

THE SHOULDERS, HEART & HANDS OF OUR SAVIOR

TEXT: Ex.28:9-29 (Please read this passage of God's holy Word before proceeding.)

INTRO.: A. On this 4th of July it is good for us to think of those who have gone before to make our freedom a reality. It is also a blessing to remember our Savior who gave us spiritual freedom. As we celebrate Independence Day, may we also recognize that the day we trusted Christ marks our spiritual Independence from the bondage of sin & Satan.

B. As we should never forget the price others paid for our freedom, so we need to remember the One Who paid our sin debt. But there is another perspective presented in the Bible concerning the price He paid & our subsequent relationship to Him. The emphasis is not that we remember Him as much as that He remembers us!

TRANS.: The garments of the High Priest of Israel teach us about the **concern, compassion & love** our High Priest has for His children...

Heb.9:11 *But Christ being come an high priest of good things to come, by a greater and more perfect tabernacle, not made with hands, that is to say, not of this building*

Heb.7:25,26 *Wherefore he is able also to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by him, seeing he ever liveth to make intercession for them. For such an high priest became us, who is holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners, and made higher than the heavens;*

I. THE HIGH PRIEST CARRIED ISRAEL'S NAMES ON HIS SHOULDERS: (STRENGTH-SECURITY)

A. He Was To Bear Their Burdens: **(Intercession)** v.9-12

1. The shoulder is the place of strength & tells us that the omnipotence of Christ is engaged in behalf of His people.

QUOTE: "The shoulder which sustains the universe, upholds the feeblest & most obscure member of the blood-bought congregation." C.H.M.

2. The *order* of the 12 tribes engraved upon the 2 shoulder stones was "according to their birth" (v.10) – signifying their equality (just as we are all precious in His sight because we have been "born of God").

ILLUS.: This places Reuben, though "as unstable as water" in first place! What grace. It would also place the 2 favorite sons of Israel, Benjamin & Joseph, at the bottom of the list!!!

3. The High Priest was to minister on behalf of his brethren; to carry their burdens be for the Lord; this is also the ministry of our High Priest. (cf. Heb.7:26 above)

NOTE: What a blessing to know that our Savior, omnipotent Creator of the universe, not only cares about us, but carries our burdens before His Father in heaven. He Who will one day have the Govt. of the world upon His shoulder, now carries our cares there!

II. THE HIGH PRIEST CARRIED ISRAEL'S NAMES OVER HIS HEART: (AFFECTIONS/EMOTIONS)

Is.40:11 *He shall feed his flock like a shepherd: he shall gather the lambs with his arm, and carry them in his bosom, and shall gently lead those that are with young.*

A. He Was To Feel Their Pain: **(Compassion)** v.29,30

NOTE: The breastplate is the 7th & final item of clothing worn by the High Priest. It was by far the chief & most costly of his vestments, the other garments providing a background for it & the breastplate pointing to the very heart of our High Priest.

QUOTES: A.W. Pink: "When God looks upon the great High Priest, He beholds His people upon His heart, as well as upon His shoulders, adorned w/all the beauty of the One on Whom His eye ever rests with perfect delight."

Peter Ruckman: "The elect nation was taken to God's heart & loved as a wife. Israel lay where John the apostle lay (Jn.13:25), & where the church now resides (Eph.5:24,25). However, the saints are never sinless, & exactly as God loved *them*, SO He hated their sins & bore them (1 Pet.2:24) in **"judgment upon his heart."** v.29

1. The fact that God chose gems to represent His people indicates how precious they are in His sight. v.17-21

QUOTE: "Whatever beauty each has, the light alone brings it out; in the darkness it has none." C.H. Bright Thus it is in the believer, it is only as God sees them in Him Who is the true light that they are acceptable to Him.

2. Though the gems had various value to man, they were all precious in His sight, because each was chosen by God & set in gold (Deity) & all rested equally upon the heart of the High Priest as he ministered before the Lord.
3. They were each "**set in gold in their enclosings**" (v.20), so it was impossible for them to slip out or be lost!!!!
4. They were also fastened w/ "**chains of gold**" (v.24); symbolizing that the people of God (represented by their names) were chained to the High Priest!!!
5. The infinite power of God (shoulders), is intimately linked to the tenderness of His heart of love & every movement of the H.P.'s shoulder would affect the breastplate, & every beat of his heart would move the breastplate, by means of the golden chains which linked the epaulets & breastplate.

ILLUS.: Thank the Lord we don't have to deal only w/the raw, infinite power of God, apart from His tenderness & love! I am glad the power is there, but it is tempered by His love. Thus when He intercedes for me & His power is placed in motion, I know that whatever He does, He does because of His love.

III. OUR HIGH PRIEST CARRIES OUR NAMES IN HIS HAND: (ATTACHMENT/NEARNESS)

Is.49:16 *Behold, I have graven thee upon the palms of my hands; thy walls are continually before me.*

A. He Knows Our Needs: (Love)

1. The word "**graven**" signifies some permanent marking.

ILLUS.: This is not a justification for you to run out & get a tattoo which says "Jesus loves me" or whatever. In fact, tattooing was forbidden by God in Israel, along with body piercing, men dying their hair and anything else that would identify men w/women or women w/men. Lev.19:28

2. The Lord has marked us permanently in His hands; this may be more than a mere listing of names, but it may imply a likeness of some kind.
3. This verse is in response to the statement in v.14 "**The Lord hath forsaken me, & my Lord hath forgotten me.**"
4. The Lord responds by asking "**Can a woman forget her sucking child...**" & answers "**Yea, they may forget, yet will I not forget thee.**"
5. The reason He cannot forget He says is that their names are engraved upon the palms of His hands!

ILLUS.: We carry pictures of our loved ones in our billfolds. I have a photo of all 10 of my grandchildren in my wallet. You girls carry a picture of that ugly guy in a locket around your neck. You & I can lose our pictures of our loved ones, but the Lord cannot. He carries them engraved on the palms of His hands! He loves you & cares about you & He knows all about you. He knows your name, address & phone number, as well as the number of the hairs on your head. He knows when you hurt, when your heart is breaking & He cannot forget you!!!

Heb.4:15 *For we have not an high priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; but was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin.*

CONCL.: Our High Priest is greater than the O.T. H.P.! He not only bears us on His shoulders, & keeps us close to His heart, but He even has us engraved upon the palms of His hands! "**THE SHOULDERS, HEART & HANDS OF OUR HIGH PRIEST**" speak volumes of His **intercession** for us, His **compassion** on us & His **love** towards us! He knows about your burdens, He cares about your heart-aches & He wants to show you His love!

The Lord says: "I've got you on My **shoulder** so you are always secure; I have you in My **heart** so you know of my love for you & I have you in the **palms of My hands** to let you know that I will care for your every need."

Is our High Priest *your* Savior?!