

REF. MATERIAL

The 12 Engraved Stones

THE BREASTPLATE, EXO.28&39

Exo.28:5-6 — The breastplate was a piece of elaborately finished cloth of the same material as the ephod. It was a strip twice as long as it was wide (“a *span* [9”] *long and a span* [9”] *wide, doubled*” [Exo.39:9]), but folded back on itself so as to form a square bag into which the Urim and Thummim¹ were placed.

THE 12 STONES, EXO.28 & 39

The breastplate’s engraved precious stones represent the 12 tribes of Israel, and they were to be borne before the Lord continually as a memorial. Each stone, engraved like a “*signet*” [Exo.39:14] (raised off the face of the stone) would have been placed on the Breastplate by order of “*birth*”, oldest to youngest (see table at end of this handout).

The Bible gives no exact dimensions for each stone; however, a rough estimate of 3”L x 2.25”H can be arrived at by dividing the 9” width by 3 (“*3 in a row*”) and then divide the 9” length by 4 (“*set in gold in 4 rows*”).

12 TRIBES OF ISRAEL (IN BIRTH ORDER)			
Mothers of the 12 Tribes of Israel (Father: Jacob ²)			
L — Leah (Z — Zilpah, Leah’s handmaid) R — Rachel (B — Bilhah, Rachel’s handmaid)			
Tribe Name	Meaning of Name	Dispensational View	Stone ³ (Today’s Name)
Reuben (L) רְאוּבֵן	who see a son, vision of a son	Gen.29:32 — Israel when they came out of Egypt, strong and confident, but untaught as to the condition of their heart	Row 1: Sardius(sard), clear red to brownish red
Simeon (L) שִׁמְעוֹן	he that hears or obeys; that is heard	Gen.29:33 — The dispersion (scattering) of Israel.	Row 1: Topaz (peridot), yellow citrine

¹ Identically shaped objects connected with the breastplate of the high priest and used as a divine oracle. Since the days of the Alexandrian translators of the Old Testament it has been asserted that Urim and Thummim mean “*revelation and truth*” or “*lights and perfections*”). One or the other could be drawn from the Breastplate’s pouch in order to provide a “Yes” or “No” answer when seeking the LORD for guidance. [JEWISH DICTIONARY]

² In Gen.22:38, God changed Jacob’s name to Israel after Jacob had wrestled with an angel.

³ UNGER’S BIBLE DICTIONARY.

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Tribe Name	Meaning of Name	Dispensational View	Stone ³ (Today's Name)
Levi (L) לֵוִי	joined, associated with him	Gen.29:34 — The dispersion (scattering) of Israel.	Row 1: Emerald (malachite), deep green
Judah (L) יְהוּדָה	praise of the Lord, confession	Gen.29:35 — Jesus as the "Lion of the tribe of Judah".	Row 2: Carbuncle (garnet), red almandine garnet
Dan (B) דָּן	judgment, he that judges	Gen.30:4-6 — Israel restored to self-government; the false prophet may come out of Dan.	Row 2: Sapphire (sapphire), clear blue to deep blue
Naphtali (B) נַפְתָּלִי	my wrestling, struggles or fights	Gen.30:7-8 — Israel as set free in the Kingdom Age and carries the Gospel to all nations.	Row 2: Diamond (diamond), glass-like and very reflective
Gad (Z) גָּד	a troop or band, an invader	Gen.30:10-11 — Israel in the end time as seemingly overcome; however, God will rise to their rescue and they will overcome at last.	Row 3: Ligure (jacinth), transparent red, yellow, orange, or brown
Asher (Z) אָשֵׁר	happy, happiness	Gen.30:12-13 — Israel blessed in the Kingdom.	Row 3: Agate (agate), chaledony with colors unevenly distributed, usually in bands
Issachar (L) יִשָּׁשָׁכָר	hired, he will bring reward, recompense,	Gen.30:17-18 — Israel refusing to yield to Jesus and not receiving a spiritual reward.	Row 3: Amethyst (amethyst), purple to blue-violet form of quartz
Zebulon (L) זְבֻלֹן	a dwelling, habitation	Gen.30:19-20 — Israel dwelling in the world, more interested in natural things than spiritual.	Row 4: Beryl (beryl), yellow or golden
Joseph (R) יוֹסֵף	let Him add	Gen.30:23-24 — Jesus the suffering one, who made a way for His glory through His humiliation.	Row 4: Onyx (quartz), similar to banded agates but bands are flat
Benjamin (R) בִּנְיָמִין	son of my right hand	Gen.35:16-18 — Benjamin was born through suffering and death and was the one tribe exalted among the Gentiles; speaks of Jesus in His suffering, death, and resurrection (glory).	Row 4: Jasper (jasper), opaque red, yellow, brown, and green