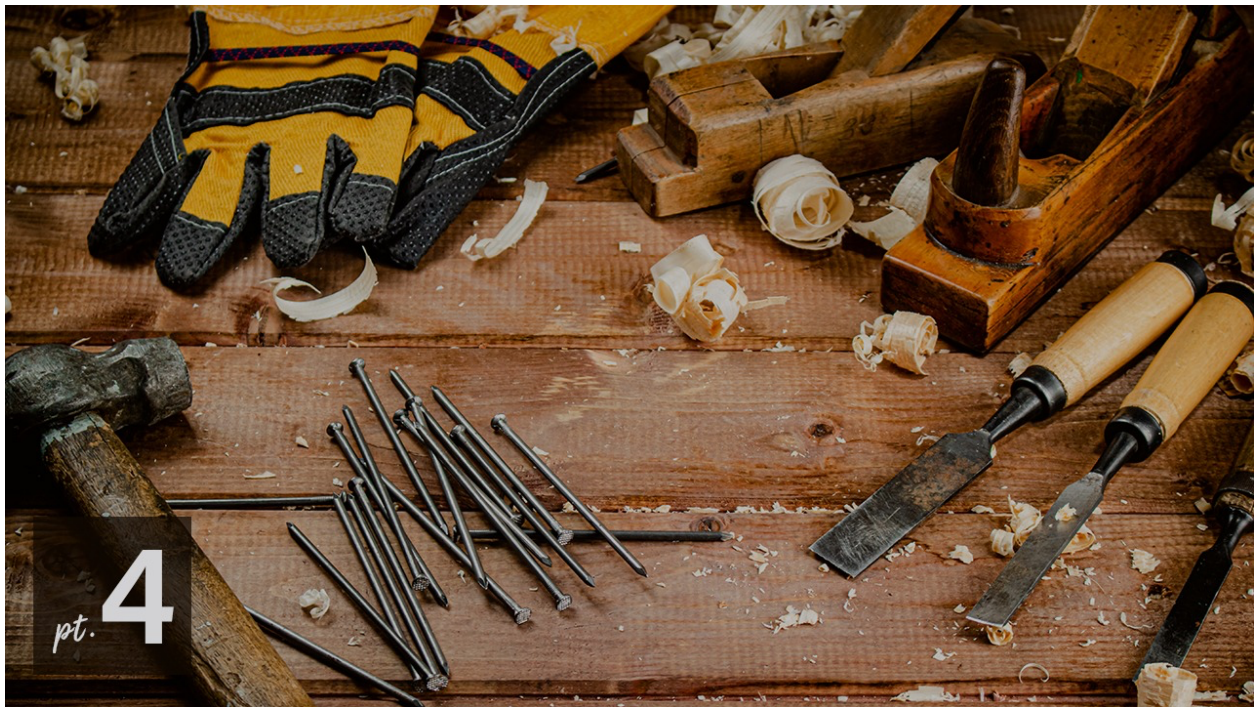


BUILDING HIS HOUSE – PART 4

The Breastplate

Now that the Father has successfully duplicated his temple all over the earth and has chosen new "sons of God" to be priests in the order of Melchizedek to minister before Him, the priests have to be clothed for war. In this week's portion, the Creator goes into great detail about what each garment looks like, how it is to be made, and how it is to be worn. What I would like to do in this article is focus on one part of the priestly garment and show you its connection to us as priests today. The piece I would like to zoom in on is the breastplate of judgment.



Exodus 28:15 *"You shall make the breastplate of judgment. Artistically woven according to the workmanship of the ephod you shall make it: of gold, blue, purple, and scarlet thread, and fine woven linen, you shall make it."*

The breastplate is one of the most incredible pieces of handcrafted artistry ever made in the entire Bible. It has been the subject of great discussion for over two millennia as theologians, scholars, and laypeople alike seek to understand its true meaning. I am going to attempt to share what the Father has shown me concerning the topic.

BETWEEN THE SHOULDERS

First of all, the entire scope of the High Priest's duties involved presenting Israel before Yahweh for judgment that they may be forgiven of their sin and put in right standing before Him. He wore two onyx stones, one on each shoulder, that had the names of the sons of Israel engraved on them, six names on each stone. This is a clear connection to the time in Joshua when Yahweh instructed Moses to have six tribes stand on Mt. Gerizim and six on Mt. Ebal with the city of Shechem - a name that literally means "between the shoulders" - between them. Shechem was where the first altar of Abraham was made, where Yahweh swore to make many nations of him, and where Joseph was buried. I have several articles on Shechem and recommend you read them to get details of this city's significance. There is a very clear allusion in the instructions about the ephod to the story of standing on the mountains in Shechem.

Just as the tribes physically stood on the two mountains before Yahweh and pledged their allegiance to all the blessings and curses of the Covenant, so would the High Priest carry the tribes of Israel on His shoulders before Yahweh once a year on Yom Kippur to atone for its sins. As we know, the High Priest was a shadow of THE High Priest, Yeshua our Messiah, who would carry all of our sins on His shoulders before His Father. The following scripture should take on a far deeper meaning with the above information in mind:

Isaiah 9:6 *For unto us a Child is born, unto us a Son is given. And the government will be upon His shoulder. And His name shall be called Wonderful, Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace."*

Because the Messiah is the literal High Priest, He is required to literally carry the government (the tribes of Israel) on His shoulders before He comes into the presence of His Father. The shoulders were Mt. Ebal and Mt. Gerizim, which were, for His people, symbolic of the entire Covenant of Yahweh. The moment the shoulders were presented before the Father, the terms of the Covenant were initiated and the blessings and curses flowed, either to them or their enemies.

In the same way that the two onyx stones represented the tribes on the shoulders of the High Priest for judgment, so did the breastplate. The difference was that the breastplate did not have the tribal names separated; all twelve were represented together as one. And instead of the names being engraved, each tribe was represented by its tribal gemstone. We will dive into the significance of this in a moment. For now, let's talk about breastplate's construction.

The stones were placed on a 9-inch by 9-inch square fabric backing made from gold, blue, purple, and scarlet thread and fine woven linen. These colors cannot be overlooked as they tell the entire gospel story. Fine woven linen is pure white, representing the priesthood, purity, perfection, and the full characteristics of God. Scarlet represents the blood of the lamb that was sacrificed for all mankind. Purple is the color of earthly royalty and is created by combining blue (the color of divine royalty) with scarlet. When the divinity of Yeshua united with the sacrifice of His blood, He was made King of the earth. His royal purple robe was complete. Blue is the color of divine royalty and is why the Ark of the Covenant was covered in a blue cloth when it was in transit. And finally, gold represents the wealth of the royal King and is connected to the Kingdom itself.

THE URIM AND THUMMIM

On the back side of the breastplate was a pocket where the Urim and Thummim were placed. There has been great speculation as to what these were. Although we're not exactly sure, we do know that they were mainly used by the priest to determine guilt and innocence. The interesting thing is that the Hebrew word *Urim* is actually the plural form of the word *oor* which is translated as "fire" or "light." It is spelled aleph, vav, resh, the exact same spelling as the word *ore*, which is the nominal Hebrew word for "light." So we know that the Urim was some sort of instrument that produced light and was held in a pocket behind the breastplate.

The **Thummim** also has very interesting connections. It comes from the parent root *tome* which is the word for "**perfect, completeness, integrity, or innocence.**" Thummim is actually spelled exactly the same way as *tamiym*, which is translated mostly as "without blemish" but can also be translated as "perfect, upright, complete or sincere." So it should not be surprising that the Thummim means "perfections" as it is the plural form of the word "perfect." It is connected to judgment and has the connotation of Yahweh's perfect judgment. Together, the Urim and Thummim could be said to be "**perfect light.**"

Just like the menorah was the light of the temple, today, the Word of God in us is the light inside of our temple. The strength of the light is in proportion to the righteousness one lives by. If he obeys the principles and instructions of the LORD, his light will be bright. If he doesn't, it will be dim. The book of Revelation says that there is a rainbow that surrounds Yahweh's throne. I also had a dream once where the Father showed me a breastplate. Each time He placed a gem into it, it shot out a fire-like light in the color of the gemstone. I personally believe that when the High Priest went into the Holy of Holies, the Urim and Thummim lit up so brightly that they caused all the gems that represent the tribes of Israel to light up and create a rainbow effect around the ark, perfectly mimicking the effect of the rainbow around the throne in the heavens. The "colors, or banner, of Israel" were, in a very real way, represented over the throne of God.

IT'S ALL ABOUT JUDGMENT

The Urim, the Thummim, and the entire breastplate all had to do with judgment. When the High Priest came into the presence of the LORD, Yahweh would, in His perfect righteousness, judge Israel. This brings a whole new meaning to the following popular scripture out of the book of Ephesians.

Ephesians 6:14 *"Stand therefore, having girded your waist with truth, having put on the breastplate of righteousness."*

Paul is clearly alluding to the garments of the High Priest in this passage when he tells the believer to put on the breastplate of righteousness. The Torah calls this the breastplate of judgment. Paul is quoting the prophet Isaiah as he connects the two together:

Isaiah 59:17 *"For He put on righteousness as a breastplate, and a helmet of salvation on His head. He put on the garments of vengeance for clothing and was clad with zeal as a cloak."*

As you can see, the prophet connects the breastplate to the judgment of God in the land. Understanding this helps us comprehend the idea that not only is the armor of God offensive in nature, but that part of our offensive weapon against the enemy is the light that comes from us judging righteously according to His Word. In order for us to judge righteously, we have to know His Word. When we have the perfect light of righteous judgment permeating from us, it creates a strong rainbow of color around us, telling the enemy loud and clear that Yahweh is present in this temple. The enemy cannot stand the light that comes from His countenance, and it is our responsibility to allow His light to shine through us to the dying world around us. The perfect light of the righteousness of Yeshua (the Tammim) coupled with the righteousness we receive when we follow His Word and judge righteously (the Urim) is no match for any gate that hell might have.

Although you might not have thought of the breastplate as being connected to judging righteously, the seriousness of this fact cannot be overlooked. We are representatives of the Most High. When we judge with just scales and according to His Word, His light flows through us and the enemy stands no chance on any front. When we judge from our flesh, with biased scales and against the clear protocols of His Word, we are not representing the High Priest and His righteousness. The light turns off and the enemy has a clear shot at our heart and lungs that are now unguarded because of our unrighteous judgment.

In order to truly be the priests we are called to be, we are to always remember that in order to be in His presence, we need to be in a state of humility, prayer, and reverence. We are there to plead for the souls of all those around us, *even our enemies*, and leave all judgment to Him. In doing so, we allow His light to penetrate us and create more of His image through us.

Building the House of God starts with understanding how His original house was built. When we understand the components of the tabernacle and later temple, we can better understand the foundation from which the Father is drawing when He desires to build our temples in the same way. We have displaced the fallen sons of God, those rebellious angels that lost their light by judging Yahweh unrighteously. We have been given the status of priests that have the privilege of serving before the LORD through the temples of our own bodies. We have been given the breastplate of judgment that contains the righteousness of Christ and the power of the glorious principles of His Word. Let us, therefore, be strong and bold in the purity of our ambassadorship, forwarding His name in the earth realm, caring little for our own. Let us build up the body of Messiah through the humility, mercy, and compassion that the Father gives to all of His children. Let our hearts be guarded by the breastplate of righteousness and let us all work together to build His House His way.

PRACTICAL APPLICATION

Have you ever judged someone without having all the information? Do you find yourself jumping to conclusions based on apparently irrefutable evidence? We all do this. But this kind of judgment is forbidden in scripture. When we do it, we must immediately repent because, in the spiritual realm, we've taken Yahweh off of the throne and replaced Him with ourselves, choosing to judge for Him. Whether it be a spouse unrighteously judging her husband without first asking him for all the details of a situation, a teenager that harbors bitter feelings because her parents

said "no" to a particular request, or an elder board that excommunicates a member of the church based on allegations the accused never gets the chance to defend, whenever we blow it and tear off the breastplate of righteousness, we must immediately repent before the person we've wronged and before Yahweh Himself for judging the situation without having all the information. And even if we *do* have all the information, we're still supposed to allow Him to be the Judge while we just pray.

So until next time, be a righteous warrior for your King. Let Him sit on HIS throne and do what He does best! Then and only then will the light of Messiah shine its brightest for all the world to see!

Shalom,

Jim Staley