

## *Priesthood Order*

### **Part 1**

Recently, I've realized a personal need to have a greater understanding of God's "Priesthood Order," which has drawn my attention to the O.T. Types under the "Old Covenant" and how those examples relate to our "New Covenant" life and experience. A basic recurrent thought was that, nobody can take the honor of the high calling of God, unto himself. The "Priesthood" is distinctly God's prerogative and it is God who appoints those whom He calls, chooses, anoints, ordains, and consecrates for the purpose of being a priest unto Him and a minister to his people. It also became apparent that He predestined those who would be designated to fulfill His purpose for a kingdom of priests, and "birthed" each one into their respective families, which began the process of preparation for them to fulfill their individual and collective destinies. Nothing here that you would call "new" but a re-thinking of some things we may already be aware of.

While studying the O.T. types it became evident that everything concerning the Priesthood after the Order of Aaron and the Levitical Order, along with various responsibilities within those orders, have their reality and fulfillment in Christ. Rather than making strong "divisions" between the priesthood orders it may be more beneficial to recognize "distinctions" within the varying orders. Each facet of priesthood has a God given purpose to fulfill and those who are obedient to the vision God has given them will prosper. Those who are disobedient or lawless will not be chosen for the highest priestly calling and may suffer tremendous loss. (The highest priestly calling meaning, "To become a member of the body of our High Priest, a priest after the order of Melchizedek.")

Not all of the "sons" of Levi were expected to fulfill each and every aspect of the priesthood. Again, if they were faithful in their calling and did what they were appointed to do, they prospered. Each portion allotted to the various dimensions of priesthood is necessary for the fullness of His purpose for a "priesthood" to be complete/perfect. While the level or degree of responsibility varied, according to each "member" within their order, they were all considered "equal," because of their "birthright." All were given a function according to the need to righteously fulfill God's purpose and not according to their individual, self-righteous desires. Abundance of grace is made available to those who humble themselves and present their members as instruments of righteousness, unto holiness.

It is said of Moses that he was the most humble man upon the face of the earth. Psalm 99:6 says that Moses and Aaron were among His priests. Some of the questions that come to mind are: "Did the priesthood after the order of Aaron come out of the Levitical order of priests or was it the other way around?" Who was it that stood in the midst of Israel, (who was supposed to become a kingdom of priests), as the "First Order of Priesthood?"

I used to say that all priests were Levites but not all Levites were priests. After reading the scriptures more carefully it may be better said that, "All Levites were priests but not all

priests were Moses, Aaron or Aaron's sons." This is evident from the scriptures that teach us those things concerning the Levitical Order and their function in the Tabernacle or Temple, (at the Sanctuary, not in the sanctuary), in the wilderness, in the promised land where they possessed cities, and in the temples that were subsequently built or restored. They were given specific duties and responsibilities that were peculiar to their "Order" but they could not become a "High Priest."

In this document there will be an attempt to "define" the priesthood that is shown to us in the O.T. type, under the "Old Covenant" and show some of the parallels to the priesthood of the "New Covenant." The following N.T. portion of scripture is beneficial to keep in mind when we study the "type":

"Now if perfection was through the Levitical priesthood (for on the basis of it the people received the Law), what further need *was there* for another priest to arise according to the order of Melchizedek, and not be designated according to the order of Aaron? For when the priesthood is changed, of necessity there takes place a change of law also. For the one concerning whom these things are spoken belongs to another tribe, from which no one has officiated at the altar. For it is evident that our Lord was descended from Judah, a tribe with reference to which Moses spoke nothing concerning priests. And this is clearer still, if another priest arises according to the likeness of Melchizedek, who has become *such* not on the basis of a law of physical requirement, but according to the power of an indestructible life. For it is attested *of Him*, "YOU ARE A PRIEST FOREVER ACCORDING TO THE ORDER OF MELCHIZEDEK." For, on the one hand, there is a setting aside of a former commandment because of its weakness and uselessness (for the Law made nothing perfect), and on the other hand there is a bringing in of a better hope, through which we draw near to God. And inasmuch as *it was* not without an oath (for they indeed became priests without an oath, but He with an oath through the One who said to Him, "THE LORD HAS SWORN AND WILL NOT CHANGE HIS MIND, 'YOU ARE A PRIEST FOREVER'"); so much the more also Jesus has become the guarantee of a better covenant. The *former* priests, on the one hand, existed in greater numbers because they were prevented by death from continuing, but Jesus, on the other hand, because He continues forever, holds His priesthood permanently. Therefore He is able also to save forever those who draw near to God through Him, since He always lives to make intercession for them. For it was fitting for us to have such a high priest, holy, innocent, undefiled, separated from sinners and exalted above the heavens; who does not need daily, like those high priests, to offer up sacrifices, first for His own sins and then for the *sins* of the people, because this He did once for all when He offered up Himself. For the Law appoints men as high priests who are weak, but the word of the oath, which came after the Law, appoints a Son, made perfect forever. (Heb 7:11-28 NASB)

God, by a Sovereign act, (having predestined Moses according to foreknowledge), chooses Moses to deliver His "firstborn son", (Israel), from bondage to the Pharaoh of Egypt. "Then you shall say to Pharaoh, "Thus says the LORD, "Israel is My son, My firstborn." (Exo 4:22 NASB) Moses feels inadequate and says he is slow of speech and slow of tongue, which causes God's anger to burn against Moses. Aaron is appointed to be Moses' mouth and will speak all that God puts into Moses' mouth. Aaron would be Moses' prophet and Moses would be to Aaron, as God. This is where the foundation and "precedent" for the priesthood orders

begin.

If we view Moses' appointment by God as the man to consider as the "Head" and Aaron as his "mouth," we may begin to have a greater appreciation and better understanding of how "HIGH" the high calling of God upon our lives really is. Portions of scripture, such as the following verses from Isaiah 59 begin to have new meaning as we consider the Christ of God they are obviously speaking of:

"A Redeemer will come to Zion, And to those who turn from transgression in Jacob," declares the LORD. "As for Me, this is My covenant with them," says the LORD: "My Spirit which is upon you, and My words which I have put in your mouth shall not depart from your mouth, nor from the mouth of your offspring, nor from the mouth of your offspring's offspring," says the LORD, "from now and forever."

Not only was Aaron to be Moses' mouth but God declares that he will be **with** the mouth of both Moses and Aaron and would teach them what to do. Moses and Aaron had ears to hear the voice of God and He spoke to and through both of them.

If we were to consider this foundational "Order of Priesthood" using modern language we might define it as a, "Top Down" system of administration. This is God's Sovereign choice but it is, in no way like the corruptible, perverted, distorted, expression of authority seen in the world order or religious systems devised by carnal men. This, in all likelihood, doesn't need to be emphasized to those who desire to be as humble as Moses, or come to the humility of our Lord Jesus Christ, who considered equality with God as something he didn't need to grope for or grasp. This is one of the defining attributes of those who will be members of the body of our High Priest, and participate in the kingdom order as administrators of the New Covenant.

In determining a way to view the "structure" and "order" of priesthood, it seems that a basic outline may be more easily followed than a lengthy, wordy treatise. One of the things that stood out while researching this subject is the sense that we have placed most of our emphasis, while studying the type of the Tabernacle, by starting with the Outer Court and continuing to the inner sanctuary. Very little has been shared concerning the "buffer of priests" that prevented the wrath of God from breaking out upon the encampment. "But you shall appoint the Levites over the tabernacle of the testimony, and over all its furnishings and over all that belongs to it. They shall carry the tabernacle and all its furnishings, and they shall take care of it; they shall also camp around the tabernacle. "So when the tabernacle is to set out, the Levites shall take it down; and when the tabernacle encamps, the Levites shall set it up. But the layman who comes near shall be put to death. "The sons of Israel shall camp, each man by his own camp, and each man by his own standard, according to their armies. "But the Levites shall camp around the tabernacle of the testimony, so that there will be no wrath on the congregation of the sons of Israel. So the Levites shall keep charge of the tabernacle of the testimony." Thus the sons of Israel did; according to all which the LORD had commanded Moses, so they did. (Num 1:50-54 NASB)

### ***Priesthood Order***

From the moment we open our bible and begin to read, it becomes apparent that GOD is a God of Order. Every part of creation is arranged according to His Divine Purpose and direction. All that comes out from GOD is according to His will and desire and is set in motion by the action of His Word and Spirit. While all was darkness over the face of the deep, the Spirit of God hovered over the waters and God said, "Let there be light." After seeing that it was good, He separated the light from the darkness and called the light "day," and the darkness "night." This was before He set the sun in the firmament to rule the day and the moon to rule the night. When scripture tells us, "You are all sons of the light and sons of the day. We do not belong to the night or to the darkness," (1Th 5:5 NASB), it is this "spoken" day and night \_\_ without sun, moon or stars \_\_ being considered.

What does that have to do with "Priesthood Order?" Why would that be relevant to our study? Because, we are looking at the "TYPE" in the scriptures and not the "REALITY." We are looking at the "Pattern!" God's Divine Purpose can be revealed through the pattern, which is part of His plan, but the reality is not in the earthy, physical, temporal realm. We must not think that the pattern God showed Moses in the mountain was only for the "elements" of the Tabernacle. The pattern also includes the Priesthood along with their placement in relation to the Tabernacle and the "Encampment;" the garments of the priests; the sacrifices; the qualifications for becoming a priest; the responsibilities; the Law, along with statutes and ordinances and probably much more.

When God placed the sun, moon and stars in the firmament they were not only to separate day from night. They were also to serve as signs to mark seasons, days and years. In like manner, the "pattern" produced in the wilderness is for "signs" that are used to show us the Reality of the True Tabernacle in heaven, the invisible realm of Spirit. Without over simplifying, and without burdening everyone with a lot of references, the emphasis that is being made is intended to bring us out of darkness into His marvelous light. What is being contrasted over and over in the scriptures is life/death; light/darkness; flesh/spirit; visible/invisible; type/reality; temporal/eternal, etc. It is our intention and determination to experience the positive side of all of these things until He becomes our LIFE.

We are all familiar with "metaphors" that give us examples which delineate any number of things we would call "Factual." For instance, "The sun rises in the east and sets in the west." We accept that statement as fact but is that the reality? Would it be more accurate to say that we get our first glimpses of daylight when we are sitting in darkness, facing eastward, and out of darkness the light shines and the sun comes into view? Perhaps, but is that any more factual? No! The fact is that day came the moment God said, "Let there be light." The thing God did was "Suddenly" and not like sitting and waiting for a gradual change from darkness to light. That is how we receive "light/revelation."

Jesus used many metaphors and spoke in parables to confound those who thought they were wise and could find life by searching the scriptures but, wouldn't come to him who is the Life. They had taken refuge in darkness and were not able to comprehend the Life that was the Light of men, who had come to dispel the darkness. He reserved understanding and revealed

himself to those who had eyes to see and ears to hear; to heal the blind and deaf. The same “principle” may be followed as we look at the examples given in scripture concerning the tabernacle, or the temple, cities, mountains, people, etc.

Our outline will begin at the “East” side of the Tabernacle, based on the precept that “East,” as a location and direction, has a prominent place in God’s “order,” and His purpose for bringing man to full stature and giving him dominion over all His works. It was toward the east, in Eden, that God planted the garden where Adam’s processing began and where the cherubim were placed to guard the way into the garden after Adam and Eve were put out. It was an east wind that caused the famine in Egypt, according to the dream Joseph interpreted for Pharaoh. It was also an east wind that divided the sea when Moses brought the Israelites out of Egypt. It is the eastern sky we look to for the “rising sun” to usher in the new day. It was a star in the east that showed the place where the Christ child could be found and led the Magi to him. And, it is on the east side where we find the first “Order of Priesthood” and the Only entrance into the Tabernacle.

## I. The East Side

A. Levites = Descendants from Levi, the third son of Jacob/Leah

1. Second son of Levi, Kohath, (Assembly/Allied)

a. Firstborn of Kohath, Amram, (Exalted People)

1.) Miriam, (Rebellion) Firstborn of Amram and Jochebed, (God is Glory)

2.) Firstborn Son, Aaron, (Light Bringer)

3.) Moses, (Drawn)

B. Moses was called, “the man of God,” six times in scripture and was distinguished as the most humble man on the face of the earth. He became God’s sovereign choice to bring deliverance to his brethren, the sons of Israel. Although he was cared for by his birth mother, Jochebed, (a daughter of Levi who was born in Egypt), until he was weaned, we don’t know what his name was during that time. His name was given to him by Pharaoh’s daughter because he was, “drawn from the water,” after which he “became” her son.

The day after Moses killed the Egyptian, who was beating his Hebrew “brother,” he tried to break up a fight between two of his “brothers” and became afraid that what he had done the day before had not happened without notice, and was asked, “Who made you a prince/ruler and judge over us? Will you kill me like you killed the Egyptian?” Young’s Literal Translation says, “Who set thee for a **head** and a judge over us?” (Compare Acts 7:35 Weymouth New Testament: “This Moses, whom they did refuse, saying, Who did set thee a ruler and a judge? this one **God a ruler and a redeemer did send, in the hand of a messenger who appeared to**

**him in the bush;”)**

1. Moses fled to the wilderness of Midian.
  - a. Midian = “strife”
    - 1.) Through much tribulation God tried Moses for forty years and prepared him to be the “Head” or “First of the First Order,” of Priests.
  - b. Jethro/Reuel; Jethro = his abundance, Reuel = friend of God
  - c. Jethro, Moses’ father-in law, was **the** Priest of Midian.

The significance of Moses’ coming to the land of Midian and to Jethro’s house is worth the time and space necessary to share a few details so if you’re already familiar with this you can skip this part. Midian was a child of Abraham, by Keturah. Keturah became Abraham’s wife after he had brought Rebekah to Isaac for his bride. (This was after Sarah had died and was buried at Kiriath-arba \_\_\_ which was later known as Hebron \_\_\_ in the land of Judah.) Keturah was Abraham’s “concubine” and the children born to her were not included in the inheritance which was Isaac’s. Keturah had six sons to Abraham and he gave his concubines and their children gifts while, he was still alive, and sent them away from his son Isaac, “eastward, to the land of the east.” They are not identified in scripture as Abraham’s “sons.” They are referred to as, “Sons of Keturah.” This becomes significant when we consider who are esteemed as “Sons” under the New Covenant. (The “Sarah Covenant.”)

Jethro, the “Midianite” was also called a “Kenite” which is the name given to the descendants of Cain, who slew his brother Able and was forced to go “east” and settled in the land of Shinar \_\_\_ where Babylon was built.

2. Moses was given Jethro’s daughter Zipporah, “a bird,” for his wife and she bore him two sons, Gershom and Eliezer. These sons never became a part of the first order of priests; did not camp with their father on the east side of the Tabernacle; were numbered together with the Levites and camped on the south side of the tabernacle with the sons of Kohath: Izhar, Hebron and Uzziel. This may have been due to their DNA from their mother’s side... Who knows? Still, as we will see later, they were among those who had the responsibility of carrying the holy and most holy place elements upon their shoulders \_\_\_ which had to be a tremendous honor.

3. Moses received the Law of the Old Covenant, also known as the Law of Moses, and gave it to the people. There is no need to add to this statement. There are many references that establish this truth.

**Side Note:** This note may be premature but it seems appropriate to include because it may be of some value to keep in mind as we progress. The women of the bible have a more prominent place in the fullness of God’s purpose than has been considered. Many of our studies seem to focus on the importance of the “men,” with little regard for the role of their sisters, wives or mothers. Although little is written about Miriam, Aaron and Moses’ older sister, she is considered a “Prophet(ess),” and is included among the “priests” who camp on the East Side of the Tabernacle although she was not “consecrated” as a Priest unto God. She was able to enter the tabernacle, just like any other priest and was as much a “Levite,” through Amram and

Jocebed, as Aaron and Moses. When we begin to consider the “Tribes” that camped on the East Side we will take care to note that all of them were “Sons” of Jacob/Israel, by their mother Leah. The tribes on every other side were “Mixed” tribes in regard to their mothers.

The significance of the women of the bible extends to the “New Covenant” where we find Elizabeth in the genealogy of the “Aaronic Order of Priests” and Mary, which is equivalent to Miriam in the Old Testament, descended from David, King of Judah. (Not to mention again; Sarah who is representative of the Jerusalem above, who is Mother of us all.) The women of scripture are directly connected to our becoming a Kingdom of Priests, as intimately as the men.

(To be continued.....)