

Breastplate of Righteousness

Ex 28:29-30 ... *“Aaron shall carry the names of the sons of Israel in the breastpiece of judgment over his heart when he enters the holy place, for a memorial before the LORD continually. You shall put in the breastpiece of judgment the Urim and the Thummim, and they shall be over Aaron’s heart when he goes in before the LORD; and Aaron shall carry the judgment of the sons of Israel over his heart before the LORD continually”.*

While the word translated here as “judgement” (from Heb Mishpāt) has to do with “ruling or governing”, it also carries the meaning of “Judicial sentence of guiltlessness” – that’s what righteousness really is, as righteousness is the state of those who stand before God as guiltless.

“Breastpiece or breastplate” – worn by the high priest, carried the names of the tribes of Israel on it and it contained the Urim and Thummim

So the breastplate symbolised

- UNITY – the unity of the nation
- PRIESTLY INTERCESSION – the dependence of the people on the ministry of the High Priest
- RIGHTEOUSNESS CONSCIOUSNESS - their presence before God as a beloved people – guiltless in His eyes
- DIVINE DIRECTION – In the Urim and Thummim were the channels of the revelation of God’s will

Eph 6:10-12 ... *“Finally, be strong in the Lord and in the strength of His might. Put on the full armour of God, so that you will be able to stand firm against the schemes of the devil. For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the powers, against the world forces of this darkness, against the spiritual forces of wickedness in the heavenly places”.*

Now, of utmost importance, we must consider the order of the first two lines ... *“be strong in the Lord and in the strength of His might. Put on the full armour of God”* (v10, 11). There are two separate things here; *“be strong in the Lord and in the strength of His might”* and *“Put on the full armour of God”*. Often times when we approach this passage we rush to focus on the armour. But the order is there for a reason. Both are necessary. We cannot have one and not the other. You cannot say “oh we will hand it over to the Lord and His strength, He will fight the battle for us” and leave it at that. Similarly you can’t say “I’ve got the armour on so Satan can’t touch me” and forget about needing strength and expect to be successful. We need both, first God’s strength and secondly the armour of God. We must first gain strength before we will be able to gird up and wield the armour. We start with strategy and then go on to tactics. Strategy deals with the overall picture, the whole field; tactics deal with individual or specific fronts, particular movements, particular methods and ways of attack.

Christ is our strength and Christ is our armour.

Strength: This part has to do with strategising. Before you begin to fight you must possess strength, which can only come from the Lord. We need to *“be strong in the Lord and in the strength of His might”* because we cannot fight this battle without strength or in our own strength. We need to know our own weaknesses and also our total dependence on Christ for strength. We need to put on Christ that we may be strong in every area of our lives.

Armour: This part has to do with tactics. We have armour because there is something for us to do. There’s a struggle. We have some wrestling to do. So we need armour. Christ is our armour. When we ‘put on’ the armour we ‘put on’ Christ.

The strength and the power of His might are offensive, while the armour is almost entirely defensive. It is concerned with our protection and the defensive side of our struggle and skirmish with the devil and his forces of darkness. There’s no back protection so there’s no running away from the enemy. We are to stand firm and enforce the victory that is already ours in Christ. We do not fight *for* a place of victory, we fight *from* a place of victory.

Now in our strategy and tactics let’s look at the four things we want to focus on in our prayers that the breastplate of righteousness represent:

UNITY:

- STRATEGY PRAYER POINT: That we may be united in our minds with the mind of Christ, which is revealed on God’s word.
- TACTICS PRAYER POINT: That we will stand in unity with no place for divisions. That we will apply the mind of Christ to establish and maintain unity in the body of Christ.

PRIESTLY INTERCESSION:

- STRATEGY PRAYER POINT: ... *“For we do not have a high priest who cannot sympathize with our weaknesses, but One who has been tempted in all things as we are, yet without sin. Therefore let us draw near with confidence to the throne of grace, so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help in time of need”* (Heb 4:15-16) ... Pray that God’s people will draw strength from Christ our High Priest
- TACTICS PRAYER POINT: That we as a royal priesthood and holy nation will stand and intercede in the strength we have gained from Christ our High Priest

RIGHTEOUSNESS CONSCIOUSNESS:

- STRATEGY PRAYER POINT: That God’s people will truly understand that... *“by His doing you are in Christ Jesus, who became to us wisdom from God, and righteousness and sanctification, and redemption”* and (1 Cor 1:30) ... *“He made Him who knew no sin to be sin on our behalf, so that we might become the righteousness of God in Him”* (2 Cor 5:21). Pray that we will know and be established in righteousness and walk in the righteousness of Christ
- TACTICS PRAYER POINT: Pray that believers will walk in righteousness consciousness not accepting the lies of the devil regarding them or their wellbeing.

DIVINE DIRECTION:

- STRATEGY PRAYER POINT: Pray for a hunger for God's word that we may know His will and purposes. Pray that believers will draw near to God in prayer and learn His will and His ways.
- TACTICS PRAYER POINT: That we will be bold and stand firm in our convictions that righteousness may rule in this land.