What Are Carnelian and Jasper?

Carnelian, known in ancient texts as Sardius, is a reddish gemstone resembling a ruby. It was highly valued in the ancient Near East for its deep red, almost blood like hue, symbolizing passion, power, and sometimes sacrifice.

Jasper is another type of gemstone, often appearing in brown, green, or red tones. In Scripture, it’s frequently associated with clarity and strength. Both stones were commonly used in priestly garments (Exodus 28) and are rich in biblical symbolism.

In modern gemology:

- Carnelian Sardius

- Jasper retains the same name.

Biblical Significance of Carnelian and Jasper

These stones appear multiple times in Scripture, often used

symbolically to describe the glory, majesty, and holiness of God and His dwelling place.

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1. God’s Glory Described as Jasper and Carnelian

In Revelation 4:2–3 (NIV), the Apostle John describes a heavenly vision:

> “At once I was in the Spirit, and there before me was a throne in heaven with someone sitting on it. And the one who sat there had the appearance of jasper and carnelian. A rainbow, resembling an emerald, encircled the throne.”

This description doesn’t claim God is made of these stones, but rather uses metaphor (“the appearance of…”) to convey His splendor in terms that human beings can grasp. The jasper here may symbolize purity, brilliance, and divine perfection, while carnelian (sardius) may represent God’s righteous judgment, power, and sacrifice.

The emerald like rainbow surrounding the throne adds to the

imagery, often interpreted as a symbol of God’s mercy and covenant faithfulness (cf. Genesis 9:16).

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2. The New Jerusalem Adorned with Precious Stones

In John’s vision of the New Jerusalem, these stones are again prominent:

> *Revelation 21:18–20 (ESV):*
> “The wall was built of jasper, while the city was pure gold, like clear glass.
> The foundations of the wall of the city were adorned with every kind of jewel.
> The first was jasper, the second sapphire, the third agate, the fourth emerald,
> the fifth onyx, the sixth carnelian, the seventh chrysolite…”

This vivid picture reveals that the heavenly city is not just functional but glorious a place adorned with divine craftsmanship and beauty. The use of these stones shows that God values beauty, order, and holiness, and that the environment He creates for His people is resplendent.

The jasper foundation may suggest stability and eternal light, while carnelian again points to the redemptive work of Christ and the righteous foundation of His kingdom.

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3. Lucifer’s Former Glory Before His Fall

The prophet Ezekiel describes the pre-fall splendor of Lucifer (often interpreted as a symbolic description of the king of Tyre or Satan):

> *Ezekiel 28:13 (NIV):*
> “You were in Eden, the garden of God; every precious stone adorned you: carnelian, chrysolite and emerald, topaz, onyx and jasper, lapis lazuli, turquoise and beryl. Your settings and mountings were made of gold; on the day you were created they were prepared.”

This passage reflects the heavenly origin and glory of Lucifer before iniquity was found in him (Ezek. 28:15). The inclusion of carnelian and jasper among his adornments reinforces their symbolic association with divine beauty and privilege.

Yet, despite being adorned with such glory, pride led to his downfall reminding us that external beauty does not equate to righteousness.

The consistent use of jasper and carnelian throughout Scripture points us to several important truths:

- God’s glory is indescribable. Earthly materials even the most precious ones are mere shadows used to help us understand heavenly realities (cf. 1 Corinthians 13:12).

- Heaven is real and beautiful, not metaphorically but tangibly a city prepared by God (Hebrews 11:16).

- God adorns His people and His place with beauty, because He Himself is beautiful in holiness (Psalm 96:9).

- These stones also point to the ministry of Christ His sacrifice (symbolized in carnelian’s red) and His eternal reign (reflected

in jasper’s brilliance).

Don’t Miss Heaven

Heave is described with such splendor not just for poetic effect, but to awaken in us a deep longing for eternity with God. As 1 Corinthians 2:9 (NIV) reminds us:

> “What no eye has seen, what no ear has heard, and what no human mind has conceived the things God has prepared for those who love Him.”

We may lose many things in this life, but we must not lose heaven. These stones jasper and carnelian serve as reminders that what God has planned is far more beautiful, eternal, and satisfying than anything this world can offer.

May the Lord bless and guide us as we set our hearts on eternal

things.

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