

A KINGDOM OF PRIESTS

- “We shall reign with Him”

Before Israel had a king, she was governed by the LORD through a prophet and shepherd (*Moses - later Joshua*) who was a type of Messiah. Along with the leader, the High Priest and the priesthood, served as mediators. They taught the people right from wrong (*according to the LAW*) and officiated at the sacrificial offerings. They were also the judges of last resort (*Deut. 17:8-11*).

From Mount Sinai, the LORD had promised Israel:

Exodus 19:5-6 “. . . if you will indeed obey My voice and keep My covenant, then you shall be a special treasure to Me above all people; for all the earth is Mine. And you shall be to Me a kingdom of priests and a holy nation.” (*Priest is kohen - Strong's #03548.*)

*Here we have the LORD's original intention and purpose for Israel.
Remember - His word will be accomplished (Isaiah 55:11).
We are Israel, therefore we will be priests.*

After Israel worshiped the golden calf image at the foot of Mt. Sinai, the LORD named the tribe of Levi to serve the Sanctuary (*Exo. 32:26, Num. 1:50-53*). They stood with Moses against those who had worshiped the calf image. Within that tribe, Aaron and his descendants would serve as priests.

This Aaronic priesthood was a temporary measure, until the death of Messiah. Jesus then became our High Priest, and all of those who come into covenant with God through Him become priests “after the order of Melchizedek.” Today we call this “the priesthood of all believers.”

NOTE: The LORD pronounced a curse upon the House of Eli (High Priest descendant of Aaron). His lineage would one day be replaced by “a faithful priest” whose house would remain sure forever. That “faithful priest” is Jesus our Messiah.

1 Peter 2:5, 9, 10 [Speaking to believers after the resurrection.] “. . . you also, as living stones, are being built up a spiritual house, a holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ.” . . . “ you are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation [*Israel*], His own special people . . .”

NOTE: All believers are grafted into Israel (Romans 9, Ephesians 2).

NOTE: These priests will offer up “spiritual sacrifices” - not literal animal sacrifices.

RESURRECTED TO BECOME PRIESTS

Revelation 20:6 “Blessed and holy is he who has part in the first resurrection. Over such the second death has no power, but they shall be priests of God and of Christ, and shall reign with Him a thousand years.”

Revelation 7:9, 13-14 The “great multitude” who “come out of great tribulation,” are “arrayed in white robes” [*priestly garments*] and “serve Him day and night in His temple.”

NOTE: Only priests were allowed to enter the Temple proper.

Revelation 2:17 “He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches. To him who overcomes I will give some of the hidden manna to eat.”

NOTE: The twelve loaves of the shewbread were originally made from manna and were “hidden” from view, set on a golden table inside the first apartment of the Sanctuary tent. Only the priests ate of this bread (Lev. 24:9). Those who are resurrected to become priests will partake of this “hidden manna.” Christ Himself is the “bread from heaven,” in the Father’s House (John 6:32-33). Only those who “overcome” will partake.

Revelation 1:6, Revelation 5:9-10 The twenty four elders [*presently in heaven*] proclaim that Christ “has made us kings and priests to His God and Father.” You Jesus “were slain”. . . “and have made us kings and priests to our God; and we shall reign on the earth.”

NOTE: The verbs here are in the Greek aorist tense, meaning that this is an ongoing process, not a completed fact. These 24 elders are being made (are being prepared to be) priests and kings. Notice where they will reign - “on the earth.” They are not reigning yet.

NOTE: By the time of David, the eligible descendants of Aaron had become so numerous for every one of them to officiate - at the same time - in the Temple. King David divided the priesthood into 24 courses - each course coming up for two weeks of the year - to officiate in the Temple (1 Chronicles Chapter 24). The reference to "24 elders" in the Book of Revelation may be telling us that there are 24 courses of elders - not just 24 of them.

These "elders" were raised from the dead by Christ, after He was raised by His Father (Matt. 27:51-53). They were the "Spring harvest." There would be a Summer harvest, and a Fall harvest. And remember: the firstfruits of each harvest were presented at the Temple.

A PRIEST FOREVER

Yeshua Messiah (Jesus Christ) became High Priest. God said, "He is a priest forever, after the order of Melchizedek" (Psa. 110:4, Heb. 5:6). He will still be our High Priest AFTER He becomes King, just as Melchizedek was King and Priest of Salem (Gen. 14:18, Heb. 7:1-2). Zechariah prophesied that Joshua (Jesus) would build the Temple of the LORD, and He will be a priest upon his throne" (Zechariah 6:11-13).

THE PRIESTHOOD WILL REIGN WITH CHRIST - ON THE EARTH

1. We will be priests (Rev. 20:6, Rev. 1:6, Rev. 5:9-10).
2. We will reign/rule with Him - over the nations (Rev. 2:26).
3. Therefore we will reign with HIM - as "priests and kings" (Rev. 1:6, 5:10, 3:21).

Revelation 2:26 "And he who overcomes . . . to him I will give power over the nations – He shall rule them with a rod of iron; as the potter's vessels shall be broken to pieces."

Revelation 3:21 "To him who overcomes I will grant to sit with Me on My throne, as I also overcame and sat down with My Father on His throne."

The Government of Yeshua Messiah

The 12 Apostles

The 24 Elders

The 144,000

The Priesthood of Redeemed Israel

The government of Christ on the earth will have structure. The 12 apostles form the core, supported by the 24 elders of Revelation Chapter five, the 144,000 of Revelation Chapters seven and fourteen, and the priesthood of all Israel. As priests, they will teach the Law, judge, settle disputes and administer justice (*Deut. 17:8-11, Deut. 21:5, Deut. 33:8, Ezra 8:7-8, Eze. 44:23-24*). **God's plan was to use Israel as His priests - to teach and govern the nations.** This He will finally accomplish.

A NOTE ABOUT RESURRECTIONS

Revelation 20:6, speaks of the "first resurrection" to separate it from the last great resurrection of The 8th Day. In context, the "first resurrection" takes place at Second Coming - which begins the 7th millennium. The last great resurrection will take place during the 8th millennium.

REDEEMED ISRAEL

They will rise in the "first resurrection" (at the Second Coming).
They will prepare for the priesthood - (during the 7th millennium).
They will spend this preparation time in the "Father's House" - Heaven.
Following their preparation/consecration they will return to "the land."
They will build Ezekiel's Temple.
With Christ - they will rule over "the nations" of the last great resurrection.
Then "the Law will go forth from Zion" (*Isa 2:1-4*).
Those who have never heard the name of Christ,
or known of the Father's love - will learn of HIM.

BEFORE WE CAN RULE - WE WILL NEED PREPARATION

Christ will rule through His priesthood. All of those raised in the first resurrection will become "priests of God and of Christ" (*Rev 20:6*). Those who endure will "reign with him" (*2 Tim. 2:12*). Every believer-regardless of age or experience will need time and training. (I personally do not feel ready to govern in the name of Christ. Do you?) Those especially, who lived before the death of Christ will need to understand fulfilled prophecy. Everyone will have hundreds of questions to ask, concerning the actions of God. We will need to spend time with the Master - just as the first disciples listened to His every word for three and a half years. Before we can represent the LORD to "the nations" we will need to spend 1000 years learning about the great war, the rebellion, the reconciliation, and the mysteries of God's character and government.

Just as in the ancient type, we will not begin to serve as priests UNTIL the 8th day (the 8th millennium). After our consecration, we will be prepared to "reign with Him."

MY FATHER'S HOUSE

John 14:2 “In My Father's house are many mansions; if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and receive you to Myself; that where I am, there you may be also.”

John 2:16 “And He said to those who sold doves, “Take these things away! Do not make My Father's house a house of merchandise!”

Jesus referred to the Temple as “My Father's House.” The Sanctuary (later the Temple) was a copy of “heaven itself,” according to Hebrews 9:24, where Jesus as our High Priest, appears “in the presence of God for us” (Heb. 6:19-20). So - the Temple was a copy of heaven, and heaven IS the true Temple of God. Jesus has gone to prepare a place for us in His Father's House - which IS a Temple. This lends support to the belief that those raised first will become priests. Only priests could enter the Temple, therefore only priests will enter this place which Jesus has gone to prepare in “heaven itself.”

THE FUTURE PRIESTHOOD

Ezekiel 28:25-26 “Thus says the Lord GOD: ‘When I have gathered the house of Israel from the peoples among whom they are scattered, and am hallowed in them in the sight of the Gentiles, then they will dwell in their own land which I gave to My servant Jacob. And they will dwell safely there, build houses, and plant vineyards; yes, they will dwell securely.’”

Isaiah 61:4-9 “And they shall rebuild the old ruins. They shall raise up the former desolations. And they shall repair the ruined cities, the desolations of many generations. Strangers [*non-Israelites*] shall stand and feed your flocks, and the sons of the foreigner [*non-Israelite*] shall be your plowmen and your vine dressers. **But you shall be named the Priests of the LORD.** Men shall call you the Servants of our God. You shall eat the riches of the Gentiles, and in their glory you shall boast. Instead of your shame you shall have double honor, and instead of confusion they shall rejoice in their portion. Therefore in their land they shall possess double [*the inheritance of the firstborn*].”

NOTE: The firstborn inherited a “double portion” (Deut. 22:17). Their inheritance included a “double portion of the land, AND the “priesthood.” Each firstborn son became the representative of the family unit before God. God said, “Israel is my son, even My firstborn” (Exodus 4:22). Therefore Israel (the redeemed) will become the priesthood.

Isaiah 61:4-9 cont.

“Everlasting joy shall be theirs. For I, the LORD, love justice; I hate robbery for burnt offering; I will direct their work in truth, and will make with them an everlasting covenant. Their descendants shall be known among the Gentiles, and their offspring among the people. All who see them shall acknowledge them, that they are the posterity whom the LORD has blessed . . .”

NOTE: The “covenant” which the LORD will make with His priesthood is the “New Covenant” (Jeremiah 31:31-34, 32:40; Ezekiel 36:24-27; Hebrews 8:10; Deut. 30:6).

NOTE: In order to be “known among the Gentiles” there will need to BE Gentiles living on the earth at that time. The “Gentiles” (nations) will be “the rest of the dead” - who are raised to life at The 8th Day.

OUR HIGH PRIEST

The author of the Letter to the Hebrews makes it very clear. “There has been “a change in the law,” and that “change” involved the priesthood (*Heb. 7:12, 1Sam. 2:30-36*). “The former commandment” - the one concerning the priesthood (*and therefore the animal sacrifices*) “has been changed.” It has been “annulled” (*Heb. 7:18*). WHY? Because that law was “weak and unprofitable” (*Heb. 7:18*). It could not change the heart, or the conscience. “The law [*of sacrifices*] made nothing perfect; on the other hand, there is the bringing in of a better hope, through which we draw near to God” (*Heb. 7:18*). That “better hope” is Messiah - who died for us. That “better hope” is Jesus, who now makes atonement for us, as High Priest before God’s throne.

Yeshua was appointed of God to be “a priest forever, according to the order of Melchizedek” (*Heb. 5:10, Psa. 11:4*). We cannot imagine Him in any role other than that of High Priest. The Letter to the Hebrews is centered on this theme - that a man from the tribe of Judah could now be our High Priest in Heaven, ministering His own blood in our behalf. We now look to Him as our High Priest - not to any Levite priest of “the order of Aaron.”

Under the Law, the High Priest often killed the animal for sacrifice, especially on the Day of Atonement (*Lev. 9:8, 12, 15, 18 & Lev. 16: 6, 9, 11, 15*). Our High Priest does not need to offer up animals for sacrifice, “for this He did once for all when He offered up Himself” (*Heb. 7:27*). **There can be ONLY ONE High Priest - and He is Yeshua Messiah.** He WILL NOT offer the blood of animal sacrifices to His Heavenly Father - and neither will His priesthood of the redeemed, during the coming 8th Day!

Hebrews 9:11-12 “But Christ came as High Priest of the good things to come, with the greater and more perfect tabernacle not made with hands, that is, not of this creation [*Heaven itself*]. Not with the blood of goats and calves, but with His own blood He entered the Most Holy Place once for all, having obtained eternal redemption.”

More perfect Tabernacle - More perfect Lamb - More perfect High Priest

Hebrews 10:12 “But this Man, after He had offered one sacrifice for sins forever, sat down at the right hand of God,”

Hebrews 10:8-9 “Previously saying, ‘Sacrifice and offering, burnt offerings, and offerings for sin You did not desire, nor had pleasure in them’ (which are offered according to the law), then He said, ‘Behold, I have come to do Your will, O God.’ He takes away the first that He may establish the second.”

He takes away the first (the system of animal sacrifices which could do nothing to change the heart) that He may establish the second (His own perfectly obedient will - offered instead).

Hebrews 10:10 We are sanctified
“by the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all.”

The priests who serve under Christ (in the “order of Melchizedek”) will not need to offer up more animal sacrifices, because Yeshua was the only perfect sacrifice, acceptable to God for all time.

The animal sacrifices prefigured and prophesied of Christ - the Lamb of God. Now that the prophecy has been perfectly “fulfilled” - the type is no longer needed (Matt. 5:18). Most do not understand that we still live under the sacrificial system - we just have a “better sacrifice” - a perfect sacrifice, and we have a better priest - a Perfected One - Yeshua the Son of God.

THE ROLE OF THE PRIESTHOOD IN THE COMING KINGDOM OF MESSIAH

The priests of God in the coming kingdom of Messiah on earth, will offer up “spiritual sacrifices” (1 Peter 2:5). They will also teach the law, judge, settle disputes and administer justice (*Mal. 2:7, Exo. 29:35, Lev. 8:33-35 & 9:1, Deut. 17:8-12, Deut. 21:5 & 33:8, Ezra 8:7-8, Eze. 44:23-24*).

Spiritual sacrifices include: praise and thanks to God (*Heb. 13:15*), our lives dedicated to God (2 Tim. 4:6), the service of faith (*Phil. 2:17*), our bodies (*Rom. 12:1*), gifts to the poor (*Phil. 4:18*) visiting the sick or those in prison (*Matt. 25:34-40*), and offerings in support of the ministry (*I Cor. 9:13*).

THE PRIESTHOOD HAS BEEN CHANGED

I am not a descendant of Levi. According to the Law of Moses, I cannot be a priest. But Scripture teaches plainly that all of the redeemed from the Second Coming will become priests. The order of the priesthood **MUST** have been changed. The Melchizedek priesthood is **NOT** added to the Levite/Aaronic priesthood. It replaces the old order! We should say, "It fulfills the prophecy."

Hebrews 7:12-19 "For the priesthood being changed, of necessity there is also a change of the law. . . . For it is evident that our Lord arose from Judah, of which tribe Moses spoke nothing concerning priesthood. And it is yet far more evident if, in the likeness of Melchizedek, there arises another priest who has come, not according to the law of a fleshly commandment, but according to the power of an endless life. For He testifies: 'You are a priest forever According to the order of Melchizedek.' For on the one hand there is an annulling of the former commandment because of its weakness and unprofitableness, for the law made nothing perfect; on the other hand, there is the bringing in of a better hope, through which we draw near to God."

*The priests acted as mediators between man and God. They taught the Law of God, and they helped men to become reconciled to God thru the offering of animal sacrifices. The animal was killed by the penitent, or at certain times, by the priest. A priest then caught the blood in a bowl and performed various ceremonial anointing. The priest prepped the whole animal (or parts of the animal) to be burned on the altar. In this role, they were said to "make atonement for" the penitent. A priest was absolutely necessary for the offering of a sacrifice. If you do away with the priest, you **are** abolishing the system of animal sacrifices!*

THE PRIESTHOOD OF AARON - AN EVERLASTING PRIESTHOOD ?

Exodus 40:13-15 "You [*Moses*] shall put the holy garments on Aaron, and anoint him and consecrate him, that he may minister to Me as priest. And you shall bring his sons and clothe them with tunics. You shall anoint them, as you anointed their father, that they may minister to Me as priests; for their anointing shall surely be an everlasting priesthood throughout their generations."

The LORD appointed Aaron and his descendants to an everlasting priesthood, but they did not continue in righteousness. They despised the LORD and abused their role as priests. A man of God came to Eli, with a prophecy and a curse. The LORD would bring an end to their priesthood. The promise to Aaron and his descendants was a conditional promise - based upon their obedience to covenant. By their actions, they despised that covenant!

1 Samuel 2:30-35 “Therefore the LORD God of Israel says: ‘I said indeed that your house and the house of your father would walk before Me forever.’ **But now the LORD says: ‘Far be it from Me; for those who honor Me I will honor, and those who despise Me shall be lightly esteemed.** Behold, the days are coming that I will cut off your arm and the arm of your father’s house, [Aaron’s House] so that there will not be an old man in your house [a man of eligible age for the priesthood]. **And you will see an enemy in My dwelling place,** despite all the good which God does for Israel. And there shall not be an old man in your house forever. . . . Then I will raise up for Myself a faithful priest who shall do according to what is in My heart and in My mind. I will build him a sure house, and he shall walk before My anointed forever.”

The “faithful priest” would be Jesus the Messiah. God would “build Him a sure house” and He would walk before the LORD as His anointed priest - forever (Psa. 110:4).

The prophet of God said “You will see an enemy in My dwelling place.” By the time of Christ, the priesthood was bought and sold. The High Priest was a Roman appointee. If you study your history - He was actually an Edomite (descended from Esau). But I believe this prophecy is pointing to Antichrist of the last days, the “man of sin” who “sits as God in the temple of God, showing himself that he is God” (2Th. 2:4). The “abomination that causes desolation” will be set up in the House of God.

WHY A PRIESTHOOD?

Our study begs the question: **What further need will there be for a priesthood, AFTER the return of Christ in glory?** The role of the priests was one of mediation. They guided and taught the one who would approach the LORD. I believe that the priesthood will continue, with Christ as High Priest, because there will be thousands (if not millions) raised to continue their lives after the 1000 years are finished (*Rev. 20:5*). These will be human beings who lived in ignorance of God and of His Law, or died before reaching the age of consent. They will be raised into the Kingdom of Messiah, at The 8th Day. They will learn of God and of His Son, and many will choose to serve Christ as LORD and King. Through the work of the priesthood, there will be many won to the Kingdom, of those who are raised “last.”

NOTE: This does NOT represent a “second chance” for those raised at the 8th millennium. During their lives they remained in ignorance. They never had a chance - to chose the LORD. The continuation of their lives in the Messianic Kingdom represents for them a first opportunity.

WHY A TEMPLE ?

Like so many other prophecies, the vision of Ezekiel's Temple will be completely and perfectly fulfilled. The "whole house of Israel" will be returned to the land. (This did not happen in the time of Ezra.) They will build the Temple seen by Ezekiel. (This did not happen in the time of Ezra.) In this Temple - Christ WILL BE the Lamb, and the High Priest. All Israel will serve as priests, helping those who come in faith to claim the death of Yeshua Messiah (Jesus Christ), as the One True Offering.

If the work of redemption was finished at Second Coming, there would be NO NEED for another temporary House of God, and NO NEED for a priesthood. In the New Jerusalem of the eternal kingdom, John "saw no Temple there" for "God and the Lamb are the Temple" therein (*Revelation 21:22*). This tells us that Ezekiel's Temple is temporary. It is the Temple of the Messianic 8th Day Kingdom.

The Temple of The 8th Day will be the center of learning and the center of worship. It will be the meeting place, where "all flesh will come to worship the King" (*Isaiah Chapter 2*).

Question: When will those raised "first" (at the Second Coming) begin to minister as priests ?

Answer: Not until The 8th Day.

"One day with the Lord is a thousand years" (2 Peter 3:8).

THE PRIESTS MUST FIRST BE CONSECRATED

Exodus Chapter 29:7-35 & Leviticus Chapter 8:

Aaron and his sons and all future priests:

"Seven days you shall consecrate them." Wash them with water [*baptism of the Holy Spirit*] then dress them in the white "priestly garments." Anoint the head of Aaron with oil [*Holy Spirit*]. Kill the bull for a sin offering and the ram for a whole burnt offering. Kill the other ram – the ram of consecration. Anoint the tip of the right ear, thumb, and big toe of each man to be consecrated. Sprinkle some of the blood from the sacrifices mixed with the oil, on Aaron, on his sons, and on their garments.

Remain at the door of the tent [*Tabernacle*] until the 8th Day.

Leviticus 8:33-36 “And you shall not go outside the door of the tabernacle of meeting for seven days, until the days of your consecration are ended. For seven days he [*Moses*] shall consecrate you.”

NOTE: I believe they remained inside the courtyard, just outside the veil (door) into the covered “tent.” To remain inside the first apartment of the Tabernacle would have been logistically very difficult with normal bodily functions.

The priestly ministry begins on the 8th day.

Leviticus 9:1-7 “It came to pass on the 8th day, that Moses called Aaron and his sons” . . . ‘Go to the alter, offer your sin offering and your burnt offering, and make atonement for yourself and for the people.’”

After the sacrifices and the Aaronic blessing: “Then the glory of the LORD appeared to all the people, and fire came out from before the LORD, and consumed the burnt offering” (*Lev. 9:23-24*).

THE FULFILLMENT OF THIS ACTED PROPHECY

The Levite priesthood was a type or prophecy of the Melchizedek priesthood.

Hebrews 9:24 “For Christ has not entered the holy places made with hands, which are copies of the true, but into heaven itself, now to appear in the presence of God for us;”

Jesus remained on the earth with the disciples for 40 days after His resurrection. He then ascended to Heaven, where I am sure He was welcomed with great celebration. He would then have completed 7 days of consecration. On the 8th day (Pentecost), He was glorified as High Priest, and poured out His Spirit upon the disciples who had waited for just this sign from Heaven. The Father glorified His Son with the glory which He had with the Father before the world was (John 17:5).

Aaron and his sons were individuals, consecrated for seven literal days. No human being has lived for 7000 years. For the fulfillment we must view all of those to be consecrated as one priesthood - one collective group. The consecration of this priesthood began with Adam, nearly 6000 years ago. It will continue through the 7th millennium - until the 8th millennium - The 8th Day.

*NOTE: The alter of sacrifice was also to be sanctified for 7 days (*Exo. 29:37, Eze. 43:27*).*

CHAPTER SUMMARY

1. Those faithful to covenant will be raised to life at the Second Coming.
2. They will go to the Father's House.
3. They will then enter upon a consecration and training preparation for the priesthood.
4. They will serve as priests, under Christ - Our High Priest.
5. Their priesthood will begin on The 8th Day - at the 8th millennium.
6. They will rule over the nations which are raised to life - after the 1000 years.

CHAPTER ADDENDUM

Nadab and Abihu (the two older sons of Aaron) offered "strange fire" (not from the altar of burnt offering) and "fire went out from the LORD and devoured them and they died (*Lev. 10:1-5*). Their brethren came near and carried the bodies "from before the sanctuary" out of the camp (by their tunics). Moses looked to find the sin offering, which should have been eaten by the new priests in the holy place, but it was all burned up. He was angry with Eleazar and Ithamar (the two other sons of Aaron) but Aaron said, "this day they have offered their sin offering and their burnt offering before the LORD and such things have befallen me. If I had eaten the sin offering today, would it have been accepted in the sight of the LORD? And Moses held his peace" (*Lev. 10:16-19*).

Nadab and Abihu offered "strange fire" on the 8th day - the first day of their priesthood! This is very significant. These were the older sons of the High Priest. They demanded (by their actions) that the LORD accept their way - rather than the way He had commanded. They are a type (an example or symbol) of an older Son of Christ (the High Priest) who will offer "strange fire" - on the coming 8th day. I believe they represent Satan and his followers. Exactly what this "strange fire" will be - we do not know. We do know that they will be consumed in fire from God.