

99-11-07b

Let's resume our study now of the book of Genesis and chapter 30 specifically. Of course, I have threatened that many times and haven't ever made it all the way back to chapter 30, and I'm going to do that again because there is one other area I want to address in regard to the tribes. You recall that we mentioned that the constellations of the heavens were associated with the cardinal directions of north, east, south, and west, and this tied in with the tribes and their banner symbols and so forth.

There are standards mentioned in numbers that the children of Israel would assemble on. The Pleiades, the cluster of stars that were on the east, in Hebrew they are referred to by the word Kima, K-I-M-A-H, which literally means heap or cluster. And this is where they got the idea that this was the little group of rock pigeons that were fleeing from Orion.

It was later called the Seven Sisters. But there were seven of these stars, seven bright stars, and one of them has dimmed out since ancient times, and another one of the ones that was of normal brightness has gotten very bright, so there has been some change in that constellation. But it is associated with the western constellation of Orion, which was called Kesil, K-E-S-I-L, in Hebrew.

And we find these associated together in a few places. The Kima is the term used over in Job. We've seen two different places in Job, Job 9 and Job 38, where the constellations are mentioned.

And there is another passage over in Isaiah 13, verse 10, where the western constellation is mentioned, the Kesil constellation associated with the west. Here, there is a declaration or a woe song against Babylon. And it says in verse 9, Behold, the day of the Lord comes, cruel, with both wrath and fierce anger, to lay the land desolate, and he will destroy its sinners from it.

Isaiah 13, verse 10 says, For the stars of heaven and their constellations will not give their light. The sun will be darkened in its going forth, and the moon will not cause its lights to shine. So, this word for constellations here is actually Kesil.

And that is the constellation over there of Orion. Kima and Kesil are mentioned together in Amos, chapter 5, verse 8. And if you'll bear with me, there is a point to looking at this that helps us actually move forward in our study. Amos, chapter 5, verse 8. Don't get to go to Amos very often.

But he talks about, this is in the midst of a call to repentance. He says in verse 4, Seek me and live. Do not seek Bethel, nor enter Gilgal, nor pass over Beersheba.

For Gilgal shall surely go into captivity, and Bethel shall come to nothing. These had

become, you remember the significance of Bethel and what a great series of events took place in that vicinity. But it had become a place of pagan worship.

People valued the place instead of the person. And, seek the Lord and live, lest he break out like fire in the house of Joseph. Of course, Joseph, this is Ephraim and Manasseh.

And devour it with no one to quench it in Bethel. You who turn justice to wormwood and lay righteousness to rest in the earth. You bury righteousness like a corpse.

Look at verse 8. He made the Pleiades and Orion. He turns the shadow of death into morning and makes the day dark as night. He calls for the waters of the sea and pours them out on the face of the earth.

This, of course, is a reference to evaporation and rain. Calling up the water from the sea into the clouds and then raining it back down. For those who don't think the Bible is scientifically accurate.

But the part that concerns us is the beginning of verse 8. He made the Pleiades and Orion. This is Kima for the Pleiades and Kessel for Orion. References to the eastern and western skies.

The eastern sky in the spring. The western sky in the fall was dominated by these two constellations. We had the same thing there in Job 9.9 and also in Job 38.31. Well, in particular, Kima interests us because if you look at Revelation chapter 1. We have a likely reference to this same constellation.

Revelation chapter 1. Actually several places in Revelation chapter 1. You can make a note of verse 12, verse 13, verse 16 and verse 20. What does it tell us in Revelation 1.12? I turn to see the voice that spoke with me. This is the voice that tells him to write down what he sees and send it to the seven churches which are in Asia.

When he turns to see the voice that spoke, having turned, I saw seven golden lampstands, and in the midst of the seven lampstands one like the Son of Man, clothed with a garment down to the feet and girded about the chest with a golden band. When you go on to verse 16. He had in his right hand seven stars.

Out of his mouth went a sharp two-edged sword. His countenance was like the sun shining in its strength. Verse 20.

The mystery of the seven stars which you saw in my right hand and the seven golden lampstands. The seven stars are the angels of the seven churches and the seven lampstands which you saw are the seven churches. So this is a vision of the Lord Jesus standing in the midst of the seven lampstands and he's holding the seven stars in his right hand.

Well, anytime you talked, especially in the ancient world, about a group of seven stars, people immediately thought of the Pleiades. Because that was a group of seven stars. If you say seven stars, that's the Pleiades.

That's what people always associated in their mind. It is interesting that the angels or the messengers of the seven churches are represented by these seven stars. What is the angel or the messenger? It's not an actual angel up in the heavens.

These are the pastors of these churches. How do we know that? Every time we see Angelos, we immediately have a knee-jerk reaction and the English translators of the Bible did the same. Every place you find Angelos, they say angel.

But Angelos is not a technical term for a celestial being. Angelos literally means messenger. If you go back to the episode in Acts where Peter was in prison and he was freed, the prison doors were opened, an actual celestial angel comes and kicks him in the ribs and says, Wake up, Peter, I'm turning you loose.

Walks him out of the prison, past the sleeping guards, and he goes to the house of the people who are praying for him. The servant girl hears somebody knocking at the door. She goes, and of course they're kind of under persecution, so they don't just open the door and say, Hi, how are you? She talks through the door and she says, Who is it? She hears this muffled voice from the other side saying something about Peter.

She knows Peter is in prison. That's the whole reason they're assembled, is to pray for him. So she runs back.

She leaves him standing outside. She runs back to the group and she says, There's someone outside. They say, Who is it? She says, Well, I think it's Peter's angel.

She doesn't mean she thinks there's a winged messenger from God's throne room out there. She thinks it's a messenger with a message from Peter. She heard something about Peter in what the person said muffled through the door.

So she comes in. She says, I think it's Peter's messenger. But she says, I'm not going to open the door on somebody telling me they've come from Peter.

So she goes back in and tells the people. They let him in, and it is Peter himself. But when you look at most translations, it says angel there.

They thought it was Peter's angel. Well, this makes no sense. Why would people pray? What would it mean, Peter's angel? That he's died and it's his ghost? It doesn't make any sense unless you understand it as messenger.

Same thing here in Revelation 1, 2, and 3. To the angel of the church of X, write. This is the messenger. What is the messenger? The one who delivers a message.

Who delivers a message in the church? It's the pastor. There is a pastor of a church. Paul, as the apostle to the Gentiles, appointed pastors in every town.

That was the mission of Timothy and Titus, to go around and develop and train and prepare pastors. And it doesn't mean that there can only be one. Or certainly that there's not only one person with the gift of pastor-teacher in any given group.

But there is one who has authority. And this is one of the passages that tells us that. He doesn't say, well, there were three stars in the church of Thyatira, and there were four stars at the church of Sardis.

There's one star. There's one messenger per church. However you want to work that out, have a senior pastor with junior pastors.

Have a senior teaching elder and a bunch of junior elders. It doesn't matter what you call them. The only thing that counts is the function.

And in God's economy, there has always been a system of responsibility. In the twelve tribes of Israel, you had the chief elder of the tribe. Israel was not ruled by a parliament.

It wasn't ruled by a congress. It was ruled by a king. And God's structure of authority assigns responsibility ultimately to one person.

Jesus Christ is responsible for the church. He's the head of the church. The husband in a marriage is the responsible person.

There's a lot of false conclusions that are drawn from that. But what it means is somebody is accountable. Someone is held responsible.

And there is authority that goes with the responsibility always. And ultimately in the church, there is someone who is accountable. Some one person.

It doesn't mean that they can't have consultation and discussion and support and help and delegation and all the other things that are part of good leadership. But it means that if the red telephone rings and God is going to call someone on the carpet, there is one person who will go. And that's the responsible person.

So here you have one angel per church. One messenger. There are seven of them.

And they are the seven stars. And this puts us in mind of the Pleiades. Why would the Bible make that connection? Why are they not seven candles? Or why are they not seven gems or seven of anything else? Why are they specifically seven stars? Well, seven stars reminds us of the Pleiades.

When we go back and think about the Pleiades and their association with the direction of the east and the placement of the tribes, we know that the leadership of many things are

associated with the east. The tabernacle faces east. The gate of the city through which the glory of God departs and reenters in Ezekiel is the east.

The Mount of Olives is east of Jerusalem. This is where Jesus spent a lot of his time. John the Baptist, when he is baptizing by the river Jordan, just north of the Dead Sea, is east of Jerusalem.

The garden that God planted in the primordial phase of human history was eastward in Eden. When people got sent out of the gate of Eden, they went east. They had to leave heading further east.

Abraham sends his erstwhile offspring, Ishmael and his later sons after Isaac, off to the east. Esau will eventually go and dwell in the east. The east is significant.

It is the direction of promise, among other things. This is where the rising sun comes from. This is where there is the hope for new opportunity, to make a new beginning.

The Pleiades would show in the eastern sky just before daybreak in the spring, which is the beginning of things. Judah, as the leading tribe in Israel, as the kingly tribe, is to the east of the tabernacle. They are associated with the Pleiades.

The stars, who are the messengers, are associated with leadership. The east, among other things, is associated with the leadership or the ruling authority, just as it is with Judah. This is sort of helpful to us.

We can start to tie together some of these strands of things that we observe in Scripture and see the consistency, the internal consistency of the Word of God, even across Testaments and even across thousands of years. I wanted to point that out to you, that you do have the references, even in the church of the seven stars there, is consistent with the picture we find in the Old Testament. Finally, before we leave, no study of the tribes would be complete without taking a look at the symbolic representation of the tribes on the breastplate of the high priest in Leviticus.

Once again, I'm going to refer to one of my favorite reference sources, which is the old, original, international, standard Bible encyclopedia. It has an excellent article in here under stones, precious. There is a great discussion here of the stones of the breastplate of the high priest because virtually all of the precious stones that are ever mentioned in the Old Testament are mentioned in that group of twelve that are in that breastplate.

So this article naturally spends some time on that. And we know that each of these stones stands for a tribe. Twelve stones, twelve tribes.

It specifically tells us that the name of a tribe is engraved, one name per stone, in the breastplate of the high priest. So is there a way to determine which tribe was associated with which stone? Because the stones are specified as being where are they, in what

row. There are four rows of three stones.

Why is it so specific? Is there meaning in this ordering? Well, if you turn over to Exodus, there are a couple of different places we can go for this. Exodus chapter 28 and verse 9 gives us a picture of the accoutrements of the high priest. You shall take two onyx stones and engrave on them the names of the sons of Israel.

Six names on one stone and six names on the other stone in the order of their birth. These are sort of like epaulets up on the shoulders of the priest. They are like shoulder boards.

You've seen these in the Navy where they've got the gold stripes. These two stones, there are six names on one and six names on the other, and they're in the order of their birth. So there's one ordering of the tribes right there.

Then when you get down to verse 15, you shall make the breastplate of judgment. It's called this several times, the breastplate of judgment. Why is it the breastplate of judgment? Because it is not just a flat plate with these twelve stones set in it.

It is, in fact, a container. Inside this container, you have the Urim and Thummim. As there is some debate about exactly what the Urim and Thummim consisted of, what they looked like, or how they operated, in our study not too terribly long ago in the life of David where this came up, the best understanding of how this worked is that there were two objects in there, sort of like dominoes, only probably larger, but I would think they would be flat plates so that when they are cast, they will either have two sides and one or the other side will come up.

And on each side you have a letter of the Hebrew alphabet. So if you think of a domino type of thing, slightly larger perhaps, maybe the size of a playing card, on one side you would have an Aleph. Urim starts with Aleph, which is the letter A in the Hebrew alphabet.

On the flip side of that object you would have the letter Tav, or T, which is the last letter of the Hebrew alphabet. There are only 22 letters in Hebrew and they don't have a Z at the end like we do. Zayin is up in the middle of the alphabet.

The last letter is Tav. So you have Aleph and Tav, or Tau, depending on if you want to say your Vs like the Germans. So because there are two of these, you can arrive at one of three combinations.

It's actually four combinations, but two of them are identical. That is, you could think of this as flipping two quarters. If you have two quarters and you flip them, what are the combinations? You can either have two come up heads, you can have two come up tails, or you can have one heads and one tails.

Well that's basically the function of the Urim and Thummim. So two heads or two Alephs would be a yes answer. Two Thummims or two Tavs would be a negative answer.

If it comes up one heads and one tails, or one Aleph and one Tav, then that's indeterminate. It's not giving you an answer. This is why when you get into the later history of Saul, when he consults the Urim and Thummim, he can't get an answer.

This is one of the things that people don't allow for when they start thinking about divine guidance. They say, well Lord, give me a sign. If I'm supposed to do this, then I've had this in my experience, where somebody thought my opinion would reflect the will of God.

They prayed for a couple of days and said, well Lord, I'm going to go talk to Sam about this, and if he says I should do it, then I'll know that's your will, and if he says not to, I'll know it's not your will. Well, we don't leave God a third alternative of no answer. We say, well, it's either going to be A or it's going to be B, and we don't allow for a third alternative.

But the Urim and Thummim did, and you could consult Urim and not get an answer. God's not talking to you. He's saying you either already ought to know the answer to this, or you are not in a position to receive an answer.

There's something wrong. And every time Saul would go to the Urim and Thummim, he kept getting a mixed signal, one up and one down, and it wouldn't give him an answer. And this, of course, defies all the laws of probability and chance.

They talk about flipping quarters, what the odds will be, and so on. Well, with the Urim and Thummim, they were kept in this breastplate, and it was a pouch. It was a rectangle that was folded over to make a square, and on the front of this square you have this pattern, four rows of three stones.

That's what's described beginning in verse 15 of chapter 28. By the way, the application, when you think about Urim and Thummim, is God always has a will, but it is not always apparent to us. And sometimes the immediate answer is, wait.

We sometimes think that something must be done, a decision must be made. It's like when Satan took Jesus up to the pinnacle of the temple, and he said, cast yourself down, because doesn't the Scripture say, his angels will bear you up lest at any time you dash your foot against a stone? And we are in a situation where we think, well, I've got to jump. I've got to make a decision here.

I've either got to jump or not jump, or whatever. And there is a third answer, which is to just wait. Jesus didn't leave the pinnacle of the temple, nor did he jump off.

He just stood there. The devil had his say. Jesus responded with the word of God, you shall not put the Lord your God to the test.

And Satan tried to make out, well, you've got to make a decision here about jumping off. Well, the Lord Jesus didn't have to make a decision or decide whether or not... The thing is presented like, you've got to jump, and we'll see whether or not God bears you up. But you'll jump, and he'll either bear you up or not.

And if he bears you up, we'll know you're the Son of God, because this is a promise made to the Davidic heir over there in the Psalms. And Jesus says, I don't have to jump. I can just stand here.

And you can be presented with something that looks like it needs a decision. Well, maybe it doesn't. And sometimes we wait.

Sometimes the answer is not to go looking to God for an answer, but to look at the information we already have. Saul didn't need to consult Urim and Thummim to know that he was out of the will of God. It had become a lucky charm to him.

It was a superstition, rather than a reflection of faith, that God was leading and guiding and that he wanted to do God's will. Saul didn't really want to do God's will. Saul just wanted some validation for getting out of his bad circumstances.

So it was a superstition. He might as well have opened up the newspaper and looked at his horoscope for that day. And so God said, I'm not going to give you an answer when you honor me with your lips, but your heart is far from me.

And a lot of times when people are looking for divine guidance, they're wanting the outcome to be the best for them. They want to be happy. They want to be peaceful and secure.

And if it was a crystal ball, if it was a tarot card, if it was a Ouija board, they wouldn't care what it was as long as something told them what's the best way to go. Should I do this or not? And many times God is not going to respond. He's not going to give guidance in a situation like that, because God guides people who are seeking to do his will.

God will give the guidance to people who he can use in his plan and who are reflecting faith, and the glory of God is in it. The power of God is in it. But deciding between the red Chevy and the blue Chevy, and which one will be better, which one will last longer, which one won't have the engine problems, if we're just self-centered and concerned about our own future and our own happiness, why should God bother? So it's a point to remember when you think about the Urim and Thummim.

There are three possible answers. Yes, no, and go back and think a while. But those were contained in the breastplate.

This is a breastplate of judgment. The stones representing the twelve tribes of Israel are set in this. It is artistically woven according to the workmanship of the ephod, of gold,

blue, purple, and scarlet thread.

And fine woven linen, you shall make it. It shall be doubled into a square. A span shall be its length, and a span shall be its width.

You know what a span is? If you spread your hand out like you're showing somebody the number five, the distance from your thumb to the end of your little finger is a span. So you can see that this would fit comfortably on the chest of the priest. It's square.

It's a span each direction. It's symmetrical. And it's decoration.

And this is actually an important detail to help us understand later things. It has gold, blue, purple, and scarlet thread interwoven that decorate it. Gold, blue, purple, and scarlet.

Doubled into a square. You shall put settings of stones in it. Four rows of stones.

And then it gives the stones. First row is a sardius, a topaz, and an emerald. This shall be the first row.

The second row shall be a turquoise, a sapphire, and a diamond. The third row, a yesynth, an agate, and an amethyst. The fourth row, a beryl, an onyx, and a jasper.

They shall be set in gold settings. And the stones shall have the names of the sons of Israel, twelve according to their names, like the engravings of a signet, each one with its own name. They shall be according to the twelve tribes.

This should already give you pause for thought. Now, if you are an observer of detail, what is wrong with this picture? And I'm talking specifically about the third stone in the second row. What's supposed to happen with these stones? Once you put them in there and you have them set, what do they have on them? They have the names of the tribes.

What is the third stone in the second row in your translation there? This would be verse 18. What's the third stone in the second row? Oh, you said emerald. Third stone in the second row.

My question is... Emerald. No, it's a diamond. In the second row, a turquoise, a sapphire, and an emerald.

That's because you've got that pagan NIV there. You're supposed to be studying out of the New King James. The only inspired version beyond the King James.

In the New King James it says a diamond. If you think about this, these are people out there in the wilderness. They've got flint knives.

They've got some bronze and so forth. How do you engrave the name of a tribe on a

diamond? The technology to engrave anything on a diamond did not exist until this century. So, this cannot be a diamond.

And this to me is just a terribly sloppy translation. I know. And the reason I bring this up is... there is a lot of problem trying to figure out exactly what these stones were.

Let me give you a little bit of the information that is in this very good article in the International Standard Bible Encyclopedia on this subject. In the interpretation of the Hebrew names of the stones of the breastplate, there is much great difficulty for no Hebrew literature other than the Old Testament has been preserved. Little help is afforded by the context of other verses in which some of these names of precious stones occur.

If we could assume that the Septuagint and Vulgate of the description of the breastplate were made from the same Hebrew texts, that would be a help. I'm summarizing here a little bit. However, there are some problems with this because the Septuagint was apparently translated from a different set of manuscripts than what we have.

It must be remembered that a Hebrew writer describing the arrangement of a row of stones began with that on his right and mentioned them in the order right to left. So when it says the first stone, second stone, and third stone, this is right to left as you're looking at it. Because Hebrew is written right to left, and they order things right to left.

So if you ever want to make yourself a little diagram, just be sure you think like a Hebrew. So in translating a Hebrew statement of the arrangement into a Western language, one may either translate literally word by word, adopting the Hebrew direction of reading, or, more completely, may adopt the Western direction for the order in the row. And so you could actually transpose these so that it would make sense to someone reading in Greek or reading in English.

Because it's confusing here when it says the first stone in the first row is this. Well, are you going to assume that it's on the left or assume that it's on the right when you say first? It would almost be more helpful to say the rightmost stone, the center stone, the leftmost stone, or something that's not ambiguous because of order direction. So this is one problem.

Either method may have been adopted by the Septuagint translators. It follows that Odham and Baraketh, the first and last stones of the first row according to our Hebrew text, may respectively be equivalent either to Sardion and Smaragdus, or conversely to Smaragdus and Sardion. These are the Greek translations of those Hebrew terms.

Similarly for the other rows. Of course, the middle stone is going to be the same no matter which reading you adopt. So, anyway, after wrestling with various problems, they have arrived at a chart here of the Hebrew names and their equivalents in the

Septuagint and the Vulgate.

Also, this is further complicated by the fact that Josephus, the Jewish historian from the first century, described the breastplate of the high priest two different places. He describes it in two different works. One of them is Antiquities, and the other one, the abbreviation of it is BJ.

I didn't take the time to look it up and see what it stands for, but whatever Josephus wrote that begins BJ, that's the other place where he described the breastplate. He's not even consistent with himself between those two. But he took a lot more time writing the Antiquities and was more careful generally with his historic details and so on, so they assumed that that was probably the more accurate.

But, Josephus, as you may know, was in the service of the temple and was around these things a lot and was probably working off his direct observation of the breastplate as it existed in his day. And that breastplate was different than the one created in the wilderness. The stones are manifestly not in the same order.

If you want the details of that, you can read this article. I won't go into all of that. But it is manifestly apparent that the breastplate he was looking at did not have the stones in the same places as the one that's described back in Exodus.

So there is a problem. It is also a problem because some names that you would think are clinchers, like topazion would be the modern day topaz, or sappheros in Greek would be the sapphire. Well, the actual sapphire stone that we have today is not the sappheros that the Greeks talked about.

The topaz that we have today is not the topaz that they had back then. So when you see topazion or sappheros, you think, oh, sapphire topaz. Well, they're not.

And the way that gems are classified today, by looking microscopically at their crystalline structure and their chemical composition, well, none of that science existed back then. They were classified by their appearance. Well, a transparent-looking garnet or a piece of quartz or a lot of these other gemstones, they were basically classified by color and described by color.

And the fact that there is so much confusion about what was actually the stone, some of them were the same, like amethystis is an amethyst, and we know that amethysts are generally purple in color and so on. Some of those were the same. But this is why, even looking at the different English translations, one of them says emerald and one of them says diamond.

I mean, how could you get those confused? Well, a lot of these, nobody really knows for sure what the exact stone was. What we can do a pretty good job of is figuring out the colors. And what I'd like to do is give you the colors for these four rows, because the

color is really what counts.

I think if it was important to know the exact stone, God would have preserved the evidence to let us identify these. And some of these we just don't know. But in the first row, the first stone, and this is in the Hebrew order, which is going to be the upper right stone as you look at the priest, is designated by odhem, O-D-H-E-M, in the Hebrew.

This is translated in the Greek and Latin as sardius, and even Josephus says sardonyx. So this, by agreement, was a red stone. So the upper right one is red.

The second one is pededha in Hebrew, P-I-T-E-D-H-A-H. This is the one uniformly translated in Greek and Latin by topazion or topazious. And that was a green stone.

The third stone is baraketh. This would be the upper left stone, B-A-R-E-K-E-T-H. Now this is one that we have a hard time figuring out, but barak, this is not the barak for blessing, but it is another B-A-R-A-K word in Hebrew, is the word for lightning.

And the gemstone name, baraketh, it means that this, I think it's referring to lightning. So my guess is that this was probably a yellow stone, because of the yellow color of lightning. It could have also possibly been a pale blue, but lightning-like.

If there was ever one of these that could have been translated diamond based on its appearance, this would be it. But it was apparently a transparent and very lustrous stone that was some sort of a pale, very bright color. So we'll say yellow, and I put blue with a question mark, but something pale and very bright.

In the second row, the first stone, or the stone on the right, is the Hebrew nophek, N-O-P-H-E-K-H. This is translated, and the other problem is the Septuagint doesn't order the stones in the same way, and there seems to be some textual variation. They may have been working off a different set of manuscripts.

For some reason, when you compare the evidence, they were not translating the same, because if you look at the Hebrew words in the order that we have them here, like when you look at nophek, other places in the Old Testament Scripture, they would translate nophek by a different Greek word than what they use here for the stones in the breastplate of the high priest, so they weren't even self-consistent. Of course, you had at least 70 translators in the Septuagint, different ones worked on different parts, so the Septuagint evidence is really murky, and I don't put a lot of stock in the Septuagint here, but both the Septuagint and Josephus translate this by anthrax, A-N-T-H-R-A-X, we associate this with a disease name, but anthrax is a word that is sometimes translated carbuncle, and was a bright red stone. However, the best understanding of nophek, when you look at other places where it is used in the Scriptures, it was probably and most likely a turquoise.

It is used in Exodus 28.18 and 39.11, it is also in Ezekiel 27.16 and Ezekiel 28.13, and the

interesting thing about this is, there was a stone in Egypt called the Mophak or Mafka, which has basically the same consonant sounds, and in Egypt, looking at the hieroglyphs, it is very much a turquoise. So I think, especially based on the fact that Moses is writing near the time that they were in Egypt, that nophek and mophak are referring to the same stone, and that this is a turquoise, and that the Greeks just got it wrong. In Josephus, looking at a different breastplate, there may have been a red stone in that place, but I think this was a turquoise.

One of the reasons I think that is, the center stone is called sapir in Hebrew, S-A-P-I-R, and even the Septuagint and the Vulgate, which is the Latin, translate this with sapheros. And sapir and sapheros, this is a stone that is now known as lapis lazuli. It was generally of an azure color.

Pliny, who was a historian around the first century, more or less contemporaneous with Josephus, says that sapheros is refulgent with spots like gold. It is also of an azure color, though sometimes, but rarely, it is purple, the best kind being that which comes from media. In no case, however, is this stone transparent.

These characteristics correspond to the lapis lazuli, not to the sapphire of the present day. So even though it says sapheros, it's lapis lazuli, which is an azure, a light blue color, or even a greenish blue, almost. And then the third stone, which would be the leftmost stone in the second row, is yahalom, Y-A-H-A-L-O-M, Y-A-H-A-L-O-M.

This stone is, unfortunately, translated diamond in the King James, but obviously you can't engrave on a diamond. There is a Greek hwalos, which is probably a cognate. You have the H and the L there, and for several reasons, we think that these two are equivalent.

And this was a bluish glass, or blue chalcedony, or perhaps even beryl. And this is a transparent, bluish colored stone. So we wind up with all three stones in the second row being bluish, if we believe that the first one is a turquoise, rather than an anthrax, which is red.

And so that whole row, they all seem to be the same sort of a light blue of one form or another. In the third row, and I'll speed up here a little bit, the third row, the first stone, the one on the right, is leshem, L-E-S-H-E-M. And this is a yellowish stone, as near as we can tell.

This is an often translated ligure, or jacent. This was a yellow to white-ish, or yellow to yellow-red stone used by engravers. The ligurian may be the yellow jargoon of the present day, and so forth.

Anyway, it's a yellowish stone by virtually all accounts. The middle stone of the third row is shebo, S-H-E-B-H-O. And shebo is a striped stone.

This is the word for agate. If you ever played marbles as a kid, and you had your Aggie, your real dense shooter marble, they always had that striped appearance. And the colors in this are not specified.

Obviously, there's all different colors of agate. But most all agate has that striped appearance, so you have a striped stone there. Then the third stone, or the leftmost stone, as you look at it in the third row, is achlama, which is A-H.

And that's a hard H. L-A-M-A-H. And this is translated in the Greek by amethystos. And that's an amethyst.

That's a purple stone. Finally, in the fourth row, the bottom right-hand stone, the first stone, is tarshish, just like the name of the port to which Jonah was trying to flee. And Paul of Tarsus.

Tarsus is tarshish. Same place. Tarshish.

And this is a real difficult one to figure out. It's interesting, though, because when it talks about the wheel within a wheel, and if you look in the New King James, I think it talks about the color of this mechanism that the cherubim are operating in, and it says it was the color of a barrel, B-E-R-Y-L. This, in Hebrew, is tarshish.

And it doesn't help us in determining what the color is, but it's interesting that it's apparently a translucent sort of a color. And as near as I can figure out, it's translated in the Septuagint and Vulgate by chrysolithos, which is chrysolite in English. Chryso, if you go to Chrysler or Chrysalis or any of those, the chryso or C-H-R-Y-S, of course, Y comes over from Greek from a U. It's actually C-H-R-U-S in Greek.

The U turns into a Y in English. But chryso, this is the word for gold. Chrysalis is a diminutive.

It's a little gold thing, the little thing that butterflies come out of. Chrysler, this is the gold standard of a car, so to speak. Chrysanthemum, gold flower.

But tarshish was probably more of a sea green or translucent green or yellow green. Yellow greenish. Because a lot of gold, especially in the ancient world, was sort of like we talk about today, green gold.

And it's a bright yellowish green. And apparently this is the color that emanates out from the cherubim, the four living creatures there in Ezekiel chapter 1 and chapter 10. The middle stone there is S-H-O-H-A-M.

And this is translated by various things. Prasinos in Greek is leek green stone. Sardion, smaragdus, berulion.

Anyway, this is another green stone, another translucent green stone. The final one, the

one in the lower left, is Yashephe, which is Y-A-S-H-E-P-H-E-H. And this is translated by berillus or berulion or anukion, which would be onyx, or crucolithos by Josephus in one place.

But this is another green stone. So it's interesting to me that in the second row you have blue, blue, blue. In the fourth row you have green, green, green.

In the first row you have red, green, yellow, going, of course, right to left. And in the third row you have yellow, striped, and purple. So you seem to have monochromatic rows in the second and fourth, and you have these various rows in the first and third.

It doesn't tell us which tribe or what the order of the tribes were that were engraved on these. But we will get the chance to see, because I think a lot of these original accouterments are going to be in use in the Millennial Kingdom. But they're all in the breastplate, all 12 tribes.

And that breastplate is the breastplate of judgment, but it is also the breastplate where the lights and the perfections. Remember, urim means lights, and thumim means perfections. And they decorate that case.

And remember I talked about the threads earlier. Those threads, I think, pick up the colors.