

The Change of the Priesthood

Under the New Covenant

- The Priesthood of The Firstborn -

Compiled by Rachel Cory-Kuehl, June, 2020

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Scripture from the NKJV unless otherwise noted.

Exodus 13:2 “Consecrate to me every firstborn male. The first offspring of every womb among the Israelites belongs to me, whether human or animal” (NIV).

Exodus 13:15 “And it came to pass, when Pharaoh was stubborn about letting us go, that the LORD killed all the firstborn in the land of Egypt, both the firstborn of man and the firstborn of beast. Therefore I sacrifice to the LORD all males that open the womb, but all the firstborn of my sons I redeem.”

Exodus 22:29 [Yahweh speaking] “The firstborn of your sons you shall give to me” (NRS).

Every firstborn of Israel would have died in Egypt during the 10th plague, had not the LORD protected them, therefore the firstborn of Israel belonged to Him. A “redemption price” was to be paid for every firstborn human male, who was not given over to the special service of the LORD.

Hannah promised the LORD that if He gave her a son, she would give that son to the LORD “for as long as he lives.” When Samuel was weaned at three years old, she took him to the Tabernacle, and gave him over to Eli the High Priest. The story is found in First Samuel Chapter One. No “redemption price” was paid for Samuel, only a thank offering, for a son given after many years of childlessness. **Samuel was a “firstborn.”** He was from the Tribe of Ephraim.

AFTER THE GOLDEN CALF REBELLION

Numbers 8:17-18 “I have taken **the Levites** instead of all **the firstborn** of the children of Israel.”

The tribe of Levi stood with Moses against the leaders of the other tribes who instigated the golden calf rebellion. The LORD at that time, substituted the Levites for the firstborn from all the tribes. Make no mistake here. **THIS was a change of the priesthood!**

PRIESTS - BEFORE MOUNT SINAI

Noah, Abraham, Jacob, and Job all built alters to Yahweh, and offered sacrifices. Before them, Abel brought to the LORD the “firstlings of his flock” (*the firstborn*) as his offering. These men were acting as priests. Melchizedek was the priest and king of Salem (*Gen 14:18*). Abraham paid tithes to Melchizedek, from the spoils of the battle with the kings of Canaan.

Exodus 19:22&24 “And also let the priests who come near to the LORD consecrate themselves, lest the LORD break out against them.” (NAS)

Here Yahweh directs Moses to communicate specifically with “the priests” - men who “come near to the LORD”. Who were these priests? Notice. **This is before the golden calf rebellion.** **This is before the Tabernacle was erected.** I would contend these men were “the firstborn” of each tribe and clan. In the Hebrew culture, the firstborn male became the priest of family, clan or tribe. They offered the sacrifices. They represented the clan before the LORD.

At the foot of Mount Sinai, the (firstborn) “priests” would have been the ones who lead Israel astray, in the worship of the golden calf idol, breaking the covenant so recently made with Yahweh. These are the “priests” whom the LORD chose to replace. In place of all “the firstborn,” the LORD chose the tribe of Levi and specifically the male descendants of Aaron (the older brother of Moses). They would be the new priesthood. They stood with Moses, against those who rebelled, in the worship of the golden calf idol.

NOTE: Aaron was a firstborn. He supervised the making of the idol, yet he became High Priest of Israel. He was forgiven by the LORD, after Moses prayed for him (Deut. 9:20, 25) and for Israel (40 days and nights on his face). Aaron’s repentance and remorse must have been heartfelt. Perhaps the LORD knew that Moses needed his brother’s support. His was an extremely difficult job.

GOD'S FIRSTBORN

Exodus 4:22 [The LORD said to Moses] "Then you shall say to Pharaoh, 'Thus says the LORD: Israel is My son, My firstborn.'"

NOTE: Israel today consists of those who serve the God the Father and His Son, with heart and mind. Believing non-Hebrews have been grafted in. Unbelievers are "broken off." Please see my study titled "[Who are Israel?](#)"

Hebrews 12:22-24 [Speaking to New Covenant believers] "But you have come to Mount Zion and to the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, to an innumerable company of angels, to the general assembly and church of the firstborn who are registered in heaven, to God the judge of all, to the spirits of just men made perfect, to Jesus the Mediator of the new covenant, and to the blood of sprinkling that speaks better things than that of Abel."

Believers have joined "the church of the firstborn." **The firstborn are "registered in heaven" (in the Book of Life).** A "redemption price" has been paid for these "firstborn." Christ paid that price with His own blood. They now belong to Him.

All of "the dead in Christ" will be raised at His glorious return (*1Cor. 15:23*). According to Revelation 20:6, those who are part of this "first resurrection" will become "priests of God and of Christ." They will become the priesthood, to reign with Christ over "the nations."

Question: How can all believers become priests? Doesn't the priesthood belong exclusively to the descendants of Aaron, within the Tribe of Levi?

Answer: **No. The priesthood has been changed.**

Hebrews 7:12 "For the priesthood being changed, of necessity there is also a change of the law."

SIN - FORGIVEN

Acts 5:31 "Him God has exalted to His right hand to be Prince and Savior, to give repentance to Israel and forgiveness of sins."

When God's own firstborn was sacrificed, the sin of Israel was washed away, for those who sincerely repented. This forgiveness washed away the sin of the golden calf rebellion, the rebellion which caused the first change of the priesthood. I am making the case that **God can now return the priesthood to "the firstborn."**

Yeshua the Christ *is* God's firstborn. He is "the firstborn over all creation" (*Col. 1:15*). He was the firstborn of Mary. He is the Father's choice for High Priest over all Israel (*Heb. 3:1, 5:10*).

The LORD changed the priesthood at Mount Sinai.
He has changed it BACK, to the "firstborn."
Jesus Christ is THE "Firstborn."
We are firstborn - in Him.
We will be "priests of God and of Christ."

HONOR AND SHAME

For those of you who study the teachings concerning honor and shame in the culture of the ancient Middle East, I want to make a point here. At the foot of Mount Sinai, eleven of the tribes were shamed when the LORD rejected their firstborn, and confined the special service of the Tabernacle to the tribe of Levi. When the sin of Israel was washed away by the death of Messiah, the priesthood was restored to the firstborn. The honor of Israel was restored!

This "change" was not a shaming of the Levite priesthood. It was restoration of honor for the whole house of Israel. Faithful Levite priests will continue as priests, in the kingdom of Messiah. They just won't be the only priests.

THE FIRSTBORN OF GOD

Colossians 1:15 "He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn over all creation."

Psalms 89:27 "Also I will make him My firstborn, the highest of the kings of the earth."

Romans 8:29 "For whom He foreknew, He also predestined to be conformed to the image of His Son, that He might be the firstborn among many brethren."

Zechariah 12:10 "And I will pour on the house of David and on the inhabitants of Jerusalem the Spirit of grace and supplication; then they will look on Me whom they pierced. Yes, they will mourn for Him as one mourns for his only son, and grieve for Him as one grieves for a firstborn."

God's only Son IS the "firstborn." He is therefore High Priest over Israel - His own people.

PRIESTS WHO INHERIT A DOUBLE PORTION

The Levites were given “no inheritance” in the land, therefore the priests described by the LORD through Isaiah the prophet cannot be Levite/Aaronic priests.

Isaiah 61:4-9

“They will rebuild the ancient ruins and restore the places long devastated; they will renew the ruined cities that have been devastated for generations.

Strangers will shepherd your flocks; foreigners will work your fields and vineyards.

And you will be called **priests** of the LORD, you will be named ministers of our God. You will feed on the wealth of nations, and in their riches you will boast.”

“Instead of your shame you will receive a **double portion**, and instead of disgrace you will rejoice in your inheritance. And so you will inherit a **double portion** in your land, and everlasting joy will be yours.

For I, the LORD, love justice; I hate robbery and wrongdoing. In my faithfulness I will reward my people and make an everlasting covenant with them.

Their descendants will be known among the nations and their offspring among the peoples. All who see them will acknowledge that they are a people the LORD has blessed.” (NIV)

Yeshua quoted the first part of this passage (See Luke Chapter 4). His hearers were very familiar with the rest. In so doing, Jesus was claiming to be One sent of God to restore Israel.

Deuteronomy 21:17 “But he shall acknowledge the son of the unloved wife as the firstborn by giving him a double portion of all that he has, for he is the beginning of his strength; the right of the firstborn is his.”

I quoted this verse only to show that the “double portion” *is* “the right of the firstborn.” Concerning the firstborn of Rachel, Jacob’s “second” and more loved wife, I would point out that Rachel was Jacob’s lawful first wife - the wife he chose, paid for (with 7 years hard work) and agree to marry. Not Leah. Only the deception of Laben and Leah caused Jacob to first lay with Leah, (thinking that she was Rachel). After Joseph was elevated to prime minister of Egypt, Jacob sent double the money to Egypt, in payment to Joseph, inadvertently fulfilling the “double portion” due the firstborn son of his first wife (*Genesis 43:12-15*).

ARE YOU CONNECTING THE DOTS?

The “right of the firstborn” is the “double portion”. The priests referenced in Isaiah 61:4-9 receive this “double portion.” These priests *are* the LORD’s “firstborn.”

All those who believe in Yeshua Messiah, *are* Israel. (Believers are “grafted in,” and unbelievers are “broken off.”) Israel is God’s firstborn. He said so. A redemption price was to be paid for the firstborn (*Exo. 13:13, 15*). The Father paid that “redemption price” when He gave His only Son. Those who are thus redeemed are “firstborn,” are Israel, and will become “priests of God and of Christ.”

The dead who are Christ’s will rise in the “first resurrection” at His return (*1Thes. 4:16-17*). All those from the “first resurrection” will become “priests of God and of Christ” (*Rev. 20:6*).

Yeshua the Christ is literally God’s firstborn - “the firstborn over all creation” (*Eph. 1:15*). He is therefore High Priest, over all creation. He is the “one mediator” standing between God and man (*1Timothy 2:5*).

DOUBLE DESTRUCTION

Jeremiah 16:18 “And first I will repay double for their iniquity and their sin, because they have defiled My land; they have filled My inheritance with the carcasses of their detestable and abominable idols.”

I find it most interesting that unfaithful of Israel, especially unfaithful priests, receive “double” punishment. The faithful receive a double blessing.

Revelation 18:6 “Render to her just as she rendered to you, and repay her double according to her works; in the cup which she has mixed, mix double for her.”

The sin of Babylon, portrayed in the Book of Revelation, is that she thought to stand in place of God’s “firstborn.” She put forth a false priesthood, and she has persecuted the true priests of God - the remnant of Israel.

NEITHER MALE - NOR FEMALE

Galatians 3:28 “There is no longer Jew or Greek, there is no longer slave or free, there is no longer male and female; for all of you are one in Christ Jesus.”

Luke 20:35-36 “But those who are counted worthy to attain that age, and the resurrection from the dead, neither marry nor are given in marriage; nor can they die anymore, for they are equal to the angels . . .”

It is my belief that there will be no sexual orientation within the kingdom of God, for those made immortal in the new “spiritual body”. Those within the redeemed, who lived as females in their physical/mortal life, will *also* become “priests of God and of Christ.”

Certainly females were regarded as “last” during most of human history. Jesus said the last will be first in His kingdom.

I was the firstborn of my own mother, and I am the only one of my family with an insatiable interest in things of God. Here’s looking forward!

We pray this study will prove a blessing.

Rachel Cory-Kuehl

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