

Chapter 12 – Benjamin and the Jasper

The twelfth stone is **jasper (3471)**: (yashpeh /yaw-shef-ay'/) from an unused root meaning *to polish*.¹ Modern jasper is an opaque stone that is usually red because of its iron content. However, it is also found in brown, yellow, or green.² It was known for taking a high polished finish.

The jasper that is used in New Jerusalem is described as being “clear as crystal” in Rev. 21:11. Although the jasper mentioned here in Exodus has been thought by many biblical scholars and translations to have been green, it is more likely to have been red. The Egyptians gave the Israelites their riches right before the Hebrews left Egypt (Ex. 12:35,36) and the gems in the breastplate were probably among the spoils. That being the case, Egyptian jasper was known to be available in three colors—brown, yellow, or red, not green.³

The strongest proof, in my opinion, that this jasper was red is in Rev. 4:3. It says that the one who sat on the throne “was to look upon like a jasper and a sardine stone.” This phrase is a comparison of two similar things—jasper and sardine. As a matter of fact, both stones are in the *chalcidony* family of stones and are both known to be cryptocrystalline in nature, meaning that they both are obviously crystal to the naked eye but the crystals cannot be individually distinguished even when placed under a microscope.⁴ It is my belief that John mentioned sardine here next to jasper to let us know that jasper was red. Jasper is the first foundation stone of New Jerusalem.

Symbols in the stone

Since the stone is **red**, it symbolizes the blood atonement we have through the sacrifice of Jesus Christ and the passing over of God’s destructive judgment on us. It also represents royalty, prosperity, prestige, and valiance (Lam. 4:5; Dan. 5:7,16,29; Nah. 2:3).

Jasper also represents the perfection of the saints. In the same manner that the gem was known for its high polished finish, we are to be known for our high moral standards and character that are brought forth in us by obedience to the Lord. It does not mean we are sinless, but that we are humble enough to recognize our weaknesses and are willing to take the necessary steps to overcome them.

Symbols in the order of the stone

Twelve is the number of divine order or divine government (12 tribes of Israel, 12 apostles).

Facts about Benjamin

¹ Strong, p. 53.

² Lockyer, p. 571.

³ Simpson & Weiner, v. 8, p. 197.

⁴ <http://www.bartleby.com/65/ja/jasper.html>

- ▶ His name means “son of the right hand.” The right hand is symbolic of strength, power, and authority (Ps. 18:35; Heb. 1:3; 8:1; 10:12).

Observation: Jesus is seated at the right hand of the Father. Since believers are seated in heavenly places in Christ, spiritually speaking, we are also seated at the Father’s right hand. One day we will physically be able to sit there (Rev. 3:21).

- ▶ Benjamin was Jacob’s twelfth son and Rachel’s second.
- ▶ Rachel died right after his birth.
- ▶ Israel’s first king, Saul, came from this tribe.
- ▶ The apostle Paul was also from this tribe.

Jacob’s prophecy of Benjamin

“Benjamin shall ravin as a wolf: in the morning he shall devour the prey, and at night he shall divide the spoil.” (Gen. 49:27)

Ravin means to plunder, pillage, or devour. This prophecy speaks of the fierceness of the tribe of Benjamin. When a wolf goes on the prowl, it is persistent in its hunting and Benjamin would be the same way in fighting his enemies. As wolves move swiftly in overtaking their prey, so Benjamin would move quickly to defeat his enemies.

At the beginning of the day, Benjamin would conquer the prey while at the end of the day he would divide his loot with others. This prophecy was fulfilled in several places in the Bible. Ehud the Benjamite, one of the judges, killed the Moabite king in Judges 3 and then gathered Israel to defeat the remaining Moabites. The Benjamites defeated the other Israelite tribes in several battles before they were defeated for their wickedness (Jud. 20). King Saul was a warrior king who won many battles for Israel. The apostle Paul, in the spiritual sense, conquered Gentiles with the gospel of Jesus Christ throughout the Roman empire in the first century. He still continues to do so today through the words he wrote and has divided his loot with those of us who preach or teach using his writings.

Application: Christians must work the works of the Father while it is day because the night cometh when no man can work (Jn. 9:4). Our words and actions must meet the standards of God’s word to be effective. It is imperative that we take advantage of the fact that it is still daylight. Judgment day, when our work will come to a halt, has not arrived yet, so we must redeem the time by fulfilling what God wants us to do.

Like wolves on the prowl, we should be persistent in our cause of righteousness. Just because we don’t get everything right all of the time doesn’t mean we should back away from our God-given course. If we sin, we should repent and get back in the battle quickly. Night can come at any time. Therefore, there is no time to waste.

When night finally arrives for us, we will divide the spoil. That is when we will receive the things done in our body, whether they be good or bad. Christ will take into account everything we’ve said and done while we were on earth and will reward us accordingly. The ultimate dividing of the spoil is when we will reign with him for eternity.

Moses’ prophecy of Benjamin

“And of Benjamin he said, The beloved of the LORD shall dwell in safety by him; and the LORD shall cover him all the day long, and he shall dwell between his shoulders.” (Deut. 33:12)

Benjamin was called the “beloved of the LORD” because he had a special place in God’s heart. Since he was the “son of the right hand”, a position of favor, this should come as no surprise.

The Lord was the tribe’s protector, which explains why they won so many battles. All day every day, God provided shelter for Benjamin from all kinds of dangers. Benjamin dwelt between God’s shoulders. In other words, God constantly carried him and held him up.

Application: True believers are the beloved of the Lord, the sons of his right hand. We are precious in God’s eyes which is why he paid the highest price possible to redeem our souls.

God causes us to dwell in safety so we can fulfill his purpose in the earth. This does not mean we will never have problems or suffer persecution. These are a regular part of being a Christian (Jn. 16:33; 2 Cor. 1:7). It only means God will preserve our lives until our time here is up. Afterwards, we will live forever with him where nothing can harm us.

While we are here taking care of our God-given ministries, God shelters us all the time, including those times when we feel that he is distant from us. Because he is constantly with us, we can walk through the valley of the shadow of death and fear no evil (Ps. 23:4). He has promised to never leave us nor forsake us (Heb. 13:5). Furthermore, we live between God’s shoulders, where he constantly bears us up and carries us if we are caught up in doing his will.

Summary of ideas & characteristics in Benjamin and the jasper: Spiritual perfection; blood atonement; God’s divine order in our lives; royalty; prosperity; prestige; strength, power, and authority; persistence and swiftness to do righteous works; conquering spiritual enemies to share the plunder with other saints; we are the Lord’s beloved; God is our constant protector; the Lord consistently carries us.