

The Lord's Jewels



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The topic “The Lord’s Jewels” is more specifically “The *Gathering of the Lord’s Jewels.*” During the present Christian or Gospel Age, God has been selecting saints who will ultimately comprise His royal family. At the end of this age, soon to come, God’s crown jewels will be mounted in the royal diadem.

Two questions naturally arise: What characteristics is the Lord looking for in His people? What constitutes their beauty? We are told, “Man looketh on the outward appearance, but the LORD [God] looketh on the heart” (1 Sam. 16:7). We can glean answers to the two questions by piecing together clues from various Scriptures. Psalm 45:10,11 is one such text: “Hearken, O daughter, and consider, and incline thine ear; forget also thine own people, and thy father’s house; So shall the king greatly desire thy beauty: for he is thy Lord; and worship thou him.”

Beauty, in God's sight, is our friendship for Him based on our love for Him and for the principles of divine government. Jesus told his disciples that he would in no wise cast out any who came to him, for the Father Himself had drawn them (John 6:37,44). The Heavenly Father's appraisal of and affection for Jesus (and inferentially for us also) are based upon the statement in Hebrews 1:9, "Thou hast loved righteousness, and hated iniquity; therefore God, even thy God, hath anointed thee with the oil of gladness above thy fellows." On a particular occasion, the Master said to those who were listening to one of his sermons: "Who is my mother? and who are my brethren? ... whosoever shall do the will of my Father which is in heaven, the same is my brother, and sister, and mother" (Matt. 12:48,50).

The value of gemstones consists in several factors, one of which is their scarcity or rarity. The third chapter of the Book of Malachi contrasts the jewel class with the proud and the wicked. The jewel class are those individuals who reverentially fear Jehovah; they think upon His name and assemble for that purpose. They indeed are a "little flock," dearly beloved (Luke 12:32).

Hardness is another factor to consider. In some respects, jewels are like flowers, yet unlike the flowers of the botanical realm, they do not fade and wither but have a lasting or permanent value. And so the jewel class, when mounted in divine glory,

will endure forever. Hardness prevents jewels from being scratched or marred, and hardness and endurance are characteristics God is looking for in His people (1 Pet. 2:19; Matt. 10:22; James 1:12). Figuratively, the hardness of jewels represents durability and firmness of character—intent and purpose. The jewel class set their faces as flint in their determination to do God's will.

Another value of gemstones consists in the form of crystallization peculiar to each kind. Not only does crystallization represent the individual's willingness and obedience toward truth and righteousness, but also it implies being fixed and settled in righteousness—enduring hardness as good soldiers of the Cross (2 Tim. 2:3). The form of crystallization also signifies, to a certain degree, individuality of character.

Another quality to look for in a jewel is transparency or clearness, particularly in its interior. Transparency represents the honesty and openness that God is looking for in His people—the purity of their intentions and, consequently, moral purity and relative flawlessness. God's people are not faultless, but they are blameless in His sight because He sees the purity of their intentions. As the Apostle John said, if we say we do not sin, we deceive ourselves, and “if any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous” (1 John 1:8-10; 2:1).

The luster or sheen of a jewel, which also determines its value, illustrates the zeal, animation, and enthusiasm of the Christian in his service toward God and truth. The transparency or clearness of the stone pictures an *interior* quality, whereas the luster or sheen represents an *exterior* quality.

A polished diamond has a peculiar luster that is sometimes referred to as adamantine; that is, it looks like polished iron. In Scripture, iron represents law and discipline. Therefore, the luster of the diamond, or adamantine, represents the obvious beauty and grace of the mature, polished Christian, whose well-ordered and disciplined life in the school of Christ becomes increasingly apparent to other spiritually minded Christians. This maturity can prove to be a stimulating factor, an incentive, a help, to others in their development and growth.

Still another value of precious stones is their color. This value will be demonstrated more fully in the future resurrection glory, beauty, and personal honor of office to be bestowed on those of the Bride class by the Heavenly Father. In the present life, the color of gems signifies the particular area or development in a field of endeavor in which a Christian excels. That development is obvious to fellow Christian associates.

To illustrate some of the characteristics of gemstones, we will consider the diamond. Where is the diamond found?

Approximately 75 percent of diamonds that are mined come from southern Africa, which is sometimes styled “the Dark Continent.” God’s crown jewels are found in this sin-benighted earth, being dug from the mire or pit of sin. The soil in which diamonds are found, called kimberlite, is a blue-black ground. It represents the soil of faith (blue) and humility (black). Diamonds are also found in volcanic “pipes” or “chimneys.” Accordingly, the Lord’s people are found in divinely appointed channels.

Another peculiarity of the diamond is that it is separated out or extracted by the use of cart grease. The stones are flushed over the grease. The cart is a burden-bearing conveyance, and just as lubricating the wheel greatly assists in the pulling ability of such a device, especially when carrying a heavy load, so the Christian, formerly heavily laden and burdened by the weight of the consciousness of his or her sin, is attracted by the gospel message of Christ and the consolation of the Holy Spirit. Jesus enjoins those who are being drawn: “Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest ... unto your souls” (Matt. 11:28,29).

Diamonds are formed from black coal under great pressure and heat. Under those conditions, a miraculous transformation takes place, the result being the clear, transparent diamond. As soft carbon, coal is greasy, smeary, and soot-like, but under great

pressure and heat, it becomes the hardest, clearest, and most beautifully transparent gemstone, the one at the top of the mineral kingdom.

How are diamonds appraised? Jewelers like to check a diamond for flaws by viewing it in northern light against a white background. In the Diamond District of lower Manhattan, jewelers used to go out into the street to view and appraise diamonds in the natural light. The carat, the standard unit of weight for valuing gems, might well represent the character of the Christian. The degree of character development determines the proportionate weight or influence one has in God's estimation. A scale of specific gravity or relative weight is used to identify the various jewels; that is, the comparative weight is in relationship to a fixed standard of an equal volume of water against which the stones are compared. And so God's estimation of the Christian is based upon the relationship to His Holy Word—the degree to which one aspires to be influenced by the teachings of the Bible.

The diamond is also important from the standpoint of its reflective, refractive, and dispersal powers of light. Accordingly, God's people have a duty not only to receive the truth in their hearts but also to share it with others—to preach the gospel and to show forth the glories of the coming Kingdom. Our theme text, Malachi 3:16, expresses this characteristic: "Then they that feared

the LORD spake often one to another: and the LORD hearkened, and heard it, and a book of remembrance was written before him for them that feared the LORD, and that thought upon his name.” Christians love to meditate upon God, His character, and His plan, and the Heavenly Father informs us that a record is being kept of their names in His “book of remembrance.” What an awesome and humbling fact about the Almighty One, who “telleteth the number of the stars ... [and] calleth them *all* by their names” (Psa. 147:4)! The Malachi text is trying to convey to us little beings the importance of the attention the Heavenly Father has for His people. He condescends to men of low estate by telling us that He will put the names of faithful Christians in a book of remembrance. He is giving assurance that He will not forget their labor of love on His behalf (Heb. 6:10). The theme text continues, “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.”

In the Old Testament, in connection with the Tabernacle of Moses in the Wilderness, the high priest ministered on behalf of the nation of Israel for the typical cancellation of sins. The high priest wore garments of glory and beauty, one of which was the breastplate of judgment (Exod. 28:2,15-21). In this item of clothing, which was a span wide and a span long—that is, 9 inches square—were set twelve semiprecious stones in golden ouches or

receptacles. On the face of the stones were inscribed the names of the twelve tribes of Israel, one name on each stone: Judah, Issachar, Zebulun, Reuben, Simeon, Gad, etc. Each stone, such as the sard, the topaz, and the emerald, had its own characteristics, and the particular jewel was in relationship to the name that was inscribed upon it.

The twelve stones in the breastplate represent the twelve primary characteristics or personality traits that are to be found in God's people. In their compliance with the instructions in His Word, God does not expect all of His people to be conformed to one stereotype or image. Although it is true that they are to be transformed into the likeness of His dear Son, He does not expect them to be cookie-cutter representations of that likeness (Rom. 8:29). In other words, He does not destroy individual personality traits. In fact, just as the beauty of nature consists largely in the variety that exists—for example, we marvel at and appreciate flowers because of the variety of texture, color, and fragrance—so the variety of leading characteristics in God's people is not expunged by conformity to His will but is enhanced in beauty by the power of the Holy Spirit, and all disparaging features are minimized. In resurrection glory, the Lord's jewels will be perfect.

The New Testament shows that Jesus, in his ministry and association with the disciples, repeatedly favored three particular

individuals: Peter, James, and John. For instance, in the raising of Jairus's daughter, he allowed these three to accompany him into the room where he performed the miracle (Mark 5:37-42). The same three individuals went with Jesus to the top of the Mount of Transfiguration, where they saw him transformed with glistening garments (Matt. 17:1,2). In the Garden of Gethsemane, these three accompanied him farther than the other apostles (Matt. 26:36,37). It is not that Jesus did not love the other apostles but that a principle operates; namely, he most appreciates those who love him the most.

We will illustrate this principle by considering certain jewels in the breastplate. The twelve jewels were aligned in four vertical rows with three stones across horizontally in each row. The four primary stones in the breastplate were in the vertical row on the left side of the high priest, which would be on the right side as he was viewed (Hebrew reads from right to left). Therefore, *from the standpoint of the beholder*, the first or most important stone was the one in the upper right-hand corner. On this stone, which was the sard, was inscribed the tribal name "Judah," meaning "praise." The ancient sardius, a flesh-colored stone that was used in carving and for cameo engravings, is symbolic of love. In the Book of Revelation, the Heavenly Father is symbolically seen seated on a throne, and two stones are used to portray His character. "And, behold, a throne was set in heaven, and one

[God] sat on the throne. And he ... was to look upon like a jasper and a sardine stone" (Rev. 4:2,3). The "jasper" is not the jasper of today but, as shown in the Greek and as used in this context, is the green-tinted diamond. On the one hand, the diamond pictures God's office and glory—honor due to Him. On the other hand, the sard represents the softer features of God's character—His compassion, love, mercy, and pity—which blend perfectly with His justice, glory, power, and office. Thus the diamond and the sard represent the two primary essentials of His being.

In regard to the first stone in the breastplate being the sard and the first tribe being Judah, we know that Jesus is "the Lion of the tribe of Judah" and that he most fitly represents God's love (Rev. 5:5). However, of the twelve apostles, the one first in rank—and thus pictured by the sard—is the Apostle Paul.

The second most important jewel on the high priest's breastplate, also being to the far right but one row down, was the carbuncle or pyrope with the tribal name of "Reuben" inscribed on it. In prophecy, Reuben is pictured as being "unstable as water" (Gen. 49:3,4). Of the twelve apostles, Peter was known for the quality of impulsiveness. Accordingly, the carbuncle is a coal of living fire. Peter's zeal, spontaneity, and impulsiveness were the very characteristics Jesus loved, but in the school of Christ, they needed to be developed and stabilized so that later Peter

could feed the Lord's sheep (John 21:15-17). Under the discipline of the Holy Spirit, Peter became a rock.

The next jewel in rank, the fire opal, is related to the Apostle John. With this apostle, there again was zeal but in another way: emotionalism. The Lord is pleased with emotionalism when it is schooled in the right direction of love for him.

The fourth stone in rank was the chrysolite, representing the Apostle James of Zebedee and the tribe of Dan, the judge. Chrysolite is the stone of wisdom: "chrysos" (gold) and "lithos" (stone).

In summation, the twelve jewels of the breastplate represent the characteristics God is looking for in His people. Although we cannot hope to be an apostle, we can hope to be of the same class as one of the twelve apostles. While now, in the Gospel Age, we are being quarried, we trust that ultimately, after being refined and polished, we will be mounted as jewels in divine glory by God's grace.

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For more information on this topic, see "The Throne Scene" and "The High Priest's Breastplate" in *The Keys of Revelation*.