

Elder Vernon Johnson

Numbers

Twelve and Seventy

Twelve Names on the Two Shoulders of the High Priest

Ex. 28:7 "It shall have the two shoulder pieces thereof joined at the two edges thereof; and so it shall be joined together. 8 And the curious girdle of the ephod, which is upon it, shall be of the same, according to the work thereof; even of gold, of blue, and purple, and scarlet, and fine twined linen. 9 And thou shalt take two onyx stones, and grave on them the names of the children of Israel: 10 Six of their names on one stone, and the other six names of the rest on the other stone, according to their birth. 11 With the work of an engraver in stone, like the engravings of a signet, shalt thou engrave the two stones with the names of the children of Israel: thou shalt make them to be set in ouches of gold. 12 And thou shalt put the two stones upon the shoulders of the ephod for stones of memorial unto the children of Israel: and Aaron shall bear their names before the LORD upon his two shoulders for a memorial."

The twelve names of the twelve tribes of Israel were graven on the shoulder pieces of the High Priest so that he should bear their names before the LORD upon his two shoulders for a memorial. Typically, the High Priest wasn't just bearing two stones with names, but rather he was bearing what those two stones **represented**. Those two stones with the **twelve names** of the twelve tribes of Israel **represented** the entire population of Israel.

The shoulder in the scriptures is that part of the body used to bear burdens:

1. Gen 21:14 "And Abraham rose up early in the morning, and took bread, and a bottle of water, and gave it unto Hagar, putting it on her shoulder, and the child, and sent her away: and she departed, and wandered in the wilderness of Beersheba."

2. Gen 24:15 "And it came to pass, before he had done speaking, that, behold, Rebekah came out, who was born to Bethuel, son of Milcah, the wife of Nahor, Abraham's brother, with her pitcher upon her shoulder."

3. Gen 24:45 "And before I had done speaking in mine heart, behold, Rebekah came forth with her pitcher on her shoulder; and she went down unto the well, and drew water: and I said unto her, Let me drink, I pray thee."

4. Gen 49:15 "And he saw that rest was good, and the land that it was pleasant; and bowed his shoulder to bear, and became a servant unto tribute."

5. Josh 4:5 "And Joshua said unto them, Pass over before the ark of the LORD your God into the midst of Jordan, and take you up every man of you a stone upon his shoulder, according unto the number of the tribes of the children of Israel:"

6. Judg 9:48 "And Abimelech gat him up to mount Zalmon, he and all the people that were with him; and Abimelech took an ax in his hand, and cut down a bough from the trees, and took it, and laid it on his shoulder, and said unto the people that were with him, What ye have seen me do, make haste, and do as I have done."

7. Psa 81:6 "I removed his shoulder from the burden: his hands were delivered from the pots."

Thus, the High Priest was to bear the burdens of the children of Israel upon his shoulders. While his work was ceremonial and he could not possibly bear all the burdens of such a vast group of people, yet we have a High Priest after the order of Melchisedec that has and is bearing the burdens of a far greater group of people and he is doing it by himself. This High Priest, of course, is the Lord Jesus Christ.

Jesus **bore** the burden of sin-guiltiness of all the elect family of God upon his shoulders: Heb 9:28 "So Christ was once offered to **bear the sins of many**; and unto them that look for him shall he appear the second time without sin unto salvation." Furthermore, he **bears** the **government** of those same people upon his shoulder: Isa 9:6 "For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given: and **the government shall be upon his shoulder**: and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, The mighty God, The everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace."

Jesus also carries our cares: 1 Pet 5:7 "Casting all your care upon him; for he careth for you." He also carries the burden of gospel revelation upon his shoulder: Isa 22:22 "And the key of the house of David will I lay upon his shoulder; so he shall open, and none shall shut; and he shall shut, and none shall open."

Furthermore, Jesus carries us throughout our lives: Is. 46:3 "Hearken unto me, O house of Jacob, and all the remnant of the house of Israel, which are borne by me from the belly, which are carried from the womb: 4 And even to your old age I am he;

and even to hoar hairs will I carry you: I have made, and I will bear; even I will carry, and will deliver you."

In addition, Jesus carries the burden of executing the covenant of redemption for all his elect children: Is. 46:9 "Remember the former things of old: for I am God, and there is none else; I am God, and there is none like me, 10 Declaring the end from the beginning, and from ancient times the things that are not yet done, saying, My counsel shall stand, and I will do all my pleasure: 11 Calling a ravenous bird from the east, **the man that executeth my counsel from a far country**: yea, I have spoken it, I will also bring it to pass; I have purposed it, I will also do it." This includes the burden of calling, justifying, and glorifying all that the Father had given him in covenant before the world began.

Thankfully, God has laid these burdens upon the shoulders of the Lord Jesus Christ and not on our shoulders.