

Mineral Spotlight: Topaz

Topaz is a mineral well-known for its high hardness (an 8 on the Moh's scale) and, when crystalline, clear prismatic crystals. These crystals typically form during the last stage of underground magma cooling in rocks like granites or pegmatites (granite with very large crystals).

Topaz comes in a wide array of colors. The most common hue is a golden yellow, but it can also be clear, pink, brown, blue, or green. Because of topaz's diverse colors, clarity, and high hardness, it is a highly sought-after gemstone.

Many translations of the Bible mention topaz, though it is unclear whether or not topaz was actually known and named at that time. Old Testament text mentions yellow stones from the isle of Topazios in the Red Sea (now called Zabargad Island), which is actually a locality for olivine rather than topaz. It is likely olivine was the stone being referred to in the Old Testament.

Regardless, the biblical mentions of topaz (or perhaps another yellow gemstone) help to paint descriptive pictures. Daniel writes of an angel who appeared to him: "His body was like topaz, his face like lightning, his eyes like flaming torches, his arms and legs like the gleam of burnished bronze, and his voice like the sound of a multitude" (Daniel 10:6).

This feature was posted on Dice Museum social media by Museum curator Jillian Herlinger on 6/28/2022.

