

Priesthood Order

Part 3

The previous study ended with some information about “Kadesh” that may have been confusing, whether it was a lack on my part of being able to present these things clearly, or because it is difficult to navigate through the wildernesses and correctly identify some of the “places” where the children of Israel traveled or, it could be a combination of many possibilities. Before continuing the outline, it may help to try to sort out some of the possibilities.

“Kadesh” is a word in scripture that is derived from the parent noun, *qodesh*, and is used in a variety of forms and translated literally as, “holy,” or “sacred” and usually used in reference to a “certain” person, place or thing. It doesn’t matter which form is used, it always has this basic implication of being for a holy purpose, whether it is the denominative verb, “*qadash*,” meaning; to “cut/set apart,” be hallowed, holy, sanctified; to consecrate, sanctify, dedicate, prepare; or the different nouns such as; “*qodesh*,” meaning, apartness, holiness, sacred, or “*qadosh*,” which means holy, Holy one or saint. These all relate to the essential nature of that which belongs to the sphere/dimension of the “sacred” giving it the distinction and evidence that it is the antithesis of the “common or profane.” Kadesh is the name given to several locations, including a number of cities, places where a particular event happened, etc.

Other references to Kadesh that may be confusing are when Kadesh is connected to an entire region. We read of Kadesh in the wilderness of Zin and also, Kadesh in the wilderness of Paran. It helps to know that Paran was a vast region of wilderness, within which was the wilderness of Sinai, the wilderness of Sin, the wilderness of Beersheba, the wilderness of Etham, the wilderness of Zin and perhaps included a number of other of the wildernesses recorded in scripture. It’s possible to incorrectly identify the “places” bearing the name, “Kadesh,” because it may be perceived to be in more than one physical location, making it even more difficult to know the exact “spot.” The significance or emphasis may have more to do with the “meaning” of Kadesh than whether it is a city somewhere near the border of Edom or a place in the wilderness where Israel saw God’s handiwork. When it comes to Moses and Aaron smiting the rock to bring forth water for Israel’s thirst, it may be that all three times were at “Meribah-Kedesh,” but at different geographical sites. This additional thought may help us to understand how the Rock, which is Christ, followed them.

Note: It is written in some of the “oldest” historical writings that all eighteen encampments where Israel “rested” were in the wilderness of Paran. (If, indeed, there were eighteen. ??)

Whether the aforementioned answers any questions or creates several more, we will continue our outline of the “Priesthood Orders.”

I. The East Side (Continued)

A. Aaron married Elisheba, the daughter of Amminadab; the sister of Nahshon, and she bore him Nadab and Abihu, Eleazar and Ithamar. (Exo 6:23)

1. Nadab and Abihu will not be discussed because they were not faithful in their

placement as sons. They provoked God's wrath by offering strange fire and were killed. What they did should give us "pause" to consider:

"If some of the branches were broken off, and you, being a wild olive, were grafted in among them and became partaker with them of the rich root of the olive tree, do not be arrogant toward the branches; but if you are arrogant, *remember that* it is not you who supports the root, but the root *supports* you. You will say then, "Branches were broken off so that I might be grafted in." Quite right, they were broken off for their unbelief, but you stand by your faith. Do not be conceited, but fear; for if God did not spare the natural branches, He will not spare you, either. Behold then the kindness and severity of God; to those who fell, severity, but to you, God's kindness, if you continue in His kindness; otherwise you also will be cut off." (Rom 11:17-22)

2. Eleazar = "God has helped"; married Putiel and they begat Phinehas.

a.) Considered Aaron's "firstborn" after the death of his two elder brothers.

b.) Was called the "chief of the leaders of Levi" and had the oversight of all who performed the duties of the sanctuary

c.) "The (personal) responsibility of Eleazar the son of Aaron the priest is the oil for the light and the fragrant incense and the continual grain offering and the anointing oil--the responsibility of all the tabernacle and of all that is in it, with the sanctuary and its furnishings." (Num 4:16, parens for emphasis)

It was Eleazar who was in charge of the entire Tabernacle including the "Sanctuary" and all of the elements in the Holy Place and Most Holy Place. Although Aaron was responsible for covering the Ark so that nobody, (even Eleazar), could look at it, Eleazar was appointed to inspect everything else and oversee every aspect of dismantling, covering and transporting the entire Sanctuary. He was also responsible for the "Sons of Kohath" who were designated to carry everything from inside the sanctuary upon their shoulders. When they arrived at the place they were led to, he saw to it that everything was set in its proper place before Aaron uncovered the articles that were placed within the Most Holy Place.

d.) Took up the bronze censures, that Korah and his followers had used when trying to usurp the priesthood, which were hammered into plating for the altar of burnt offering

e.) Officiated at the offering of the Red Heifer

f.) Succeeded Aaron as High Priest _ in his stead.

Note: The term, "in his stead" was considered in an earlier document which said, "In the "old order" priesthood the garments for the High Priest were not duplicated, altered, or replicated when it came time for a "Son" to be anointed and ordained in his stead. It seems that it was necessary for the son to "grow" to the same stature as his father, rather than "altering the garment to fit the son." The underlined term, "in his stead" is somewhat misleading because it causes us to think in terms of "replacing," which is not what the word is meant to convey. The word is "tacath" (Strong's H8478), and means: "under," "beneath," "underneath" and could have just as correctly been translated, "under authority."

For example: After Moses had stripped Aaron of his garments and put them on his son Eleazar, Aaron died there on the mountain top. Then Moses and Eleazar came down from the mountain. (Num 20:28 NASB) Did the priesthood become the Priesthood after the Order of

Eleazar? Not at all! The Priesthood remained the Priesthood after the Order of Aaron, who carried out his ministry and service to God “under the authority” granted him when he was called, anointed, ordained, consecrated, and appointed. Eleazar, was required to carry out his ministry and service to God by that same authority... The authority comes from the head, not the body.”

3. Phinehas = “mouth of brass,” appears to have been the firstborn and only son of Eleazar

a.) stopped the plague that broke out on Israel after Balaam had paved the way for them to join themselves to the daughters of Moab and become defiled by joining them in the worship of their gods and having relations with them.

Phinehas’ experience has some ramifications that are worth considering so the following selection seems relevant to our study:

“While Israel remained at Shittim, the people began to play the harlot with the daughters of Moab. “For they invited the people to the sacrifices of their gods, and the people ate and bowed down to their gods. “So Israel joined themselves to Baal of Peor, and the LORD was angry against Israel.” The LORD said to Moses, “Take all the leaders of the people and execute them in broad daylight before the LORD, so that the fierce anger of the LORD may turn away from Israel.” So Moses said to the judges of Israel, “Each of you slay his men who have joined themselves to Baal of Peor.” Then behold, one of the sons of Israel came and brought to his relatives a Midianite woman, in the sight of Moses and in the sight of all the congregation of the sons of Israel, while they were weeping at the doorway of the tent of meeting. When Phinehas the son of Eleazar, the son of Aaron the priest, saw it, he arose from the midst of the congregation and took a spear in his hand, and he went after the man of Israel into the tent and pierced both of them through, the man of Israel and the woman, through the body. So the plague on the sons of Israel was checked. Those who died by the plague were 24,000. Then the LORD spoke to Moses, saying, “Phinehas the son of Eleazar, the son of Aaron the priest, has turned away My wrath from the sons of Israel in that he was jealous with My jealousy among them, so that I did not destroy the sons of Israel in My jealousy. “Therefore say, **‘Behold, I give him My covenant of peace; and it shall be for him and his descendants after him, a covenant of a perpetual priesthood,** because he was jealous for his God and made atonement for the sons of Israel.” Now the name of the slain man of Israel, who was slain with the Midianite woman, was Zimri the son of Salu, a leader of a father's household among the Simeonites. The name of the Midianite woman who was slain was Cozbi the daughter of Zur, who was head of the people of a father's household in Midian.” (Num 25:1-15)

After this “judgement” took place, Israel went to war against the Midianites and killed every male in Midian. Phinehas went into the battle, along with one thousand men from each of the tribes, with the holy vessels and the trumpets for the alarm in his hand. It was at this battle that Balaam was slain by the sword.

b.) Phinehas was the priest who confronted the sons of Ruben, Gad and the half tribe of Manasseh, after they returned from the battles in Canaan to their homes on the “other” side of Jordan and had built an altar. He was instrumental in keeping peace.

c.) Phinehas enquired of the LORD concerning the tribe of Benjamin, which

disgraced themselves by not intervening on behalf of the priest who had gone to Gibeah, where his wife was violated and murdered. Although the tabernacle appears to have been set up at Shiloh the Ark was said to be at Bethel and it was “before the Ark” that Phinehas sought the LORD’S counsel concerning going to war with Benjamin. Still, we don’t know whether these terms, i.e., “Shiloh and Bethel”, are indicative of two separate locations or different perspectives of one. This is the last we read of Phinehas until we are told of “Phinehas,” the son of Eli, who was possibly a grandson of the Phinehas whom we are writing about. Eventually, through a succession of Phinehas’ sons, (Eleazar’s grandsons), we find Zadok at the head of the priesthood after the Order of Aaron.

The years that passed between the time when “Brass Mouth” *judged* Israel and the name of Phinehas is given to Eli’s son are a time of transition. The last verse in the Book of Judges, “In those days there was no king in Israel; everyone did what was right in his own eyes.” (Jdg 21:25), marks the end of an “era” and foretells the end of the use of the tabernacle as we knew it in the wilderness. In this interval we are introduced, through the Book of Ruth, to the genealogy that produced the line of “Kings,” who would reign in Jerusalem, beginning with David, the son of Jesse, who descended through Perez, (who was Tamar’s son) Boaz and Ruth. It is significant that Ruth, a moabitess, would be included in this lineage. If we pursue the line we find that Rahab, the harlot who hid the spies in Canaan, was married to Salman/Salma, who was the son of Nahshon, the son of Judah. Salman/Salma was the father of Boaz. How many, (unnamed descendants,) there were in the genealogical order is uncertain but Matthew Chapter One does a pretty good job of giving us the names necessary, in order to bring us to the birth of Jesus.

It’s interesting to me that the King/Priest line of succession was kept “separate, sanctified, holy,” through the seed of the fathers but their mothers were often from the “nations” or from those we would call “gentiles.” However, when we come to John the Baptist and Jesus, the “line” is “reconciled” to the order that God had chosen many hundreds of years earlier, i.e., those who were set as sons who would be from the priesthood after the order of Aaron, along with those who would be kings descended from David and included both their fathers and mothers, who descended from the “First Order.”

4. Ithamar = “coast/land of palms;” the fourth and youngest son of Aaron and Elisheba

a.) Although there are only a few references to Ithamar we see the significance of his placement as a son, who is last in the direct line of Aaron and a prominent member of the first order of priesthood. This is made evident in the thirty-eighth chapter of Exodus and later in the twenty-fourth chapter of I Chronicles, when David established the twenty-four “orders of ministry” from the Priests and Levites.

1.) Exodus 38, identifies the elements of the “Outer Court” according to the pattern God showed Moses on the top of Mt. Sinai. The verse we will focus our attention on is verse twenty-one, which says, “This is the number of the things for the tabernacle, the tabernacle of the testimony, as they were numbered according to the command of Moses, for the service of the Levites, by the hand of Ithamar the son of Aaron the priest.”

2.) From here we will go to Numbers, Chapter four, where we find

Ithamar having the oversight of the sons of Gershon and Merari, the Levites who were given ox carts and oxen to convey the “Outer Court” articles, as they journeyed toward the “promised land.” When the Pillars of cloud and fire led them from one place to another, Ithamar had the responsibility to inspect and oversee the dismantling of the entire outer court, covering each piece, loading everything onto the carts, making sure they were secured, and “guarding” them as they traveled. It was also Ithamar and Eleazar who were to carry the trumpets and sound a “clear/certain” sound to gather Israel to meet at the tabernacle, set out on their journey or prepare for war.

3.) When David made twenty four divisions/orders of ministry to function in the temple it was Zadok, of the sons of Eleazar and Ahimelech, of the sons of Ithamar, who divided them according to their placement as sons.

It is evident that these descendants continued to faithfully serve according to their “divisions” If we discern the following verses we will see this confirmed: “Thus were they divided by lot, one group with the other, for there were chiefs of the sanctuary and chiefs of God [*high priests*] drawn both from the sons of Eleazar and from the sons of Ithamar. Shemaiah the scribe, son of Nethanel, a Levite, recorded them in the presence of the king, the princes, Zadok the priest, Ahimelech son of Abiathar [*the priest who escaped being killed at Nob by Saul and fled to David*], and **the heads of the fathers' houses of the priests and Levites--one father's house being taken alternately for Eleazar and one for Ithamar.**” (1Ch 24:5-6 AMP)

If we take into consideration that Eleazar was in charge of everything related to the ‘Entire Tabernacle,’ and especially responsible for the “Holy” articles, and that Ithamar was in charge of the entire ‘Outer Court’ it isn’t too difficult to see that the twenty-four priests selected by Zadok, ministered **IN** the “Sanctuary,” of the Temple by the authority of Zadok, who was the high priest descended from Eleazar, and the twenty-four Levites alternately selected by Ahimelech ministered **AT** the Temple under the supervision of Ahimelech who was of the sons of Ithamar. (There is no scripture reference that Ithamar ever succeeded Eleazar and became high priest.)

This ends our outline of the “First Order of Priests,” who camped on the East Side of the Tabernacle.

There may be some disappointment for failing to show a relationship between the history of the priesthood order of Aaron and the New Covenant dimension, making a connection to the Priesthood after the Order of Melchizedek, and for not showing how the “Type” fits the “Reality” or visa/vie. These connections may become more evident when we continue the outline to include the placement of the sons of Levi on the South, West, and North sides of the Tabernacle and know something of their ministry and function in their respective callings.

In conclusion, it may be worthwhile to include the following comments: “What is outlined here is intended to give us a sense of how “HIGH” the high calling of God upon our lives really is. This was stated in the first document of this series but warrants repeating. Reviewing the old covenant priesthood from the highest dimension may not have been the best starting place but, if we begin to think that our starting place is at the bottom of the “Order” and

we somehow “work” at being His minister until we become “qualified” to be a priest in His kingdom we have not really had a revelation of the “Priesthood of Melchizedek,” or a revelation of our, “Faithful High Priest, our Lord Jesus Christ.” If we only have a vision for “discipleship,” we will never progress further than the Outer Court. Even that “dimension” may be difficult to enter if we take refuge and become comfortable in our placement between the outer walls and the encampment of the multitude that rejoice because they are “saved” from Egypt but murmur and complain constantly about everyone and everything that would lift them into a “higher dimension.”

NOW THE main point of what we have to say is this: We have such a High Priest, One Who is seated at the right hand of the majestic [*God*] in heaven, [*Ps. 110:1.*] As officiating Priest, a Minister in the holy places and in the true tabernacle which is erected not by man but by the Lord. For every high priest is appointed to offer up gifts and sacrifices; so it is essential for this [*High Priest*] to have some offering to make also. If then He were still living on earth, He would not be a priest at all, for there are [*already priests*] who offer the gifts in accordance with the Law. [*But these offer*] service [*merely*] as a pattern and as a foreshadowing of [*what has its true existence and reality in*] the heavenly sanctuary. For when Moses was about to erect the tabernacle, he was warned by God, saying, See to it that you make it all [*exactly*] according to the copy (the model) which was shown to you on the mountain. [*Exod. 25:40.*] But as it now is, He [*Christ*] has acquired a [*priestly*] ministry which is as much superior and more excellent [*than the old*] as the covenant (the agreement) of which He is the Mediator (the Arbiter, Agent) is superior and more excellent, [*because*] it is enacted and rests upon more important (sublimar, higher, and nobler) promises. For if that first covenant had been without defect, there would have been no room for another one or an attempt to institute another one. However, He finds fault with them [*showing its inadequacy*] when He says, Behold, the days will come, says the Lord, when I will make and ratify a new covenant or agreement with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah. It will not be like the covenant that I made with their forefathers on the day when I grasped them by the hand to help and relieve them and to lead them out from the land of Egypt, for they did not abide in My agreement with them, and so I withdrew My favor and disregarded them, says the Lord. For this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, says the Lord: I will imprint My laws upon their minds, even upon their innermost thoughts and understanding, and engrave them upon their hearts; and I will be their God, and they shall be My people. And it will nevermore be necessary for each one to teach his neighbor and his fellow citizen or each one his brother, saying, Know (perceive, have knowledge of, and get acquainted by experience with) the Lord, for all will know Me, from the smallest to the greatest of them. (Heb 8:1-11 AMP)

(Part 4 will begin with the South Side)