

Exodus 39:8

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

And he made the breastplate of cunning work, like the work of the ephod; of gold, blue, and purple, and scarlet, and fine twined linen.

Analysis

The breastplate (חֹשֶׁן, choshen, breastplate of judgment, 28:15) matched the ephod's materials and workmanship, signifying unity between bearing Israel's names (shoulders/strength) and bearing them over the heart (affection). The 'cunning work' (מְעֵשֶׂה חֵיָּב, ma'aseh choshev, skillful craftsmanship) indicates divine design executed by Spirit-filled artisans. This breastplate, positioned over Aaron's heart, taught that priestly ministry requires both strength and love. Christ, our High Priest, bears believers with both omnipotent power and infinite compassion (John 13:1).

Historical Context

The breastplate, worn over the heart, complemented the shoulderpieces' function. Together they symbolized the high priest carrying Israel in both strength (shoulders) and affection (heart) before YHWH. The matching craftsmanship emphasized the unified design of these garments.

Related Passages

1 John 4:8 — God is love

1 Corinthians 13:4 — Characteristics of love

Revelation 20:12 — Judgment according to deeds

1. What comfort comes from knowing Christ bears you not only with omnipotent strength but with infinite love?
2. How should ministers today balance 'shoulder' leadership strength with 'heart' pastoral compassion?

Additional Cross-References

Exodus 28:4 (Parallel theme): And these are the garments which they shall make: a breastplate, and an ephod, and a robe, and a brodered coat, a mitre, and a girdle: and they shall make holy garments for Aaron thy brother, and his sons, that he may minister unto me in the priest's office.

Isaiah 59:17 (Parallel theme): For he put on righteousness as a breastplate, and an helmet of salvation upon his head; and he put on the garments of vengeance for clothing, and was clad with zeal as a cloke.

Ephesians 6:14 (Parallel theme): Stand therefore, having your loins girt about with truth, and having on the breastplate of righteousness;

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