

Revelations of a Seasoned Rockhound

My wife and I have searched for precious and semi-precious stones ever since we were married back in 1967. In fact, on our honeymoon in Idaho we searched for such stones along the Salmon River and in other such places, and despite being novice rockhounds we found a few prizes that grace our collection even today. It was a really fun adventure, complete with confrontations with rattlesnakes and hailstorms! We have built upon this hobby ever since, and now have an entire room in our house dedicated to beautiful rocks, crystals, and minerals from all over the world.

This matter of seeking after valuable treasures is not a subject to be taken lightly, for even our heavenly Father is, in a very real sense, a rockhound. Take a look at what is said in Exodus 19:5-6.

“Now therefore, if you will indeed obey My voice and keep My covenant, then you shall be a special treasure [*sequllah*, “wealth, as shut up”] to Me above all people, for all the earth is Mine, and you shall be to Me a kingdom of priests and a holy nation.”

In fact, in the very beginning of God’s word we read,

“Now a river went out of Eden to water the garden, and from there it parted and became four riverheads. The name of the first is Pishon; it is the one which skirts the whole land of Havilah, where there is gold. And the gold of that land is good, Bdellium and the onyx stone are there” (Genesis 2:10-12).

Notice that onyx is given a prominent position in the text, and even Bdellium may refer to precious stones as well, as stated in Webster’s

Revised Unabridged Dictionary: “1. (n.) An unidentified substance mentioned in the Bible (Gen. ii. 12, and Num. xi. 7), variously taken to be a gum, a precious stone, or pearls, or perhaps a kind of amber found in Arabia.”

Add to this the fact that when the Eternal characterizes the New Jerusalem in Revelation 21:19-20, He shows the walls of the city adorned with all types of precious stones.

The first foundation: jasper
The second foundation: sapphire
The third foundation: chalcedony
The fourth foundation: emerald
The fifth foundation: sardonyx
The sixth foundation: sardius
The seventh foundation: chrysolite



The eighth foundation: beryl
The ninth foundation: topaz
The tenth foundation: chrysoprase
The eleventh foundation: jacinth
The twelfth foundation: amethyst

There is some question as to what each of these stones actually is, but it is safe to say that they were beautiful and highly symbolic of the character of the Eternal Living God who made them. Moreover, the breastplate of the high priest contained an array of twelve precious stones in settings of gold, each one with the name of a tribe of Israel. This “breastplate of judgment” (Exodus 28:15) was to be made of gold, blue, purple, and scarlet thread, and fine woven linen, a two-piece square of a *span* [*zereth*, “the spread of the fingers,” about 7 inches], with four rows of stones (Exodus 28:17-20). The Urim and Thummim were folded inside this piece.

Row 1: sardius topaz, emerald
Row 2: turquoise, sapphire, diamond

Row 3: jacinth, agate, amethyst

Row 4: beryl, onyx, jasper

Which stone identified which tribe is a matter of conjecture, but my belief is that the twelve foundations of Revelation 21:19-20 correspond to those twelve breastplate stone, since the twelve tribes of Israel were to form the basis of the priestly government that would overspread the earth, as expressed in the blessings to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. In Genesis 49, each of the twelve sons of Jacob is described in some detail as to its national character as a people in the end time. Moreover, Israel as a whole was to be an example or model in governance and the expression of God's law and character to all nations (Exodus 12:49; Leviticus 24:22; Numbers 15:29). See especially Deuteronomy 4:5-7.

“Surely I have taught you statutes and judgments, just as the Lord my God commanded me, that you should act according to them in the land which you go to possess. Therefore be careful to observe them; for this is your wisdom and your understanding in the sight of the peoples who will hear all these statutes, and say, ‘Surely this great nation is a wise and understanding people.’ For what great nation is there that has God so near to it, as the Lord our God is to us, for whatever reason we may call upon Him?”

The ephod for the priest was to have finely woven and colorful material as was the breastplate, with an onyx stone on each shoulder of the ephod having engraved on them the names of the twelve tribes of Israel — six on one stone and six on the other. Here again we see the use of precious stones to display the names of the twelve tribes. The throne of God is pictured as a sapphire stone (Ezekiel 1:22, 28; 10:1; Exodus 24:10), and the living creatures had “wheels and their workings ... like sparkling beryl” (Ezekiel 1:16; 10:9). Even Lucifer was decked out in precious stones, at least before he sinned: the sardius, topaz, diamond, beryl, onyx, jasper, sapphire, turquoise, and emerald in settings of gold (Ezekiel 28:12-13).

Many other scriptures also speak of precious

stones. Here is a sampling.

Exodus 24:10. “... and they saw the God of Israel; and under His feet there appeared to be a pavement of sapphire, as clear as the sky itself.”

1 Kings 10:2. “So she [the Queen of Sheba] came to Jerusalem with a very large retinue, with camels carrying spices and very much gold and precious stones.”

1 Chronicles 20:2. “David took the crown of their king from his head, and he found it to weigh a talent of gold, and there was a precious stone in it;



and it was placed on David's head.”

1 Chronicles 29:2. “Now with all my ability I have provided for the house of my God the gold for the things of gold, and the silver for the things of silver, and the bronze for the things of bronze, the iron for the things of iron, and wood for the things of wood, onyx stones and inlaid stones, stones of antimony and stones of various colors, and all kinds of precious stones and alabaster in abundance.”

Job 28:16. “It cannot be valued in the gold of Ophir, in precious onyx, or sapphire.”

Job 28:18. “Coral and crystal are not to be mentioned, and the acquisition of wisdom is above that of pearls.”

Job 28:19. “The topaz of Ethiopia cannot equal it, nor can it be valued in pure gold.”

Proverbs 3:15. “She [wisdom] is more precious than jewels, and nothing you desire compares with her.”

Proverbs 8:11. “For wisdom is better than jewels, and all desirable things cannot compare with her.”

Proverbs 31:10. “An excellent wife, who can find? For her worth is far above jewels.”

Isaiah 54:11. “O you afflicted one, tossed with tempest, and not comforted, behold, I will lay your stones with colorful gems, and lay your foundations with sapphires. Moreover, I will make your battlements of rubies, and your gates of crystal, and your entire wall of precious stones.”

Jeremiah 17:1. “The sin of Judah is written down with an iron stylus; with a diamond point it is engraved upon the tablet of their heart and on the horns of their altars”

Daniel 11:38. “But instead he will honor a god of fortresses, a god whom his fathers did not know; he will honor him with gold, silver, costly stones and treasures.”

1 Corinthians 3:12. “Now if any man builds on the foundation with gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, straw”

Revelation 4:3. “And He who was sat there was like a jasper stone and a sardius in appearance; and there was a rainbow around the throne, like an emerald in appearance.”

We can safely say that almighty God is highly interested in precious, beautiful stones.

What About Us?

It turns out that we saints also are likened to jewels, both today and at the resurrection. Regarding our present status, notice I Peter 2:4-6.

“Coming to Him as to a living stone, rejected indeed by men, but chosen by God and precious, you also, as living stones, are being built up a spiritual house, a holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ. Therefore, it is also mentioned in the Scripture, ‘Behold, I lay in Zion a chief cornerstone, elect, precious, and he who believes on Him will by no means be put to shame.’”

Notice what God says concerning our future status through the prophet Malachi in Malachi 3:16-17.

“Then those who feared the Lord spoke to one another, and the Lord listened and heard

them. So a book of remembrance was written before Him for those who fear the Lord and who meditate on His name. ‘They shall be Mine,’ says the Lord of hosts, ‘on the day that I make them My *jewels* [*segulah*, “wealth”]. And I will spare them as a man spares his own son who serves him.”

Such a prophecy for the elect is an amazing admission, showing that the saints are transformed to jewels even in this life, and even more so when they are made spirit. What an incredible present and future God has given us! With God’s spirit in us, motivating us to display the fruits of the spirit (Galatians 5:22-23), we have shed our former selves, the plain, ugly rocks found on the ground in a desert wilderness, or dug up from a pit or quarry, covered with soil, dirty and shapeless, not yet cut and polished.

Is not this the state in which our Creator called us: sinful, nondescript, rough, and formless? Surely such is the case, as we read in I Corinthians 6:9-11.

“Do you not know that the unrighteous will not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived Neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor homosexuals, nor sodomites, nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners will inherit the kingdom of God. And such were some of you. But you were washed, but you were sanctified, but you were justified.”

Notice also Ephesians 2:1-3.

“And you He made alive, who were dead in trespasses and sins, in which you once walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit who now works in the sons of disobedience, among whom also we all once conducted ourselves in the lusts of our flesh, fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind, and were by nature children of wrath, just as the others.”

I have often pondered why it is so fulfilling to work with rocks and minerals. One finds a plain, nondescript rock in some remote desert place like



Wyoming or Idaho. You know the rock might have potential because others have identified ones like them in the area that might have gemstone potential. You may have to dig for the rocks, sometimes several feet down, but there you find them, dirty and formless.

You squirt some water from a spray bottle to wash away some of the soil ... and lo and behold a few promising patterns appear on the exterior, perhaps even a concentric set of lines indicating there might be an agate inside. You put it in a bag and take it home. You ponder the fate of these rocks perhaps as God did His people Israel.

“Thus says the Lord God to Jerusalem: ‘Your birth and your nativity are from the land of Canaan; your father was an Amorite and your mother a Hittite. As for your nativity, on the day you were born your navel cord was not cut, nor were you washed in water to cleanse you; you were not rubbed with salt nor wrapped in swaddling cloths. No eye pitied you, to do any of these things for you, to have compassion on you; but you were thrown out into the open field, when

you yourself were loathed on the day you were born. And when I passed by you and saw you struggling in your own blood, I said to you in your own blood, “Live!” Yes, I said to you in your blood, “Live!” I made you thrive like a plant in the field; and you grew, matured, and became very beautiful. Your breasts were formed, your hair grew, but you were naked and bare. When I passed by you again and looked upon you, indeed your time was the time of love; so I spread My wing over you and covered your nakedness. Yes, I swore an oath to you and entered into a covenant with you, and you became Mine,’ says the Lord God. ‘Then I washed you in water; yes, I thoroughly washed off your blood, and I anointed you with oil. I clothed you in embroidered cloth and gave you sandals of badger skin; I clothed you with fine linen and covered you with silk. I adorned you with ornaments, put bracelets on your wrists, and a chain on your neck. And I put a jewel in your nose, earrings in your ears, and a beautiful crown on your head. Thus you were adorned with gold and silver, and your clothing was of fine linen, silk, and embroidered cloth. You ate pastry of fine flour, honey and oil. You were exceedingly beautiful and succeeded to royalty. Your face went out among the nations because of your beauty, for it was perfect through My splendor which I had bestowed on you,’ says the Lord God. ‘But you trusted in your own beauty, played the harlot because of your fame, and poured out your harlotry on everyone passing by who would have it. You took some of your garments and adorned multicolored high places for yourself, and played the harlot on them. Such things should not happen, nor be’” (Ezekiel 16:3-14).

You take the rock out of the bag and wash it free of soil, then clamp it in the rock saw. For 20 minutes the diamond saw blade chews away at the rock, and the stone finally is cut. The pattern revealed by the cutting oil on the freshly cut surface reveals a gorgeous, multi-colored banded agate. You wipe off the

oil, and take it to the polishing wheel. First a coarse grit hones the surface, then a medium grit, and finally a fine grit. Then the stone is held down upon the polishing wheel, and after a minute of polishing you wash off the polishing compound.

The nondescript, ugly rock has been miraculously transformed into a beautiful agate! What seemed impossibly decrepit has become a museum piece in your collection. Out of all the stones that were picked up and brought home to process, only a few turned out to be beautiful.

“Return, O backsliding children, says the Lord ‘for I am married to you. I will take you, one from a city and two from a family, and I will bring you to Zion. And I will give you shepherds according to My heart, who will feed you with knowledge and understanding’” (Jeremiah 3:14-15).

It is common for the rockhound to pick up bagfuls of stones from a location, all of them potentially beautiful specimens when cut and polished. Yet, once they are all cut, only a very few will display the colors and patterns fit for the display case. Notice the parallel to what Jesus told the workers in the vineyard after some had complained that they had worked longer hours than the late-comers, but received the same pay.

“Take what is yours and go your way. I wish to give to this last man the same as to you. Is it not lawful for me to do what I wish with my own things? Or is your eye evil because I am good? So the last will be first, and the first last. For many are called, but few chosen” (Matthew 20:14-16).

Notice also Matthew 22:11-14, the concluding statements of the wedding supper for the king’s son.

“But when the king came in to see the guests, he saw a man there who did not have on a wedding garment. So he said to him ‘Friend, how did you come in here without a wedding garment?’ And he was speechless. Then the king said to the servants, ‘Bind him hand and foot, take him away, and cast him into outer darkness; there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth. For many are called, but few are chosen.’”

While a rockhound who collects pailfuls of stones that, when cut and polished, may reveal a beautiful gem, only a few of those selected rough stones will reveal the qualities of a beautiful agate, amethyst, or carnelian. Most will have a nondescript, plain interior, good for nothing. Likewise, among hu-



mankind our Creator looks upon the interior qualities of the heart — the mind, attitudes, and character — to select those whom He has chosen from before the foundations of the world to become His sons (Ephesians 1:4-5), those who will be called by the Father to come to Jesus

Christ (John 6:44).

“But the Lord said to Samuel, ‘Do not look at the appearance or at the physical stature, because I have refused him. For the Lord does not see as man sees, for man looks at the outward appearance, but the Lord looks at the heart.’” (I Samuel 16:7).

These are the precious stones that will comprise the New Jerusalem, the heavenly Zion that will be manifested in the new age. Read the remarkable section of Revelation where one of the seven angels that poured out the last seven plagues told John, “Come, I will show you the bride, the Lamb’s wife” (Revelation 21:9). Thereupon John was carried to a great

and high mountain, from which he saw the holy Jerusalem, having the following qualities in Revelation 21.

- Light like a most precious stone, like jasper, clear as crystal (verse 11)
- The wall of the city was of jasper, and the city was comprised of pure, transparent gold (verse 18)
- The foundations of the wall were decorated with all sorts of precious stones (verses 19-20)
- Each gate was a massive pearl (verse 21)
- The street of the city was of pure, transparent gold (verse 21)

This city of precious stones, gold, and light defines “the bride, the Lamb’s wife.” That is us, the saints! See Revelation 19:7-9, where the resurrected saints, are given white linen to wear ... and they are the Lamb’s (Christ’s) wife!

It is clear that an interest in beautiful and precious rocks and gems involves much more than just

a casual attraction to what is lovely in the natural world. This interest stems from a deep and profound appreciation of the Creator’s great plan and purpose for mankind, and especially for the elect, those chosen from before the foundation of the world to comprise the seat of Elohim’s government in the New Jerusalem.

Precious and beautiful gems have a whole lot to do with us saints, for even the stones on the breastplate of the high priest picture the twelve tribes of Israel who are fastened to the very breast of that representative of Jesus Christ ... figuratively sitting right upon His heart. We all ought to be rockhounds, as it were, and appreciate the beautiful gems that will adorn the heavenly city and will very likely adorn each one of us when we become eternal saints of the Most High!