

Exodus 28:17

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

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.

Analysis

Twelve precious stones in four rows adorn the breastplate, each representing a tribe of Israel. The variety of stones (sardius/ruby, topaz, carbuncle/emerald, etc.) shows God values diversity within unity—each tribe unique yet all part of one people. The Hebrew **אֶבֶן** (even, stone) connects to Christ the cornerstone (Psalm 118:22, 1 Peter 2:6). These set stones prefigure believers as 'living stones' (1 Peter 2:5). Four rows suggest universal representation; three stones per row points to Trinitarian completeness.

Historical Context

These twelve stones were among the ancient world's most precious gems, making the breastplate extraordinarily valuable. The priest literally wore a fortune close to his heart, demonstrating the infinite worth of the people he represented before God.

Related Passages

Ephesians 2:8 — Salvation by grace through faith

John 3:16 — God's love and salvation

Study Questions

1. How does understanding yourself as a 'precious stone' set in Christ's priestly ministry affect your self-worth?
2. What does the diversity of stones (different colors, types) teach about unity within Christ's body?

Interlinear Text

וּמִלֵּאתָ	בּוֹ	מִלֵּאתָ	אֲבֵן	אַרְבַּעַה	הַטֹּרֶם	אֲבֵן
And thou shalt set	H0	in it settings	of stones	even four	row	of stones
H4390		H4396	H68	H702	H2905	H68
הַטֹּרֶם	אֶדְם	פְּטוּדָה	וּבֶרֶךְ קֵת	הַטֹּרֶם		
row	shall be a sardius	a topaz	and a carbuncle	row		
H2905	H124	H6357	H1304	H2905		
הָאֶחָד:						
this shall be the first						
H259						

Additional Cross-References

Ezekiel 28:13 (Parallel theme): 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.

Proverbs 8:11 (Parallel theme): For wisdom is better than rubies; and all the things that may be desired are not to be compared to it.