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A STUDY OF BIBLICAL PRIESTHOOD
WITH SPECIAL REFERENCE
TO THE EPISTLE TO
THE HEBREWS

By

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CHAPTER I
INTRODUCTION

A STUDY OF BIBLICAL PRIESTHOOD WITH
SPECIAL REFERENCE TO THE
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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

A. Statement of the Problem

Reference to library catalogues reveals that many volumes have been written on the subject of the priesthood in general or with relation to the Roman Catholic Church, but that the priesthood as found in the Christian Scriptures has not been investigated so extensively. Reeve, Moorehead, and Adams have given some of the best treatises on the Old Testament priesthood, and the best writers on the priesthood of the Epistle to the Hebrews are DuBose, Nairne, and Murray. It is known that the priest holds a prominent place in the spiritual life of the Old Testament, and that the New Testament priest, Jesus Christ, is presented as fulfilling the qualifications and function of the Old Testament priesthood. It is of value to determine the office that the priest holds according to the Scriptures.

It is the problem of the present study, therefore, to examine the Scriptures in order to discover the function of the priest in the spiritual life of a people.

In this study of the Scriptures it will be necessary to determine the nature and ministry of the Old Testament priest, and that of Christ as priest in comparison with the priest of the Old Testament. The primary problem of this study is not to trace the history of any one priest or a group of priests but rather to determine the origin and nature of the priesthood of the Scriptures and then endeavor to clarify the ministry of Christ, who is the priest of the New Testament.

B. Justification of the Problem

Priesthood is an institution of ancient times. Though still existing, its antiquity has not meant universal acceptance. The priesthood as known today in Roman Catholicism has been subject to criticism since the time of the Reformation. The problem as to the true function of the institution of the priesthood is left unsolved unless one approaches the study from the viewpoint of the Scriptures. The problem of this thesis, however, is not involved in the priesthood of Catholicism, but in the priesthood as originated on Mount Sinai under God's direction, and the relation of this to the New Testament priest.

The need of a priesthood in order to relate man to God has been felt from the earliest history of man, as

indicated by the following statement:

"Man is born religious: born to recognize the action of unseen powers about him and to seek for a harmonious relation with them, conceived of personally. . . . Some means of approach to the unseen power therefore must be provided that a harmony may be established; and man naturally looks for some one through whom this access shall be gained. The provision of this access is the work of the priest. It is then briefly the part of the priest to establish a connexion of man with God, and secondarily of man with man. The priest brings man to God (the unseen power); and he brings God to man."¹

The great emphasis that has been placed on the priesthood throughout the years is justification for determining the importance of the character and work of the priest as taught in the Christian Scriptures. This study will reveal how the priests were instituted and how they aided the spiritual life of the people. It will reveal, further, the true significance of Jesus Christ as priest in relation to the priesthood of the Old Testament.

C. Delimitation of the Problem

A study of priesthood in the Old Testament in relation to the Epistle to the Hebrews must be defined in order to concentrate investigation upon certain points. The present study is to cover the portions of Scripture which consider primarily the qualifications, duties and

. . .

1. Westcott: The Epistle to the Hebrews, p. 139.

consecration of the priests of the Old Testament. These data are needed in the comparative study of the New Testament priest with that of the Old Testament. The Old Testament study necessarily will be centered largely in Leviticus, though not exclusively; and that of the New Testament in the Epistle to the Hebrews.

It is not the purpose of this thesis to follow the study of the corrupting of the priesthood in the Old Testament nor to make any comparison of the office of the priest with that of the prophet.

There are many references to priests in the Scriptures, such as fathers being priests of their families and offering their own sacrifices as did Noah, Abraham, and others;¹ and priests of various lands, such as the priests of Midian.² To include these would be of interest, but the subject is limited in this thesis to answering the question: How did the instituted priesthood of the Old Testament and the Superior Priest of the New Testament function respectively in uniting man to God?

D. Method of Procedure

This study falls into two parts: the first, divided into two chapters, is a study of the nature and ministry

. . .

1. Cf. Genesis 8:20; 12:7; 26:25; 31:54.

2. Cf. Genesis 47:22; Ex. 2:16; I Sam. 5:5.

of the Old Testament priesthood. In this study there will be considered the necessary qualifications, the duties, the consecration of Aaron and his sons, and of the Levites. The second part, divided into two chapters, deals with the nature and ministry of Jesus Christ as compared with the Old Testament Priest. Part two is, therefore, a consideration of the high priestly qualification and ministry of Jesus Christ, and a comparison of Christ and the Old Testament priesthood.

PART ONE

THE NATURE AND FUNCTION OF THE OLD TESTAMENT PRIESTHOOD

CHAPTER TWO

THE QUALIFICATIONS AND FUNCTION OF THE
OLD TESTAMENT PRIESTHOOD

CHAPTER II

THE QUALIFICATIONS AND FUNCTION OF THE OLD TESTAMENT PRIESTHOOD

A. Introduction

In attempting to understand the nature and function of the Old Testament priest it is necessary, first of all, to inquire: What were the requirements made of the priest? This question will be answered first by investigating the Scriptures for the necessary qualifications, and second, by a consideration of the duties of the one who mediated between man and God.

B. The Qualifications of the Priest

1. A priest was one chosen by God.

The priesthood in its beginning was not open to every person who might decide to act as a mediator between man and God, any more than the Levitical priesthood was after centuries of its existence. There needed to be a divine designation before a person was qualified to be a priest. The Scriptures reveal the following fact regarding the choice of the priests:

"Them hath Jehovah chosen to carry the ark of God."¹

"For Jehovah hath chosen you to stand before him, to minister unto him, and that ye would be his ministers, and burn incense."²

"For Jehovah thy God hath chosen him out of all thy tribes."³

"For them Jehovah thy God hath chosen to minister unto him, and to bless in the name of Jehovah."⁴

The great qualification necessary before one was able to mediate between man and God was that there needed to be such a direct relationship with God as to be chosen by God. Not only was his office a divine institution, but the priest himself was appointed of God to the office. The truth of the whole consideration is fully stated by the writer of the Epistle to the Hebrews:

"And no man taketh the honor unto himself, but when he is called of God, even as was Aaron."⁵

2. A priest must have no physical defect.

The twenty-first chapter of Leviticus records the catalogue of defects or blemishes which, if a seed of Aaron had, he was not permitted to approach to offer the bread of his God.

"For whatsoever man he be that hath a blemish he shall not approach: a blind man, or a lame, or he that hath

. . .

1. I Chronicles 15:2.
2. II Chronicles 29:11.
3. Deuteronomy 18:5.
4. Deuteronomy 21:5.
5. Hebrews 5:4.

a flat nose, or anything superfluous, or a man that is broken-footed, or broken-handed, or crook-backed, or a dwarf, or hath a blemish in his eye, or is scurvy, or scabbed, or hath his stones broken; no man of the seed of Aaron the priest, that hath a blemish, shall come nigh to offer the offerings of Jehovah made by fire: he hath a blemish; he shall not come nigh to offer the bread of his God."¹

The sanctuary of Jehovah was sanctified by Jehovah, and if any one who was not physically whole in every respect was to enter as one mediating between man and God, the sanctuary would become unclean. Kellogg has remarked pointedly:

"The material and bodily is ever the type and symbol of the spiritual; hence, in this case, the spiritual purity and perfection required of him who would draw near to God in the priest's office must be visibly signified by his physical perfection; else the sanctity of the tabernacle were profaned. Moreover, the reverence due from the people toward Jehovah's sanctuary could not well be maintained where a dwarf, for instance, or a humpback, were ministering at the altar."²

3. Miscellaneous qualifying requirements.

The priests were forbidden to eat anything that had died a natural death or had been torn by beasts,³ to touch the dead body of any except those of their own kin,⁴ to shave either head or beard,⁵ to marry a dissolute, dishonoured, or divorced woman,⁶ or to drink wine when

. . .

1. Leviticus 21:18-21.

2. Kellogg, S. H.: The Book of Leviticus, p. 438.

3. Leviticus 22:8.

4. Leviticus 21:1-4.

5. Leviticus 21:5.

6. Leviticus 21:7.

approaching the sanctuary.¹

The High Priest was not to defile himself by contact with any dead body, even father or mother;² and he was forbidden to let his hair grow long or rend his clothes as a sign of mourning. He was not to observe the external signs of mourning for any person, and not leave the sanctuary when news came of the death even of a father or mother.³

C. The Duties of a Priest

1. The Duty of Offering Sacrifice.

The Scriptures clearly teach the chief duty of the priest as being that of reconciling men to God by atoning for their sins; and this he effects by means of offerings and sacrifice. The various offerings to be made were the burnt-offering, meal-offering, peace-offering, and sin-offering. Reeve has simplified the meaning of the term sacrifice in the following statements:

"Sacrifice is thus a complex and comprehensive term. In its simplest form it may be defined as 'a gift to God.' It is a presentation to Deity of some material object, the possession of the offerer, as an act of worship. It may be to attain, restore, maintain or to celebrate friendly relations with the Deity. It is religion in action -- in early times, almost the whole of religion -- an inseparable accompaniment to

. . .

1. Leviticus 10:9.
2. Leviticus 21:11.
3. Leviticus 21:10-12.

all religious exercises. Few or many motives may actuate it. It may be wholly piacular and expiatory, or an offering of food as a gift of God; it may be practically a bribe, or a prayer, an expression of dependence, obligation and thanksgiving. It may express repentance, faith, adoration, or all of these combined. It was the one and only way of approach to God. Theophrastus defines it as expressing homage, gratitude and need. Hubert and Mauss define it as a religious act which by the consecration of the victim modifies the moral state of the sacrificer, or of certain material objects which he has in view, i.e., either confers sanctity or removes it and its analogue, impiety."¹

a. The Burnt-Offering.

The law of the burnt-offering is found in the first chapter of Leviticus. The importance of the offering in the Jewish ritual is indicated by the fact that it heads the list of the offerings. The burnt-offering has some of the distinctive features of all the other offerings. According to Exodus 29:42 the burnt-offering was a daily sacrifice which, morning and evening, was presented to Jehovah on the brazen altar. This, most probably, was the offering that Abel, Abraham, and Job observed.

(1) The various kinds of burnt-offering.

According to the first chapter of Leviticus there were three different grades of burnt-offering; in verse three it refers to a victim of the herd; in verse ten there is reference to the victim of the flocks; and

. . .

1. Reeve, J. J.: "Sacrifice", article in The Standard Bible Encyclopaedia, Vol. IV, p. 2639.

in verse fourteen the victim is of the fowls. In this variety is seen God's provision for the poor as well as the rich; if one could not afford to take a bullock for offering he might be able to afford a sheep, and if he could not afford a sheep he could obtain a dove.

(2) The priest's duty in the offering.

The offerer came with his offering to the door of the tabernacle and stood at the brazen altar where he placed his hands upon the victim to designate that he was transferring his sins upon the victim as his substitute. Then he killed the victim; and the priest caught the blood and sprinkled it upon the altar. The offerer cut the victim into pieces and the priests built the fire upon the altar and laid the pieces in order upon it, burning the whole of the offering. The legs and intestines were washed with water before they were burned.

Herein the priest is clearly seen in his mediatorial office representing man before God in sprinkling the blood and delivering the sacrifice on the altar as a sweet savor offering to satisfy God in relation to the offerer.

"Never a day dawned, but the priest might have been seen arranging the morning sacrifice in the outer court: and never the twilight fell, but the watcher astir in the Camp might have beheld the smoke of the evening oblation rising all through the night. It represented the unbroken course of the adoration of Jehovah which ought to be rising continually from human hearts."¹

. . .

1. Adams, John: The Mosaic Tabernacle, p. 46.

For general laws pertaining to the priest in relation to the burnt-offering, Dr. Reeve has best compiled the Scriptural references:

"The burnt offering must be continued every morning and every evening (Ex 29:38f; Nu 28:3-8). At the fulfilment of his vow the Nazarite must present it before God and offer it upon the altar through the priest (Nu 6:14-16): on the Sabbath, two lambs (Nu 28:9); on the first of the month, two bullocks, one ram and seven lambs (Nu 28:11); on the day of first-fruits, the same (Nu 28:27); on the 1st day of the 7th month, one bullock, one ram, seven lambs (Nu 29:8); on the 15th day, 13 bullocks, two rams, 14 lambs, the number of bullocks diminishing daily until the 7th day, when seven bullocks, two rams, 14 lambs were offered (Nu 29:12-34); on the 22nd day of this month one bullock, one ram and seven lambs were offered (Nu 29:35,36). Non-Israelites were permitted to offer the 'olah; but no other sacrifices (Lev 17:8; 22:18,25)"¹

b. Meal-Offering.

The second chapter of Leviticus describes the meal offering as that which follows the burnt-offering. As distinct from the life offered in the burnt-offering, is that of flour or meal.

"Thus in the burnt-offering the surrender of life to God represents the fulfilment of man's duty to God; man yielding to God His portion to satisfy all His claim. In the meal-offering the gift of corn and oil represents the fulfilment of man's duty to his neighbor: man in his offering surrendering himself to God, but doing so that he may give to man his portion."²

(1) The various kinds of meal-offering

Just as in the burnt-offering there were three

. . .

1. Reeve, J. J.: "Law of the Burnt-offering," article in the International Standard Bible Encyclopaedia, Vol.IV, p. 2643.
2. Jukes, Andrew: Law of the Offerings Considered pp. 69-70.

grades of offering to suit the position of the people, so in the matter of the meal offering there was made provision for the needs of the people. The three kinds or grades of meal-offering are unbaked flour;¹ baked loaves or cakes;² and green ears of corn (wheat), parched or roasted.³ It appears that God wished to make it possible for every person, rich or poor, to keep in right relationship to Him.

(2) The priest's duty in the offering.

First, the offering was presented before the Lord. A representative handful of the meal was taken out by the offerer and given to the priest, who burnt it on the altar as a memorial. The handful of meal burned was a sweet savor unto God, thereby being God's portion. Then the remainder was eaten by the priests; the offerer did not partake of any part of the offering. The outstanding mediatorial duty in this offering was materially beneficial to the priest. He did his duty in burning only a part of the meal offering which then satisfied God; after which he received the greater share of the offering for himself.

c. The peace-offering.

The peace-offering is considered in the third and seventh chapters of Leviticus. Either male or female animals,

. . .

1. Leviticus 2:1.
2. Leviticus 2:4-11.
3. Leviticus 2:14.

but not pigeons as in the burnt-offering, were brought as sacrifices for the peace-offering.

"The peace offerings indicated right relations with God, expressing good-fellowship, gratitude and obligation. The common altars were fitted for their use (Ex 20:24), as feasts had been thus celebrated from time immemorial. At the feast before God on the Mount, peace offerings provided the food (Ex 24:5); also before the golden bull (Ex 32:6). The wave and heave offerings were portions of these."¹

(1) The significance of the name.

The peace-offering given as a thanksgiving is described in the seventh chapter of Leviticus. The name "Peace", in itself, reveals a state of feeling which naturally would bring thanksgiving. Much is included in the name of this offering. Moorehead speaks of this peace as follows:

"Peace of the highest sort, and of various kinds, is thereby designated. It includes in it peace with God, peace in the conscience, and peace with men -- the glorious issues of acceptance with God, 'The rights, hopes, and duties of peace with God'."²

(2) The priest's duty in the offering.

All the fat which covered the inwards, the two kidneys and the fat upon them, and the caul above the liver were to be burned on the altar.³ The priest was to sprinkle the blood on and around the altar. The

. . .

1. Reeve, J.J.: "Law of the Peace Offering", article in the International Standard Bible Encyclopaedia, Vol. IV, p. 2644.
2. Moorehead, W.G.: Studies in the Mosaic Institutions p. 158.
3. Leviticus 3:3-5.

sprinkling of the blood in the offerings was the duty of the priest because the blood was the life, and belonged to God: life was from God, as creator, and He claimed it for himself. And so the representative of man to God did the sprinkling of the blood.

The right shoulder of the peace-offering victim, and one of each of the leavened and unleavened cakes were given to the priest who sprinkled the blood.¹ In the peace-offering God, the offerer, and the priest shared alike while in the other offerings there was not that equal sharing.

In order to have the proper peace with God, man realized that he must offer sacrifice to God. In this the priest had a very important function for he was commanded to make the offering and thus mediate between man and his God, whom the man wished to reach by the offering.

d. The sin-offering.

The fourth chapter of Leviticus gives an understanding of the sin offering. The Old Testament recognizes different kinds of sin. There are sins of ignorance, that is, sins due to human frailty or unpremeditated sin;² and also sins of rebellion, or sins with full intention of

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1. Leviticus 7:14, 33.

2. Leviticus 4:2; John 20:3.

violating God's law.¹

It is not the special interest of the present study to inquire into the details relating to the kinds of offering and their specific differences but rather to determine the duties of the priest in regard to them.

(1) The varieties of sin-offering.

In the sin-offering mentioned in Leviticus, chapter four, and in 6:25-30, there are four classes of persons provided for: the anointed priest, the whole congregation, a ruler, and for an individual member of the congregation. In each of these cases the "sin" is done through ignorance.²

The ceremonial for the sin offering in each class is illuminating. The victim in each case was to be without blemish; those for the high priest and for the whole congregation were to be young bullocks; for the ruler, a male kid; and for the people, a female kid.

(2) The duties of the priest in the offering.

The blood of the sacrifices for the sin of the high priest and also for the congregation was to be sprinkled by the priest seven times before the veil of the

. . .

1. Numbers 15:30.

2. Cf. Moorehead, W. G.: Studies in the Mosaic Institutions, p. 172.

See also Leviticus 4:3; 4:13; 4:22; 4:27.

sanctuary. The priest put blood upon the horns of the altar, and the remainder of the blood of the bullock was poured out at the base of the altar of burnt offering, which was at the door of the tent of meeting. The fat of the victim was then burned on the altar and the body of the victim was carried out of the camp and burned. When a ruler sinned and brought an offering to the Lord, the priest again handled the blood of the victim after it had been slaughtered. The priest made atonement for the ruler before forgiveness was received. When one of the common people brought a sin offering the priest had again his specific duty, just as with the sin offering of the ruler; namely, to handle the blood and body of the sacrificial victim and thus make atonement before God for the sinner.

"The body of the sin-offering of the higher grade could not come on God's table, the altar; for it was accounted sin, and hence was burned without the camp. Every spot of blood from a sin-offering even of the lower grade on a garment or vessel conveyed defilement as being loaded with sin, and all such garments and vessels had to be washed and scoured or broken (Lev. 6:27, 28)."¹

2. The duty of teaching.

The duties of the priest involved more than the offering of sacrifice and officiating in the sanctuary.

. . .

1. Moorehead, W. G.: Studies in the Mosaic Institutions, p. 176.

The priest had the very important position of teacher. Preceding the consecration of the first priests in the Israelitish nation, the ten commandments were given along with sundry laws and statutes for the children of Israel to learn, understand and obey. These had to be taught from generation to generation.

"And that ye may teach the children of Israel all the statutes which Jehovah hath spoken unto them by Moses."¹

"And thou shalt do according to the tenor of the sentence which they shall show thee from that place which Jehovah shall choose; and thou shalt observe to do according to all that they shall teach thee:"²

"And they shall teach my people the difference between the holy and the common, and cause them to discern between the unclean and the clean."³

"For the priest's lips should keep knowledge, and they should seek the law at his mouth; for he is the messenger of Jehovah of hosts."⁴

One might well question the teaching function of the priest in his relation to the prophet, but it must be understood that the prophet taught the divine truth as God revealed it in the immediate situation, while the priest taught or interpreted the already existing law, the Mosaic law of worship and conduct. The prophet was seeking after divine revelations and truths to teach the people, but the

. . .

1. Leviticus 10:11.
2. Deuteronomy 17:10.
3. Ezekiel 44:23.
4. Malachi 2:7.

priest was ever building up in the minds and hearts of the people those laws which, based on immemorial customs of antiquity, were the means of living well-pleasing to God.

3. Miscellaneous duties of the priests.

The priests were to burn incense on the golden altar in the Holy Place;¹ to clean and fill the lamps on the golden candlestick;² to change the shewbread every Sabbath day;³ to pronounce the blessing upon Israel -- "Jehovah bless thee, and keep thee . . ."⁴ The silver trumpets which announced the Jubilee and Sabbatical Years were kept and blown by the priests;⁵ if a crime had been committed in a town by some unknown murderer, the town was to be reconciled by a ceremony performed by the priest.⁶ They were to be in the position of judges in matters concerning lepers.⁷

The fourteenth chapter of Leviticus draws one's attention to the priest as being a public health officer; he had to pronounce sentences on infected houses, and cleanse the houses. The garments had to be taken by the owner of the infected house and cleansed at the priest's

. . .

1. Exodus 28:1.
2. Leviticus 24:1-4.
3. Leviticus 24:5-9.
4. Numbers 6:23-26.
5. Numbers 10:8.
6. Deuteronomy 21:1-9
7. Leviticus 10.

command.

The High Priest was the superintendent over the sanctuary and the tithes.¹ The special duty of the High Priest was to go once every year, on the Day of Atonement, and offer a sin-offering for himself and the people, in just ordinary garments of the ordinary priests, thus to signify that he was coming as a sinner and not as one in his high-priestly capacity.²

D. Summary

In this chapter the qualifications and duties of the Old Testament priest have been studied. The priesthood was not an institution or system by which a man upon his own initiative could become a member; nor could the members of the priesthood legislate as to what their duties were to be. There were very definite qualifications which had to be met, and specific duties to be attended to by the priests. Men met the qualifications of the priesthood if they were physically perfect and if, then, they were divinely chosen. A man who in any way had a physical defect could not function as a priest because he would be unable to keep the reverence and sanctity of God's

. . .

1. Numbers 3:6-7; Numbers 18:28.
2. Leviticus 16:4.

Sanctuary. Being without physical defect still did not qualify a man to the priesthood unless he was chosen by God.

The duties of the Old Testament priest consisted in officiating in the Sanctuary and teaching the laws and statutes to the children of Israel. The duties of the sanctuary were primarily those of offering sacrifices at the altar. The various offerings through which man was reconciled to God were the burnt offering, which represented the fulfilment of man's duty to God; the meal offering, representing the fulfilment of man's duty to his neighbor; the peace offering, indicating that a man was in right relation to God; and the sin offering, which revealed a desire for forgiveness of wrong doing and a willingness to sacrifice for atonement. In all the offerings the priest stood at the altar and represented man as he presented the offering to God. The secondary duties in the sanctuary were to attend to the incense, the candlesticks, the shewbread, and pronounce the blessing upon Israel. Thus the qualified priest mediated between man and God by officiating in the sanctuary and by teaching God's law to man.

CHAPTER III

THE CONSECRATION OF THE
OLD TESTAMENT PRIESTS

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A. Introduction

The office of the priesthood, as revealed in the foregoing study, is spiritual; and therefore man, before functioning as a priest, had to be set apart from the secular life to the sacred task of mediation. Aaron and his sons needed to be officially set apart by God from the regular duties in which they had been engaged, to the sacred duties of the service of God. This setting apart is known as consecration.

The consecratory rites were conducted by Moses under the direction of God. Not only was Aaron and his sons set apart to the divine service; but the tribe of Levi also was purified for specific functions. The terms "Priests" and "Levites" are often used interchangeably, as are the expressions the "Aaronical" and "Levitical" priesthoods. The tribe of Levi was purified after the consecration of Aaron and his sons, as they were to be assistants to the priests in their work. However, the Levite did not ordinarily function as a priest, but in

the beginning acted as a temple porter. The Levitical priesthood has been referred to by Adams as a pyramid:

"The Levitical priesthood, as a completed system, may be likened to a pyramid. Its lowest base is the tribe of Levi; its middle part, the family of Aaron; its apex, the person of the high priest."¹

The important rites in the consecration of Aaron and his sons were the washing, the investiture, the anointing, and the consecration sacrifices. The significance of the consecration of the Levites lay in their origin, their purification, and the duties to which they were consecrated. Both of these significant consecrations will be studied in this chapter.

B. The Consecration of Aaron and His Sons

The record of the consecration of Aaron and his sons is found in the twenty-ninth chapter of Exodus and in the eighth chapter of Leviticus. The first reference of the significant occasion gives specific directions as to how the consecration shall be conducted; the second records the performance after the directions of building the tabernacle have been carried out. Moses was commanded to bring Aaron and his sons to the door of the tent of meeting and there wash them, clothe them in the priestly garments,

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1. Adams, John: The Mosaic Tabernacle, pp. 12, 13.

and then anoint them with oil. Aaron and his sons were to be consecrated so that they might have the priesthood by a perpetual statute. Following the command of God to consecrate Aaron and his sons, are the consecratory sacrifices. The Scriptural record of the consecration is as follows:

"And Jehovah spake unto Moses, saying, Take Aaron and his sons with him, and the garments, and the anointing oil, and the bullock of the sin-offering, and the two rams, and the basket of unleavened bread; and assemble thou all the congregation at the door of the tent of meeting. And Moses did as Jehovah commanded him; and the congregation was assembled at the door of the tent of meeting. And Moses said unto the congregation, This is the thing which Jehovah hath commanded to be done."¹

The scene of Moses calling the congregation of the people to the tent of meeting and bringing Aaron and his sons with all the necessary consecratory equipment is one that still impresses the reader of this account. Bonar has vividly presented the scene by imagining himself present at the service:

"We may view the scene all at once; its details are given afterwards. God commands Aaron and his sons to approach the altar, in sight of all the people, with all the furniture of consecration. Let us see them walking toward the altar, conscious of the awfully solemn situation in which they are placed. The deep thoughtfulness of the father is reflected upon his four attending sons, whose souls cannot but tremble when they see the trembling step of their aged father, though accustomed to meet with God. Moses comes with them, bearing the things needed for consecration. You see the garments (Exod. 28:2) of the priesthood, ready to cover their persons, as the skins clothed Adam and Eve, in type of imputed righteousness. Notice, also, the anointing oil (Exod. 30:23), the sight of which

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1. Leviticus 8:1-5.

reminds the priest of their need of the Spirit of all grace. Close by, at their side, stands the bullock for a sin-offering, on whose head they are this day to lay their sins; and beside the bullock are two rams, one for the burnt-offering -- such as their father Abraham offered in room of his son Isaac -- the other for consecration (ver. 22). Thus they stand in presence of types that all speak of their sin and their poverty of soul; they cannot lift their eye without seeing sin staring them in the face. And, to complete all, there is a basket of unleavened bread, which they are to present as a type of their whole persons and substance being devoted full and entire to God, without mixture of leaven. The whole congregation look on upon this spectacle in silence. It is the priesthood entering on their office! wherein they are to stand ever after, offering Israel's sacrifices, and bringing back the news of reconciliation."¹

1. The Washing with Water.

The first consecratory act was that of washing.

"And Moses brought Aaron and his sons, and washed them with water."²

Moses acted throughout the service as mediator, representing God and dealing with the chosen priests. Aaron and his sons were washed at the same time. Aaron, who was to be the High Priest, was distinguished from his sons, who were to be ordinary priests, in some of the consecration rites. This distinction was not made in the washing, however. Every priest in the service of God,

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1. Bonar, A. A.: A Commentary on the Book of Leviticus, pp. 151, 152.
2. Leviticus 8:6.

whatever his capacity, needed to be ceremonially clean before he could perform his sacred duties.

The cleansing of the priests in the Scriptures is not unique, for the record in Herod. 2:37 gives accounts of the Egyptian priests shaving the head and body every other day. They had to wash in cold water twice every day and twice every night; they could not wear wool or leather but they did have robes of linen and shoes of papyrus.¹

Washing signifies cleansing. Therefore, this consecratory act, in the priest's relationship to life, reveals the ceremonial cleansing of the body as a symbol of inward purification of the spirit. A fundamental condition of the priesthood was this cleansing from all defilement of sin. As indicated by Adams,

"The washing of the body is always a symbol of the cleansing of the heart, and without that, no one, and least of all the man who would engage in holy service, is fit to appear before God. Our God is a consuming fire. He is one whose moral perfection burns as a flame (Isa. 10:17)."²

2. The Investiture.

Aaron and his sons were washed at the same time; but then Aaron, as High Priest, was separated from his sons for the robing and the anointing. The sons had to wait until after the sin-offering and the ram of the burnt-

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1. Cf. Adams, John: The Mosaic Tabernacle, p. 30.

2. Ibid, pp. 30, 31.

offering were killed and offered before they were anointed, though they were clothed immediately following the anointing of Aaron. The specific Scriptural reference for the investiture is as follows:

"And Moses brought Aaron and his sons, and washed them with water. And he put upon him the coat, and girded him with the girdle, and clothed him with the robe, and put the ephod upon him, and he girded him with the skilfully woven band of the ephod, and bound it unto him therewith. And he placed the breastplate upon him: and in the breastplate he put the Urim and Thummim. And he set the mitre upon his head; and upon the mitre, in front, did he set the golden plate, the holy crown; as Jehovah commanded Moses."¹

The above Scriptural reference records the actual clothing of Aaron, but it is necessary to turn to the twenty-eighth chapter of Exodus to understand how the garments were made and of what material they were constituted. In Exodus the garments were a breastplate, an ephod, a robe, a coat of checker work, a mitre, and a girdle. When Aaron was consecrated, according to the record in Leviticus, the garments were put on him in the following order: the coat, the girdle, the robe of the ephod, the breastplate, the mitre, and the golden plate on the mitre.

a. The Coat.

The coat was of fine linen and embroidered. This garment was worn underneath the other garments and

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1. Leviticus 8:6-9.

therefore was hidden. The significance of a garment which doubtless was of the finest linen and also of the richest embroidery, being hidden, symbolizes the inward purity and sanctity of the High Priest. Linen is a symbol of righteousness: "The fine linen is the righteous acts of the saints."¹

b. The Girdle.

The girdle which was of fine twined linen, and of blue, purple, and scarlet, needlework,² was not the girdle used to keep the ephod in its place but rather was the girdle about the loins under the linen coat. A girdle is the symbol of strength.³

c. The Robe of the Ephod.

The robe was worn below the ephod and was made of one piece, leaving only a hole for the head to come through. Kellogg has given the best meaning of the robe of the ephod as it is described in Exodus 28:31-35:

"The robe of the ephod' was woven in one piece, and all of blue. In that it was thus without seam, was symbolized the wholeness and absolute integrity necessary to him who should bear the high priestly office. In that it was made all of blue, the colour which symbolized the God of heaven as manifesting Himself to

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1. The Revelation 19:8.
2. Exodus 39:29.
3. Isaiah 22:21.

Israel in condescending love, in the holy law and covenant, this robe of the ephod specially marked the high priest as the minister of Jehovah and of His revealed law."¹

d. The Ephod.

The ephod was the outermost garment worn over the blue robe. It consisted of two parts, one covered the front, the other the back. The ephod was very costly and made of gold, blue, purple, scarlet and of fine twined linen.² Its main feature was the onyx gems that rested on the priest's shoulders.³ These are believed to have been the sardonyx, the best kind of onyx, with its layers of black, white and red.⁴ The names of the twelve tribes were graven on them with six on each side. Thus the priest bore the names of the tribes of Israel on his shoulders when mediating between them and God.⁵

e. The Breastplate.

The breastplate was made of material similar to the ephod, foursquare and doubling back upon itself so as to form a sort of pouch.⁶ In the pouch were placed two objects

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1. Kellogg, S. H.: The Book of Leviticus, p. 194.

2. Cf. Exodus 28:6.

3. Cf. Exodus 28:9-12.

4. Cf. Moorehead, W. G.: Studies in the Mosaic Institutions, p. 96.

5. Exodus 28:12, (cf).

6. Cf. Exodus 28:16, 30.

which are known as Urim and Thummim; meaning in The Hebrew, according to Gesenius, light and completeness or perfection.¹ On the front of the breastplate were placed in settings twelve precious jewels on each of which was engraved the name of one of the twelve tribes. These jewels were set in four rows with three stones to a row.² The stones in the breastplate, according to Moorehead, were probably as follows:³

The First Row

Carbuncle, Zebulun.	Topaz, Issachar.	Sardius, Judah.
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The Second Row

Diamond, Gad.	Sapphire, Simeon.	Emerald, Reuben.
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The Third Row

Amethyst, Benjamin.	Agate, Manasseh.	Ligure, Ephraim.
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The Fourth Row

Jasper, Naphtali.	Onyx, Asher.	Beryl, Dan.
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f. The Miter and Golden Plate.

This was the head-dress of the high priest. The

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Cf.

1./Gesenius, W.: Hebrew and English Lexicon of O.T., pp. 28, 1068.

2. Cf. Exodus 28:17-21.

3. Moorehead, W. G.: Studies in Mosaic Institutions, p. 97.

white mitre was something like a turban; and affixed to it, by a lace of blue, was the golden plate with the words "HOLY TO JEHOVAH" engraved upon it.¹ The crowning of the priest in this fashion is seen to be significant. As stated by Rhind,

"The head is the seat of intelligence; and the crowning the priest's head thus with white, showed that all there was pure. So every movement, every passing thought, was hallowed in his mind, who was the Holy one of God."²

The golden plate bearing the inscription signified that the highest crown and excellence of the high priest was holiness. This revealed to the high priest that in relation to the highest office in the theocracy, and in his personal life, he was not to rest on outward forms or rites but rather inwardly to be holy.³

g. Symbolism of the High Priest's Dress.

The garments are to be regarded symbolically; for all were given by the command of God. The fine linen coat was the symbol of righteousness⁴; the girdle the symbol of strength;⁵ the seamless robe of the ephod symbolized the wholeness of the priest; the breastplate,

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1. Exodus 28:36, 37.

2. Rhind, W. G.: The High Priest in His Robes of Glory, p. 17.

3. Cf. Moorehead, W. G.: Studies in Mosaic Institutions, p. 97.

4. Cf. The Revelation 19:8.

5. Cf. Isaiah 22:21.

including the twelve jewels, signified the twelve tribes being near the heart of the priest;¹ and the miter and golden plate signified that the highest crown for a priest was holiness.²

The garments of the high priest marked him as the minister of the tabernacle. The colours of the garments, namely blue, purple, scarlet and white also symbolized by their modifications of light the God of light to whom the high priest was mediating for man. Blue is the colour of the overarching heavens to which man turns his eyes in thoughts of God;³ purple is the color of royalty, which signified that God was a ruler;⁴ the scarlet reminds man at once of the blood which stands as a symbol of life and points to God as the Living One;⁵ the white is the symbol of purity and holiness,⁶ and represents the high priest as the minister of God, the Most Holy One.⁷

3. The Anointing.

Aaron, the High Priest, being clothed with the holy garments, was left alone while Moses anointed the tabernacle and its furniture; and then later he was anointed.

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1. Cf. Exodus 28:29.

2. Cf. Exodus 28:36.

3. Cf. Psalm 115:3.

4. Cf. Daniel 5:21.

5. Cf. Matthew 22:32.

6. Cf. Daniel 12:10.

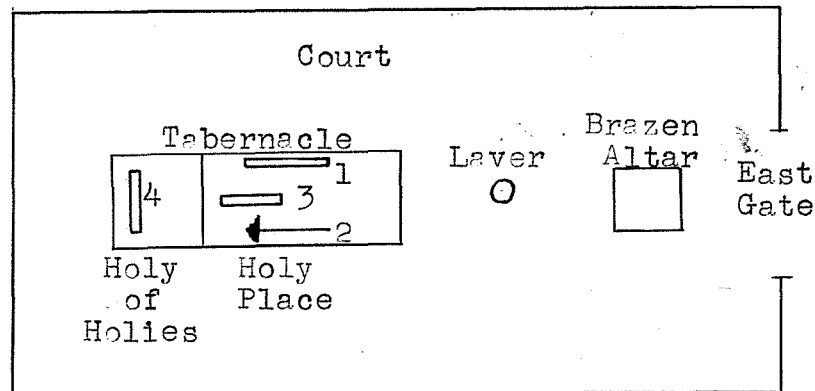
7. Cf. Kellogg, S. H.: The Book of Leviticus, pp. 193-194.

The sons of Aaron were not anointed until later in the consecration sacrificial service. The Scriptural record is as follows:

"And Moses took the anointing oil, and anointed the tabernacle and all that was therein, and sanctified them. And he sprinkled thereof upon the altar seven times, and anointed the altar and all its vessels, and the laver and its base, to sanctify them. And he poured of the anointing oil upon Aaron's head, and anointed him, to sanctify him."¹

The tabernacle is not to be given special study in this thesis, but it is very prominent in the function of the priesthood and therefore a drawing of it with its furniture is here presented.

PLAN OF THE TABERNACLE



Furniture

1. Table of Shew bread 3. Altar of Incense
2. Golden Candlestick 4. Ark of the Covenant

. . .

1. Leviticus 8:10-12.

The anointing of the tabernacle and all its furniture declares it, too, to be consecrated to the service of God. When he anointed the tabernacle, Moses sprinkled the oil, but he poured it on Aaron's head when he anointed him. This profusion of oil on Aaron, as high priest, was not applied either to the tent or upon Aaron's sons. There was so much oil used that the priest's person from head to foot was touched by and brought under the power of the sacred oil; this is declared in the following Scripture:

"It is like the precious ointment upon the head, that ran down upon the beard, even Aaron's beard; that went down to the skirts of his garments."¹

The anointing with oil is definitely stated to be for the purpose of sanctification.² As the other rites of the consecration have revealed symbolic significance, the anointing with oil also has its symbolic meaning. Oil, in Israelitish times, was used for purification and sanctification in the case of leprosy and also in the offerings or consecratory rites.³

4. The Consecration Sacrifices.

The entire list of sacrifices was observed in the

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1. Psalm 133:3.

2. Cf. Leviticus 8:10-12.

3. Cf. Deuteronomy 18:4; Nehemiah 10:37, 39; Leviticus 14:15-18.

consecration of the priests. The ceremony began with the sin-offering,¹ to show that before any progress could be made there had to be the judging and removal of sin. Then came the burnt-offering, as a savour of sweet smell, which was to precede propitiation.² And last was the ram of consecration,³ which corresponded to the peace-offering.

a. The Sin Offering.

The washing of Aaron and his sons had preceded this offering, but it did not set aside the necessity of presenting a sin-offering. The Scriptural reference is as follows:

"And he brought the bullock of the sin-offering: and Aaron and his sons laid their hands upon the head of the bullock of the sin-offering. And he slew it; and Moses took the blood, and put it upon the horns of the altar round about with his finger, and purified the altar, and poured out the blood at the base of the altar, and sanctified it, to make atonement for it. And he took all the fat that was upon the inwards, and the caul of the liver, and the two kidneys, and their fat; and Moses burned it upon the altar. But the bullock, and its skin, and its flesh, and its dung, he burnt with fire without the camp; as Jehovah commanded Moses."⁴

Aaron and his sons laid their hands upon the head of the bullock, thereby identifying themselves with the victim, and transferring their sin from off themselves to

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1. Cf. Leviticus 8:14.
2. Cf. Leviticus 8:18.
3. Cf. Leviticus 8:22.
4. Leviticus 8:14-17.

the bullock thus appointed to bear it for them. Moses then slew the bullock. Death at once followed the transfer of sin upon the victim's head -- death by the hand of another. Moses took the blood and put it on the horns of the altar, thereby purifying the altar; after which he poured the blood at the bottom of the altar and sanctified it,¹ to make reconciliation upon it. Soltau speaks of the offering in this consecration as follows:

"It is perhaps expressive of a knowledge of the value of the blood, as to its cleansing power -- Moses the clean person handling it, and applying its value to the horns of the altar; the horns representing the power, or the strength of the altar."²

b. The Burnt-Offering.

The burnt-offering for the consecration is designated a ram in the Scriptures:

"And he presented the ram of the burnt-offering: and Aaron and his sons laid their hands upon the head of the ram. And he killed it; and Moses sprinkled the blood upon the altar round about. And he cut the ram into its pieces; and Moses burnt the head, and the pieces, and the fat. And he washed the inwards and the legs with water; and Moses burnt the whole ram upon the altar: it was a burnt-offering for a sweet savor: it was an offering made by fire unto Jehovah; as Jehovah commanded Moses."³

The burnt-offering is significant for it represents the whole-hearted consecration to the service of God in

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1. Cf. Leviticus 8:15.

2. Soltau, H. W.: An Exposition of the Tabernacle, pp. 363-365.

3. Leviticus 8:18-21.

the service of the priesthood. Soltau assures that this is true from the meaning of the burnt-offering:

"The burnt-offering is the highest sacrifice in Scripture, for all of it ascended from off the fire of the altar as a sweet savour unto the Lord. The Hebrew word (Ohlah) translated 'burnt-offering' means in reality that which 'ascends' or 'goes up'. It designates a sacrifice which entirely ascended in fragrance."¹

Aaron and his sons laid their hands upon the head of the ram, and then the victim was killed. Again they identified themselves with the victim, and in so doing transferred to it all their sins and disobedience. Moses sprinkled the blood upon the altar and about the altar. Thus it was completely consecrated by blood. So there was blood on the horns, blood poured at the bottom of the altar, and now blood sprinkled all around. These sacrifices would make a deep impression both on the priests being consecrated and the congregation which was observing the rites.

c. The Ram of Consecration.

The last sacrifice offered was the ram of consecration. As in the other sacrifices, Aaron and his sons laid their hands on the victim before Moses slayed it. Then with the blood, Moses sprinkled the tip of Aaron's right ear, and placed blood upon the thumb of his right

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1. Soltau, H. W.: An Exposition of the Tabernacle, p. 367.

hand, and upon the great toe of his right foot. The whole body was consecrated to the service of God as indicated by this sacrificial service. The meaning of this service is best described by Dr. Moorehead:

"The significance of this action should not escape the reader. The whole person and career of the priest were thus brought under power of the blood. He had a blood-stained ear that he might hear and obey the Divine injunctions, that he might understand the word of Jeh and interpret it to the people. His will was brought into subjection to the will of His Lord that he might be a faithful minister in things pertaining to God. He had a blood-stained hand that he might execute, rightly and efficiently, the services of the sanctuary and the duties of his great office. He had likewise a blood-stained foot that he might walk in the statutes and commandments of the Lord blameless, and tread the courts of the Lord's house as the obedient servant of the Most High. Sacrificial blood, the blood of the atonement, is here, as everywhere else, the foundation for saints and sinners, for priests and sinners, for priests and ministers alike, in all their relations with God."¹

After the blood was placed on the parts of the body and before the whole of the offering was burned on the altar, it was placed upon the hands of Aaron and his sons, and waved before the Lord.² This indicated the formal placing of the sacrifices in the charge of Aaron and his sons.

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1. Moorehead, W. G.: Article "Symbolism of Consecration", Vol. IV, The International Standard Bible Encyclopaedia, p. 24441.
2. Leviticus (Cf.) 8:27.

d. The Sacrificial Feast.

The sacrificial feast concludes the rites of consecration. Moses commanded Aaron and his sons to boil the flesh at the door of the tent of meeting and there eat it with the bread that was in the basket of consecration. For seven days they were to remain in the tent of meeting and continue with the consecration services. This signified that Aaron and his sons were in intimate communion with God, as ministers in his tabernacle, to offer his offerings and eat at His table. It also signified that the needed strength for the duties of the office would be supplied by God whom they were to serve, in that they would be fed at the altar.¹

C. The Consecration of the Levites

1. Their Origin.

There is interest in knowing the origin of a group of people who are called by God to be His special ministers. Levi, the father of that tribe known as Levites, was one of the sons of Jacob and Leah.² The beginning of this priestly tribe was darkened by deceit and murder. Levi and Simeon violated the covenant which was made between the tribes of Schechem and Jacob; they obtained

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1. Cf. Kellogg, S. H.: The Book of Leviticus, p. 211.
2. Cf. Genesis 29:34.

vengeance by killing and plundering the vicinity of the unsuspecting tribesmen.¹ Jacob cursed these two tribes, Levi and Simeon, because of their vengeance of the tribe of Schechem after permitting intermarriage; and they were scattered in Israel.²

The Levites were willing to take their stand for Jehovah when requested by Moses at the time of the worshiping of the golden calf,³ and it was for that reason that Jehovah later chose them as special servants to assist Aaron and his sons. The calling of the Levites is later confirmed through Jehovah's words to Moses:

"And Jehovah spake unto Moses, saying, And I, behold, I have taken the Levites from among the children of Israel instead of all the first-born that openeth the womb among the children of Israel; and the Levites shall be mine: for all the first-born are mine; on the day that I smote all the first-born in the land of Egypt I hallowed unto me all the first-born in Israel, both man and beast; mine they shall be: I am Jehovah."⁴

The Levites were appointed to take care of the tabernacle;⁵ and were called to be consecrated as substitutes for the first-born of Israel.⁶ Habershon explains the gradual unfolding of God's plan in the choice of the

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1. Cf. Genesis 34.
2. Cf. Genesis 49:5-7.
3. Cf. Exodus 32:26-29.
4. Numbers 3:11-13.
5. Cf. Numbers 3:7.
6. Cf. Numbers 3:12.

Levites as follows:

"Devotion to God and obedience always bring definite blessing, but no acts of ours ever induced God to choose us. We were 'Chosen in Him before the foundation of the world' -- the obedience but proves the choice. In the call of Moses and Aaron God gave the first indication of His purpose towards the tribe, but He only unfolded it gradually. In Exodus 13, when claiming the first-born for Himself, He said, 'The firstborn shalt thou redeem,' but He did not then tell Moses that it was to be done by taking the Levites instead. The consecration of Aaron and his sons was commanded and described during Moses' first forty days on Sinai, and all this anticipated the calling out of the whole tribe for the special service of the Tabernacle."¹

2. Their Purification.

Moses was told to prepare the Levites for their office by cleansing them; he was to sprinkle the water of expiation upon them, shave off the hair from all their body, and command them to wash themselves and their clothes.² The washing, as in the case of the consecration of Aaron and his sons, signified cleansing in preparation for divine service. The whole congregation was called to the tent of meeting to observe the consecration, and then Aaron offered the Levites to Jehovah as a wave-offering.³ The anointing, the investiture, and the consecration sacrifices of Aaron and his sons were not

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1. Habershon, Ada: The Priests and Levites, pp. 69, 70.

2. Cf. Numbers 8:7.

3. Cf. Numbers 8:9, 11.

identical with the cleansing of the Levites but the consecratory procedure was similar. Moses acted as Mediator representing God and dealing with the Levites but Aaron had a part in the ceremony by offering the Levites for a wave-offering unto Jehovah.¹

3. The Duties to Which the Levites were Consecrated.

It is necessary to understand the duties of the Levites in order to understand the reason for their consecration. The duties of the priests were considered in a previous chapter of this thesis, but the Levites were consecrated to duties different from those of Aaron and his sons, therefore this study of the Scriptures is required for a clear conception of their consecration.

Levi had three sons; namely, Kohath, Gershon, and Merari. In the wilderness travel they were to have charge of the fabric of the tabernacle, its vessels, and the honor and responsibility of removing them, after the priests carefully covered them, taking them from one camp to the next. They were what might be termed temple porters. The Gershonites, in the encampment, were on the west side of the tabernacle;² the Kohathites were on the south;³ and the Merarites on the north; while Moses and

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1. Cf. Numbers 8:11.
2. Cf. Numbers 3:23.
3. Cf. Numbers 3:29.

Aaron with his sons pitched their tents on the east side directly in front of the tabernacle.¹ For an understanding of the relationship which the Levites had to the priests, a drawing of the plan of encampment will be found on the following page.

In describing the work of each section of the tribe of Levi, McCheyne writes as follows:

"The Kohathites upon their shoulders bare
The holy vessels covered with all care;
The Gershonites receive an easier charge,
Two waggons' full of cords and curtains large;
Merari's sons four ponderous waggons' load
With boards and pillars of the House of God."²

The office of the Kohathites is next to that of Aaron and his sons in sanctity. They could not approach the most holy things until preparation had been made by the priests; but when all was in readiness the Kohathites bare them upon their shoulders. They had charge of the ark, the table, the candlestick, the altars, the vessels of the sanctuary, the screen and all the service thereof.³

The Gershonites had charge of the curtains of the tabernacle, the tent of meeting, its covering, the hangings of the court and the screen for the door of the court.⁴

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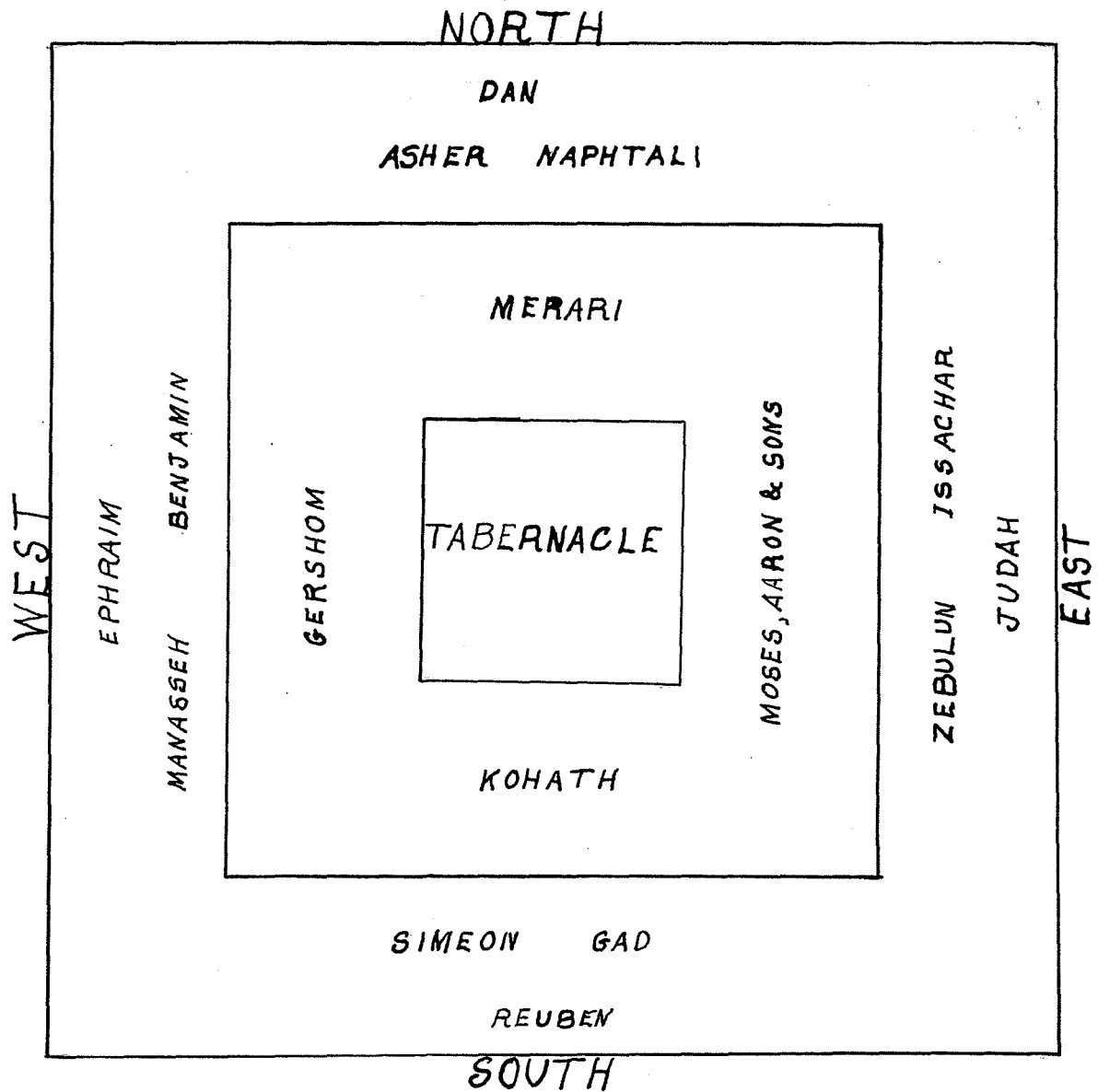
1. Cf. Numbers 3:38.

2. Habershon, Ada: The Priests and Levites, p. 38.

3. Cf. Numbers 3:31.

4. Cf. Numbers 3:25, 26.

PLAN OF ENCAMPMENT



The Merarites had charge of the boards of the Tabernacle, the bars, the pillars, the sockets, pins, cords and all their instruments of service.¹

D. Summary

The consecration of the priesthood was very impressive to the congregation watching the ceremony and to those participating in it. The terms "priests" and "Levites" refer to specific groups since each had a distinctive and separate consecration service and was designated to specific work. Aaron and his sons were a family of the tribe of Levi and were specifically consecrated to be priests; but the Levites as a tribe were later consecrated to be porters of the tabernacle and to assist Aaron and his sons in the priestly functions. Aaron and his sons had a much more elaborate consecration than did the Levites. The symbolic meaning of the washing, the investiture, the anointing and the sacrifices was of striking significance because they point typically to a greater Priest, who, we shall see in a later chapter, is Jesus Christ. Aaron, as High Priest, has the prominent place in the investiture. The Levites were consecrated because of their willingness to stand on the side

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1. Cf. Numbers 3:36, 37.

of Jehovah at the testing time of Israel's idolatry, and though their consecration ceremony was not the same as that of Aaron and his sons, they did receive similar purification before they were directed to their duties.

PART TWO

THE NATURE AND FUNCTION OF JESUS CHRIST
AS COMPARED WITH
THE OLD TESTAMENT PRIEST

CHAPTER IV

THE HIGH PRIESTLY QUALIFICATIONS
AND
MINISTRY OF JESUS CHRIST

CHAPTER IV

THE HIGH PRIESTLY QUALIFICATIONS AND MINISTRY OF JESUS CHRIST

A. Introduction

The Old Testament priesthood revealed its aim to be that of offering sacrifice by means of which sin was removed and the people of God enabled to enter into His presence. This priesthood never fully accomplished its purpose; it was a shadow or a representation of a priest who would succeed in bringing people into the presence of God. The real priesthood, which has effected eternal truth in accomplishing the aim of the Old Testament type, is that of Jesus Christ as presented in the Epistle to the Hebrews.¹ This epistle contains the only reference in the New Testament to the phrase "High Priest" as referring to Jesus Christ, and it has been spoken of as "God's exposition of the books of Exodus and Leviticus."² Nairne has well stated the theme and essence of the Epistle to

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1. Cf. Nairne, A.: The Epistle of Priesthood, p. 325.

2. Rhind, W. G.: The High Priest in His Robes, p. 4.

the Hebrews as follows:

"The Priesthood is the main theme of the Epistle. It comes almost at once, like a motif in a piece of music. First, the Son is said to have made priestly purification of the sins that priests are busy with (1.3), then comes an echo of the idea in 1.7, 14, where the angels are called sacerdotal ministers in the eternal Temple. Then at the end of ch. 2 the picture of divine and victorious humiliation is broken off with the phrase: 'Whence it behooved him to be made in all things like to the brethren, that he might become pitiful and faithful as High priest on the Godward side for the propitiating the sins of the people. For in that he himself has suffered being tried in temptation, he is able to come to the rescue of those who are in trial.' Why High priest? As yet the title is not explained; only our ears are prepared. Then section by section the letter takes up the idea; the title is repeated; more and more is said about it; and at last in chs. 7 to 10 the meaning is worked out."¹

There can be no mistake as to the central theme of the Epistle to the Hebrews because the writer himself makes especial mention of it, not only by repetition and explanation but by calling marked attention to it in these words:

"Now in the things which we are saying the chief point is this We have such a high priest, who sat down on the right hand of the throne of the Majesty in the heavens, a minister of the sanctuary, and of the true tabernacle, which the Lord pitched, not man."²

In order that Christ might truly be called a priest he must meet the necessary qualifications and perform the priestly duties. It is the purpose of this chapter, as well as of the second part of the present study, to discover

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1. Nairne, A.: Op. cit., p. 136.
2. Hebrews 8:1-2.

in the Epistle to the Hebrews how Christ qualified as a High Priest and the duties He had and now has to attend to as one in this office.

B. The Qualifications of Jesus Christ as High Priest.

1. He was Chosen of God.

The chief requirement of a priest was that he should be divinely chosen. He must not take the office as an honor to himself, but only when called of God, as was Aaron. Christ did not glorify himself but was chosen, as is stated:

"So Christ also glorified not himself to be made a high priest, but he that spake unto him, Thou art my Son, This day have I begotten thee."¹

The high priest's work rested wholly on the fact of his being called of God, which indicated that God would accept his intercession and sacrifice. No one, conscious of his own sinfulness, would take such an important office. As in the Aaronical priesthood only those chosen were able to officiate as priests, so Christ was chosen by God. More than Aaron, Christ was God's Son. This reveals that the New Testament priesthood is rooted in the sonship, and that it was the Father who chose the Son to be High Priest.

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1. Hebrews 5:5.

2. He was Taken from among Men.

The first Scriptural record of Christ being a High Priest is found in Hebrews 2:17. This reference, in its context, reveals the humanity of Christ:

"For both he that sanctifieth and they that are sanctified are all of one: for which cause he is not ashamed to call them brethren. . . Since then the children are sharers in flesh and blood, he also himself in like manner partook of the same; that through death he might bring to naught him that had the power of death, that is, the devil. . . For verily not to angels doth he give help, but he giveth help to the seed of Abraham. Wherefore it behooved him in all things to be made like unto his brethren, that he might be a merciful and faithful high priest in things pertaining to God, to make propitiation for the sins of the people."¹

God, in order to save man, had to take on the limitations of humanity in the form of man. Jesus knew the weakness, the temptations, the longings, and all the different experiences through childhood, youth and young manhood which each man knows. The Scriptural reason for this is as follows:

"For every high priest, being taken from among men, is appointed for men in things pertaining to God, that he may offer both gifts and sacrifices for sins: who can bear gently with the ignorant and erring, for that he himself also is compassed with infirmity."²

Christ had to identify himself with human beings in order to save them, and therefore he was made like them. His humanity made him a merciful and faithful high priest.

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1. Hebrews 2:11-17.
2. Hebrews 5:1-2.

Being human he could thoroughly represent humanity and mediate for man. If he had come to save angels he could have the nature of an angel, but for man's salvation he became man.

3. He is a Sympathetic High Priest.

The priests of the Old Testament were able to represent the people and sympathize with them because they also were human beings and passed through man's common temptations. The Israelites were not afraid to approach the priests because they knew the priests understood them. Christ, even though the Son of God, was sympathetic, and Christians are encouraged by the Scriptures to approach Him.

"Having then a great high priest, who hath passed through the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold fast our confession. For we have not a high priest that cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; but one that hath been in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin. Let us therefore draw near with boldness unto the throne of grace, that we may receive mercy, and may find grace to help us in time of need."¹

And so mankind can feel bold to draw near to this high priest because He understands them and is in the position to grant them mercy and grace. Mantle has considered the sympathizing high priest as follows:

"The thought of Jesus as a sympathizing High Priest

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1. Hebrews 4:14-16.

is ordinarily applied to those who are in circumstances of trial and suffering. But the truth has a far deeper meaning and application. It has special reference to the temptation which meets the soul in the desire to live wholly for God. Jesus suffered, being tempted. It was the temptation to refuse the Father's will that caused His deepest suffering."¹

If Christ was tempted, it was possible for him to sin. But He did not sin, even though he was tempted, and therefore he has power over sin. Yet He bears all the human characteristics to perfectly understand mankind and sympathize with them.

4. He is a Faithful High Priest.

a. Christ's Faithfulness to God.

A priest, if he is appointed, must be faithful both to God and man. Christ as a Son was faithful to God, who "appointed him, as also was Moses in all God's house."² Moses as a servant was faithful in God's ministry. Christ, as God's Son, is greater than Moses, yet he, too, was faithful to God's appointment of Him over His house.

Christ was made like his brethren in order that he might be a faithful High Priest.³ Christ's faithfulness as a Son is testified to by the Father: "This is my beloved Son in whom I am well pleased."⁴ Christ was

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1. Mantle, Gregory, J.: Better Things, p. 73.
2. Hebrews 3:2.
3. Hebrews 2:17.
4. Mark 1:11.

faithful to God to the end of his earthly ministry as is revealed by His words to the Father in the Garden of Gethsemane: "Not my will but thine be done."¹

b. Christ's Faithfulness to Man.

The Christian is urged to draw near to the Throne of Grace without hesitancy because he can receive compassion and help in time of need.² The phrase "help in time of need" reveals to man that there is One who is faithful in his priestly function. Otherwise man would not be able to approach the Throne of Grace with confidence and assurance that help would be given in his time of need. Mantle has well illustrated the faithfulness of the high priest to man as follows:

"The word translated 'help' signifies to run at the cry, or 'in the very nick of time'. Most of us know what it is to hear in a room upstairs a cry of weakness. The little one who has been put there to sleep awakens to find itself alone, and there goes up immediately a cry for help. The true mother puts aside her other work and runs to answer that cry. If when pressed by temptation, overwhelmed with sorrow, or over-burdened with care, we only look upward, -- there are times when we cannot cry, -- a look that means 'Lord help me!' our compassionate High Priest will run at the cry.

The words also suggest well-timed help. It always comes in time of need. The rush of the Tempter may be sharp and fierce, but quicker than the attack of the foe will come the help of the faithful High Priest."³

The Israelites did not have such a high priest as

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1. Mark 14:36.
2. Cf. Hebrews 4:16.
3. Mantle, Gregory, J.: Better Things, p. 75.

Christ, in faithfulness and in mercy, from whom they could always receive the needed help. For their high priests were never present at a Throne of Grace, and neither were they always faithful. The writer of the Epistle to the Hebrews indicates that God provided a better priesthood when he sent Christ, His faithful high priest. In order that man may not lose his confidence, or release his grip upon the hope of a place in the priestly household of sons, God teaches him through the experiences of life that he is always in need of a faithful and merciful high priest. Christ is the answer to his need.

5. He is an Immutable High Priest.

Aaron and his sons were set aside to be the family of priests, and so the high priests needed to be descendants of the Aaronical line. There was no changing from one family to another. Although the Aaronical line of high priests did not change, yet the high priests themselves changed because of death. Christ was not of the Aaronical line of priests but He was one who, because of His eternal Godhead would hold the office of high priest forever, and would not be changed through death which could not hold him. The unchangeableness of Christ as high priest is spoken of in the Scriptures as follows:

"And they indeed have been made priests many in number, because that by death they are hindered from continuing: but he, because he abideth for ever, hath

his priesthood unchangeable."¹

The writer of the Epistle to the Hebrews places the unchanging high priest in contrast to the ever-changing priesthood of the Aaronical line. In the Old Covenant one could live an intermittent spiritual life because of the character of the priesthood. During the functioning of an ideal priest, who might be fully yielded to God, obedient, faithful to God and well pleasing in his ministry to mankind, the spiritual life of the people would rise to a great height. He might hold the office of high priest for an exceptionally long lifetime, but eventually he would have to answer the call of death when his descendants must carry on as did he at the death of his forebears. The successor of an ideal high priest may be neither faithful to God or to man, and his character would reflect on the spiritual life of the people, bringing it from a high level to a low one. Under the New Covenant the spiritual life of a people would not be altered by the changing priesthood for Christ is a high priest who abideth forever. Mantle has stated the truth of the immutability of Christ's priesthood as follows:

"Whatever excuse there might be for living an intermittent life under the ever-changing priesthood of the Old Covenant, there is no possible excuse in these New Covenant days; for the life which our High Priest

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1. Hebrews 7:23, 24.

ministers from within the veil, is, like Himself, an unchanging life."¹

There was need for a continuing priesthood. A transitory one brought little help. Christ is the immutable high priest -- God's answer to man's need.

C. The Ministry of Jesus Christ as High Priest.

1. He Obtained Eternal Redemption through the Sacrifice of Himself.

Every priest had specific duties to perform. A priest, as was shown earlier in the present study, was recognized as the mediator between man and God. The priest of the Old Testament made atonement by which man was redeemed from specific sinful acts. Christ did not only obtain redemption for specific acts of sin but for sins past, present, and future. If Christ were ministering on earth he would not be a priest at all.² Christ has obtained a ministry which is more excellent, in that he is the mediator of a better covenant, which has been enacted upon better promises.³ The Scriptural basis for the fact of Christ's obtaining eternal redemption is as follows:

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1. Mantle, Gregory, J.: Better Things, p. 77.
2. Hebrews 8:4.
3. Hebrews 8:6.

"But Christ having come a high priest of the good things to come, through the greater and more perfect tabernacle, not made with hands, that is to say, not of this creation, nor yet through the blood of goats and calves, but through his own blood, entered in once for all into the holy place, having obtained eternal redemption."¹

Blood was always used in the sacrifice for sin, but it was the blood of certain animals or birds, and not the blood of the worshiper or of the priest. In the case of Christ's eternal redemption, the Offerer and the Offering were one. The entrance into the Holy Place was the annual duty of the high priest. Christ, the high priest of the New Covenant, entered "once for all" into the Holy of Holies.

a. Eternal Redemption through Christ's Own Blood.

On the great annual day of atonement the high priest of the Old Covenant entered into the Holy of Holies, and by offering the blood of animals obtained an annual redemption for himself and for the people. The blood of animals had no intrinsic value in a year's atonement. The blood represented life, and therefore when offences were committed the offender needed to apply a sacrifice of life in order to be at one with God. There was no possible access to God except by the shedding of blood.²

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1. Hebrews 9:11, 12.

2. Cf. Hebrews 9:22.

The description of the slaying of the red heifer and the use of the ashes as a sin offering is described in the book of Numbers.¹ This sacrifice and use of the ashes for cleansing from sin also is a shadow of what Christ's death and blood later brought to the human race. Owen has made a helpful comparison of the blood of Christ and the ashes of the red heifer.²

The blood of bulls and goats (sheep were classed as goats, being all beasts of the flock) was the means of expiation of sin and purification under the Mosaic Law. In the Aaronical priesthood the sprinkling of blood was essential in sacrifice; and it was by the means of blood that the high priest gained access to God. It is by the blood of Christ that humanity is able to gain access to God under the New Covenant. The comparison of the two kinds of blood is over-emphasized in the material sense, because blood, whether it is of man or animal, in a material or chemical sense, is of little matter. The points that need to be considered are the symbolism of the blood and the difference between the victims that offered the blood. The blood of goats and calves which was shed on the Day of Atonement was shed involuntarily on the part

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1. Numbers 19:1-10.

2. Cf. Owen, John: The works of John Owen, Vol. VI, p. 289.

of the victim and without its knowledge of the sacrifice or its ability to understand the meaning of the giving up of its life. Christ, as the victim, in shedding His blood for the sins of others did so of His own accord, freely and lovingly. The blood which was the representation of the life of Christ is of incalculably more value than that of bulls and goats.¹ The blood of Christ is meant to refer to his life, to the atonement which he made at the altar of sacrifice for our sins. Christ was obedient unto death. This is referred to by Murray as follows:

"There are in Scripture two aspects of Christ's death -- that of atonement and that of fellowship. He died for us, for our sin, that we might not die. What our Substitute did in bearing the curse of sin, we cannot do, we need not do. He died to sin, and we died with Him and in Him. The blood is the divine expression for the former aspect: His own blood is the power and the worth of His death taken up and presented and for ever preserved in its energy and action before God. The sprinkling with the blood includes the transition to the second aspect. As the blood, as a heavenly reality, through the Holy Spirit works in us, the very disposition that animated Jesus in the shedding of it will be imparted to us."²

b. Christ obtained Eternal Redemption by entering the Holy of Holies.

The two compartments in the sanctuary were the Holy Place and the Holy of Holies. Only the high priest could go into the Holy of Holies, and then he only went

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1. Cf. Shepardson, Daniel: Studies in the Epistle to the Hebrews, pp. 398, 399.
2. Murray, Andrew: The Holiest of All, p. 298.

once a year. He needed to go every year to make atonement and offer sacrifice for himself and for the sins of the people. The fact that the high priest needed to make atonement and sacrifice each year not only for the people but for himself proved the imperfection of the Aaronical priesthood.

The Holy Place was separated from the Holy of Holies by a veil, and only the high priest was permitted to go behind the veil into the Holy of Holies. The veil between these holy places was rent asunder on the day Christ died on the Cross indicating, symbolically, that Christ, the High Priest, had gone within the veil "once for all" time. Symbolically, the veil which Christ, the High Priest, had to tear aside before he could enter the Holy of Holies was the veil of human flesh. The Holy of Holies which Christ entered is Heaven where He is seated at the right hand of God.¹ Christ entered the Holy of Holies once and he is there continually, so that it is not necessary for him each year to make sacrifice for himself and the people.

Knowing that Christ entered the Holy of Holies "once for all" time, man is assured that Christ as high priest obtained not an annual redemption but an eternal

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1. Cf. Hebrews 1:3.

redemption.

c. Christ Mediates the New Covenant.

Christ is the minister of the sanctuary and as such the mediator of the New Covenant. The sanctuary is the dwelling place of God, and the minister has the responsibility of bringing mankind into the presence of God. The mediator of the covenant has to prepare man for entering the sanctuary and meeting God. The Epistle to the Hebrews speaks of Christ's duty as a mediator in the New Covenant as follows:

"But now hath he obtained a ministry the more excellent, by how much also he is the mediator of a better covenant, which hath been enacted upon better promises."¹

"And for this cause he is the mediator of a new covenant. . . ."²

There must be harmony between God who dwells in the sanctuary and the worshippers. Into God's presence sin may not enter, and so sinful man is not able to see God. It is the duty of the minister of the sanctuary to secure man's entrance and prepare him to meet God. Therefore, before entering the dwelling place of God, man meets the mediator through whom he is able to be related to God. The more insight man has into the perfect work of Christ

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1. Hebrews 8:6.
2. Hebrews 9:15.

in heaven, the more confidence he will have in the perfection of his life within.¹ Murray says on this:

"A heavenly sanctuary and a heavenly High Priest ask for a heavenly Christian and a heavenly heart. And this is what the new covenant promises, and the Mediator of the new covenant gives indeed."²

2. He is interceding in the Holy of Holies.

Christ as the high priest has obtained eternal redemption for all men who are willing to accept by faith the sacrifice which he made for them on Calvary. Christ continues to minister to mankind. He is now in the Holy of Holies interceding:

"Wherefore also he is able to save to the uttermost them that draw near unto God through him, seeing he ever liveth to make intercession for them."³

"For Christ entered not into a holy place made with hands, like in pattern to the true; but into heaven itself, now to appear before the face of God for us:"⁴

a. The Old Testament Type of Christ's Intercession.

The Aaronic priests were commanded to burn incense before the Lord every morning and evening, thereby making a perpetual offering of incense.⁵ Incense is the symbol of prayer and intercession.⁶ Dr. John Owen, in

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1. Murray, Andrew: The Holiest of All, pp. 269, 270. (Cf.)
2. Ibid, p. 270.
3. Hebrews 7:25.
4. Hebrews 9:24.
5. Cf. Leviticus 16:12.
6. Cf. The Revelation 5:8.

his exposition of the Epistle to the Hebrews, presents three ways that the Old Testament typified Christ's intercession: First, by the living fire that was continually burning on the altar. By this fire the offerings and sacrifices were burned and the savor which ascended typified the prayers ascending to God. Second, by the daily sacrifices which were presented morning and evening, showing also that there was a continual application of expiation to the consciences of the people. And third, by the incense that was burned in the sanctuary every day which represented prayer filling its atmosphere.¹

b. The Place where Christ intercedes.

Christ did not enter into any holy place made by man's hands as did the priests of the Aaronic line. He entered into Heaven itself and is there ministering. Since Christ is in Heaven he is able to intercede for man as a high priest: for if he were on earth he would not be a priest at all.² The true Holy of Holies is where Christ sits at the right hand of the Father. Therefore He is heard by God when he prays for mankind and ever is able to be heeded by the Father.

As Christ prayed for his disciples while He was on

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1. Cf. Owen, John: The Works of John Owen, Vol. V, pp. 537, 538.

2. Cf. Hebrews 8:4.

earth, so He prays for all believers now that He has gone beyond the veil. De Vries speaks of Christ's intercession as the crowning glory of His priestly functions:

"Our Lord's intercession at the Father's right hand is the crowning glory of His priestly functions. Without this all His priestly devotion in life and death would be without avail. There is an impression among some believers that our Lord's intercession is required only when we are in extreme need and danger, as Peter was when Satan desired to sift him as wheat, for then it was that Jesus prayed for him that his faith should not fail. And this would be correct if our Lord's intercession were like the city-fire-department which is called upon for help when the house is on fire. The fact is that our house is always on fire and therefore always in need of His intercession. There is not a moment when we are not in need or danger, and therefore our Lord liveth evermore to make intercession for us. His intercession never ceases and is always prevailing. The very extent of our need and helplessness is the only limit of His intercession."¹

c. Christ intercedes as an Advocate.

John in his First Epistle speaks of Christ as an Advocate: "And if any man sin, we have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous."² An advocate is one who pleads the cause of another; that is what Christ the high priest is doing in heaven. The verb from which the substantive 'advocate' is derived is *παρα-καλέω*, which means to call to one's side.³ So the advocate is one who comes to one's side when a call for help is

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1. De Vries, Henri: The Lord's Anointed, p. 173.
2. I John 2:1.
3. Cf. Thayer, Joseph Henry: A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament, p. 482.

given. Everyone living under the Old Covenant would bring an offering to the priest when he realized that he had disobeyed the commandments of God. But under the New Covenant man need not continue to bring sacrifices to a priest, for he has now a high priest who is continually interceding for him: one who is pleading his case. Haldeman has framed a probable intercessory prayer which Christ is making to the Father for the believer:

"No longer look at that believer as he is in himself, but him as he is in me. Look at me and see him in me, as perfect as I am, as perfect as he will be revealed in the morning of the First Resurrection when I shall bring him bodily to Heaven and the enjoyment of its glories."¹

Christ is living to intercede for those who cry to him for help. Murray has well spoken of the unceasing intercession as follows:

"It is written 'He liveth to pray' -- not prayers with words, not prayers such as ours; but His whole Being, His presence before God, is one unceasing intercession. Without ceasing, there rises from Him to the Father a cry that never fails, for more spirit, and more life, and more blessing, and more of the love of God, to be manifested in the Church of Christ here on earth. And without interruption, there flows back from the Father, Who delights in the Son, a stream of blessing to His Son, to impart to His body upon earth. And, even so, there flows forth unceasingly from the Son, a stream of blessing into every heart that is open to receive it."²

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1. Haldeman, I.M.: The Tabernacle, Priesthood, and Offerings, pp. 231, 232.
2. Murray, Andrew: The Prophet Priest, pp. 34, 35.

D. Summary

In this chapter the high priestly qualifications and ministry of Jesus Christ have been studied. The Epistle to the Hebrews, known as the "epistle of priesthood," reveals Christ as a perfect high priest. Christ meets the qualifications of priesthood by being chosen by God, manifesting that he did not take the honor unto himself but was chosen by the Father. He was taken from among men to identify himself with humanity, whom he came to represent and for whom he mediates. He is a sympathetic high priest, for he was a human being tempted in all points as we are, and perfectly able to understand man. He is a faithful high priest for he was faithful to God and to man who always receives help as he calls upon Him in time of need. He is an immutable high priest, for death had no power over Him.

The ministry of Jesus Christ as high priest is summed up in two points: First, He obtained eternal redemption through the sacrifice of Himself; and second, He is interceding in the Holy of Holies, which is Heaven. Eternal redemption was obtained through Christ offering His own blood and therefore being both the Offerer and the Offering. Blood represents life, and the blood of Christ which was willfully and intelligently shed is of incalculably more value than the ashes of the red heifer and

the blood of bulls and goats, given under the Aaronic priesthood. Christ, as high priest, went into the Holy of Holies and obtained, not an annual redemption as the Aaronic high priest obtained each Atonement Day, but rather rent the veil of human flesh and went into the Holy of Holies for eternity. As high priest, Christ is the mediator of the New Covenant and he is interceding in Heaven for the believers. He is the advocate of the believer and pleads his cause at the Throne of Grace as He is seated at the right hand of the Father.

CHAPTER V

A COMPARISON OF CHRIST
AND THE
OLD TESTAMENT PRIESTS

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A. Introduction

As was stated in the previous chapter, Christ fully met the requirements of the priesthood and is at present ministering as High Priest. It is the purpose of this chapter to make a comparative study of the priesthood of Christ, as found in the Epistle to the Hebrews, with that of the Old Testament. Since Christ is compared with Melchizedek by the writer of the Epistle to the Hebrews, this study must include this comparison as well as that of Christ and Aaron, both as to their nature and ministry.

B. The Superiority of Christ
over the Aaronic Priesthood.

1. Christ is More Sympathetic.

Man, seeking to express his deepest desire and need, yearns for a mediator who thoroughly understands him in all his trials and failings. The Aaronic priest was "taken from among men" and therefore should have been

sympathetic with humanity in all its trials and needs.

But the human priests many times mocked humanity and were faithless.¹ Dr. F. B. Meyer spoke of the meaning associated to the word "priest" and the hypocrisies of the priestcraft as follows:

"That word has an ominous sound to our ears, because it has been associated with immoralities and cruelty. The world has never seen more unscrupulous or rapacious tyrants than its priests, whether of Baal or Molock, of Judaism or the Papacy. All through the ages it has seemed impossible for men to receive power in the spiritual realm without abusing it to the injury of those who sought their help. Study the history of the priesthood, which murdered Christ because he threw too strong a light upon its hypocrisies and villanies, and you have the history of every priestcraft which has darkened the world with crime, and saturated its soil with the blood of the noblest and saintliest of men."²

Man now in Christ need not contend with priests who know nothing of their infirmities:

"For we have not a high priest that cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; but one that hath been tempted in all things like as we are, yet without sin."³

When man feels utterly hopeless, and is helpless and in despair, he is directed to Christ who is a high priest, who can sympathize and mediate; for he perfectly understands man's experiences. Christ not only understands man in his trials and sufferings but also in the temptations which meet the soul that desires to live wholly for

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1. Cf. Micah 3:11; Malachi 1:6; Ezekiel 22:26.

2. Meyer, F. B.: The Way into the Holiest, p. 61.

3. Hebrews 4:15.

God. Christ remembers, in His exalted state in the Holy of Holies, the experiences of His earthly life. The Epistle to the Hebrews reveals some of his human feelings:

"Who in the days of his flesh, having offered up prayers and supplications with strong crying and tears unto him that was able to save him from death, and having been heard for his godly fear, though he was a Son, yet learned obedience by the things which he suffered; and having been made perfect, he became unto all them that obey him the author of eternal salvation; named of God a high priest after the order of Melchizedek."¹

The High Priest whose own heart was so burdened, bleeding, and broken is touched by man's infirmities and is a more sympathetic priest than the Aaronic priest who did not go through all man's experiences as did Christ.

2. The Superior Form of Christ's Appointment.

The appointment both of Aaron and of Christ was divine. Christ had a superior form of appointment, however, for He was appointed a high priest forever.² No oath of God went with the appointment of Aaron or Levi to the priestly functions; but Christ was appointed with an oath of God. Murray states the importance of the oath Christ took as follows:

"God calls us to consider the oath He took. He swears by Himself. He points to Himself and His honour as God, to Himself as the Eternal and Almighty God and

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1. Hebrews 5:7-10.

2. Cf. Hebrews 7:21.

charges us to believe that this Priest for ever He has given us does indeed save with an everlasting salvation, with a salvation in which the power of eternity works."¹

Christ not only was initiated into the office of high priest by the oath of God, which no other priest ever took, but he was the high priest of a priesthood which would not be altered, succeeded, or substituted. The Old Testament priesthood was appointed by the law and could only appoint men as high priests, while Christ was appointed a Son, as is stated in the Epistle to the Hebrews:

"For the law appointeth men high priests, having infirmity; but the word of the oath, which was after the law, appointeth a Son, perfected for evermore."²

3. The Duration of the Two Priesthoods.

The Old Testament priesthood originated by the calling and consecration of Aaron and his sons. Aaron was the first high priest, but being human he could not hold the office beyond the length of his life on earth. The Scriptures record the transition of the high priesthood from Aaron to that of his son Eleazar as follows:

"Take Aaron and Eleazar his son, and bring them up unto mount Hor; and strip Aaron of his garments, and put them upon Eleazar his son: and Aaron shall be gathered unto his people, and shall die there. And Moses did as Jehovah commanded: and they went up into mount Hor in the sight of all the congregation. And Moses stripped Aaron of his garments, and put them on

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1. Murray, Andrew: The Holiest of All, p. 249.
2. Hebrews 7:28.

Eleazar his son; and Aaron died there on the top of the mount. And when all the congregation saw that Aaron was dead, they wept for Aaron thirty days, even all the house of Israel."¹

There was a great lamentation when the first high priest died, although there was a plan provided by which a never-ending succession was to come from that Aaronic system. The congregation which observed the consecration of Aaron as high priest also had the sad experience of seeing the high priestly garments stripped from him just before he died. The need of the changing personality in carrying on the office of high priest reveals a weakness in that priesthood.

In contrast to the death of the first high priest, Christ is the high priest who shall never be stripped of his high priestly garments, and His office shall never be given to another. This distinction between the carnal institution of the priesthood and the spiritual is stated in the Scriptures as follows:

"Who hath been made, not after the law of a carnal commandment, but after the power of an endless life. For it is witnessed of him, Thou art a priest for ever after the order of Melchizedek."²

The priest who, unlike the Aaronic priests, is to remain forever instead of only for a generation, must be constituted differently from the Aaronic priests. The

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1. Numbers 20:25-29.
2. Hebrews 7:16, 17.

Aaronic priest originated according to the law which provided that the posterity of Aaron should be priests regardless of their inward character and qualifications. Christ was made priest, not according to the law but even contrary to the law, in virtue of the power which was within himself personally, which qualified him to represent men before God.¹ Dr. Gray speaks of the priesthoods of Aaron, Melchizedek, and of Christ as being everlasting, his words being:

"The priesthoods of Melchizedek, Aaron, and Christ were all everlasting priesthoods; that is they were continuing throughout their dispensations respectively; though their dispensations were of unequal duration. . . the first fact, is that Melchizedek, Aaron, and Messiah, had each a priesthood for ever: of this the language of the divine spirit is the evidence. The second fact, is that these priesthoods were of very unequal length: Melchizedek's lasting during his own life; Aaron's lasting during the Horeb covenant, say from his consecration at Mount Sinai till the burning of the temple at Jerusalem by Vespasian; but Christ's lasting from his incarnation to eternity."²

Every act of Christ's priesthood is wrought in the power of an endless life. Jesus is living in Heaven, and as He lives He works. His work is not such as has in it a succession of acts as Aaron's but He works the power of an endless life within our own life.

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1. Cf. Ebrard, John H.: Commentary on the Epistle to the Hebrews, p. 230.
2. Cf. Gray, James: Dissertation on Priesthoods, p. 99.

4. Christ's Superior Offering.

The Aaronic high priest was qualified to bring the blood of the atonement sacrifice into the Holy of Holies for the people, but he was not sinless for he needed to atone for his own sins also.¹ But Christ was truly free from guilt and did not need to first offer atonement for himself. The Scriptures state the truth of this as follows:

"Who needeth not daily, like those high priests, to offer up sacrifices, first for his own sins, and then for the sins of the people: for this he did once for all when he offered up himself."²

Christ did not need to present His offering every day, for His was a superior offering. Shepardson has summed up the superior type of sacrifice which Christ offered:

"Though the high priest of the Levitical system only offered a sacrifice on the day of Atonement, which, as it were, summed up all the daily sacrifices, yet he needed expiation for daily sins; but the Great High Priest of Christianity had no such daily necessity; since He was 'holy, guileless, undefiled, separated from sinners, made higher than the heavens.' Being perfected in having a 'character temptation-proof and a position inaccessible to temptation', He has no daily need for repeated sacrifice for Himself; nor does He need to offer repeated sacrifices 'For the sins of the people,' because 'once for all' He offered a perfect sacrifice. 'That sacrifice was Himself, presenting in His death an embodiment of exact and loving

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1. Cf. Leviticus 16:2-14.

2. Hebrews 7:27.

obedience to God, and of self-denying devotion to the welfare of man."¹

Therefore Christ was different in his offering in that He did not need to offer anything to make atonement for himself. He was inwardly and truly undefiled; while the Aaronic priests offered for themselves and then were only outwardly and symbolically undefiled. Christ also was different because He offered once, which was for all time, while the Aaronic priests had to offer daily.

There appears to be a problem in the statement that the high priest offered daily, since the day of atonement came yearly. The incense needed to be placed on the golden altar daily, but this was not the duty of the high priest. Ebrard assists in solving this problem by the following:

"He treats these days, in other words, as a discrete, not as a concrete quantity. So might a teacher say to an unruly pupil: 'Day after day' or 'day by day I must punish you,' without meaning by this, that he is wont, regularly every day at a certain hour, to punish him, but only, that, again and again, punishments are necessary."²

Christ presented Himself as an offering and that was done "once for all". He is both the Priest and the Victim. That which needed to be repeated by the Aaronical priests was, by virtue of having to be repeated, imperfect.

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1. Shepardson, Daniel: Studies in the Epistle to the Hebrews, p. 343.

2. Ebrard, John H.: Op. Cit., p. 239.

That which needs to be only offered once is perfect and lasts forever.¹

5. Christ's Superior Place of Service.

Every priest must have a place of service. The Aaronic priests served in the tabernacle day by day and attended to the duties as God had commanded. Christ is the Minister of the heavenly sanctuary. According to the author of the Epistle to the Hebrews:

"Now in the things which we are saying the chief point is this: We have such a high priest, who sat down on the right hand of the throne of the Majesty in the heavens, a minister of the sanctuary, and of the true tabernacle, which the Lord pitched, not man."²

The true sanctuary, the place where God dwells and unites with men, is "not made with men's hands." That tent which men covered with curtains and skins cannot be the place where heaven and earth are united. There was a veil which separated the Holy Place from the Holy of Holies, but this veil was rent in two at Christ's death, revealing to man that Christ was the high priest officiating for him and making it possible for man to enter into the Holy of Holies, which is heaven. The term "heaven" is confusing to people, for many think of it only as

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1. For a compilation of contrasts of the sacrifice of Christ with the sacrifice of the Old Testament see Mantle, Gregory: Better Things, pp. 114-119. Because of the value of this to the present study, it appears in Appendix I.
2. Hebrews 8:1-2.

being the place to which they hope to go when they die.

Andrew Murray speaks in the following of heaven as the sanctuary in which Christ is officiating as high priest.

"How many Christians think of heaven, as the place where Jesus is, as the place to which they hope to go when they die. But they think not of heaven as a life, and of God's nearness as an experience for every hour and of our daily walk. And how many who think of Jesus as the blessed One in whom they are there, by imputation, but know not of Him as lifting them and their whole life into heaven, and, by the Holy Spirit, bringing heaven into them.

Every priest has his temple, where he receives the worshippers, and leads them to find the God they seek. Jesus must have a temple too. The Heavens are the true sanctuary. Do not attempt to separate between the priest and the place of his dwelling. As His life in heaven is the life of our heart, we know the power of His priesthood."¹

C. The Similarity of Christ to Melchizedek.

Christ is referred to in the Scriptures as being a priest "after the order of Melchizedek."² He appeared as a priest many years after Melchizedek, yet the Scriptures state that Melchizedek was made like Christ. The basis for this consideration is the following verses:

"For this Melchizedek, king of Salem, priest of God Most High, who met Abraham returning from the slaughter of the kings and blessed him, to whom also Abraham divided a tenth part of all (being first, by interpretation, King of righteousness, and then also King of Salem, which is, King of peace; without father,

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1. Murray, Andrew: The Holiest of All, p. 266.
2. Hebrews 6:20; 5:6; 5:10.

without mother, without genealogy, having neither beginning of days nor end of life, but made like unto the Son of God), abideth a priest continually."¹

1. The "Priest-King" Relationship.

The name Melchizedek signified "King of Righteousness." He is also called the "King of Peace" because of the meaning of the name of the city over which he reigned. The character of Melchizedek, no doubt, corresponded with his name; and his government probably was distinguished by righteousness. The phrase, "Priest of God Most High," reveals that Melchizedek was a royal priest and a priestly king. He was a true priest of the One True God. Gray refers to the character of Melchizedek and his titles as follows:

"We ventured to presume that Melchizedek's conduct corresponded with his name: may we not also risk with a conjecture that the condition of Salem corresponded with its name. The language would then correspond with the facts, and both be typical. Melchizedek a righteous king, reigning over Salem, a peaceful city, and being at the same time Priest of the Most High God, was an excellent type of the High Priest, who reigns in righteousness, over the peaceful city of our God."²

The historical account of Melchizedek reveals him giving a priestly blessing, as is the privilege of the true priest; he blessed Abraham with the following words:

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1. Hebrews 7:1-3. For a comparison of Melchizedek and Jesus Christ, see Gray, James: Dissertation on the Priesthoods, pp. 110-112. Because of the value of this to the present study, it appears in Appendix II.

2. Gray, James: Op. Cit., p. 74.

"Blessed be Abraham of God most High, possessor of heaven and earth, and blessed be God Most High, who hath delivered thine enemies into thy hand."¹

Abraham gave a tenth of all his spoils to Melchizedek, thus recognizing him as a priest.

The reference to Christ being after "the order of Melchizedek" comes out of a Messianic Psalm:

"Jehovah hath sworn, and will not repent: Thou art a priest for ever After the order of Melchizedek."²

This fourth verse of the Psalm reveals the Messiah who in the preceding verses has been described as sitting at God's right hand and as being a priest as well as a king. Christ by his character and conduct showed Himself to be righteous and peaceful as was Melchizedek. He is a priest and also a King of kings.

In Genesis is the record of the meeting of Melchizedek and Abraham;³ about eight hundred years later the Psalmist mentions him again.⁴ One thousand years after David a man who is the type of Melchizedek comes and does his great work; forty years more pass by and an unknown writer refers to the prophecy in the Psalm and the history in Genesis, and interprets both in the light of the work and worth of the Great High Priest of Christianity.⁵

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1. Genesis 14:19.

2. Psalm 110:4.

3. Cf. Genesis 14:17-20.

4. Cf. Psalm 110:4.

5. Cf. Shepardson, Daniel: Op. Cit., p. 318.

Christ is known by mankind as both Priest and King; He rules over his followers, as well as intercedes for them.

2. The Eternal Element in Christ's Priesthood.

Melchizedek is spoken of as having no father, no mother, no genealogy, and having neither beginning of days or end of life.¹ In the Old Testament there is only the historical record of Melchizedek meeting Abraham, and then the prophetic element of the Psalm; there was no intention to indicate his birth or death because, apparently, that was of no importance to the historical account. As far as the Scriptures are concerned there is no record of his dying, and so he is stamped as a type of the ever-living priest. Being the priest of Salem, the city of peace, and having no recorded predecessors nor successors, Melchizedek is considered the eternal priest. The silence of the Scriptures upholds Melchizedek as a type of an eternal priesthood.

The eternal priesthood which Christ fulfills was "a priest forever after the order of Melchizedek."² Melchizedek lived to the end of his dispensation and was a priest throughout the whole of it. After this order Christ was a priest, because He is a priest throughout a whole dispensation. Christ has an unchangeable priesthood, one

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1. Cf. Hebrews 7:3.

2. Hebrews 6:20.

which will never descend to a successor. Christ, as high priest, lives forever and is now in the presence of God. The dispensation in which Christ is the officiating priest is the eternal one, and not only one of a type. Murray clarifies the meaning of the eternity of the priesthood of Christ in the following words:

"That word 'forever' that we meet in the expressions 'Priest for ever', 'eternal salvation, eternal redemption, perfected for ever,' not only signifies without end, but infinitely more. God is the eternal one; His life is eternal life. Eternal is that which is divine, in which there is no decay or change, but everlasting youth and strength, because God is in it. The everlasting priesthood of Christ means that He will do His work in us in the power of the eternal life, as that is lived in God and heaven. He lives for ever, therefore He can save completely."¹

The words "ever" and "eternal" are used seventeen times in the Epistle to the Hebrews. In order to really understand the term "eternal", it must be united with the Eternal One, God. Eternity is an attribute of Deity and of divine life, and has its existence in the fellowship of that life. Someone has said, according to Murray:

"He is the Ancient of Days, and yet the youngest of all, for he lives ever in the freshness of the eternal strength that knows no past."²

When God speaks of Christ as His Son being a priest forever, He not only means that the priesthood will never cease, but reveals also the root and power of this; it roots in

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1. Murray, Andrew: Op. Cit., pp. 229, 230.
2. Ibid, p. 239, 240.

the life and strength of God.¹ Man can be sure that Christ died once for all time and that His sacrifice was purely voluntary in order that, as man's eternal priest, He might live forever at the right hand of God. Death had no power over Him.

D. The Superiority of Christ and Melchizedek over Aaron.

1. Christ's Priesthood Eternal, not Transitory.

Melchizedek is thought of as eternal, for nothing is known of his beginning or ending. The idea of eternity differs from that of everlasting, for everlasting is without end but it does have a beginning; while eternity has neither beginning nor ending. Christ came from no line of priests; and his ministry is one which abides forever. He has by his very relationship with God as the Son no beginning in the priesthood and no end.

Aaronic priests, to qualify for office, needed to be members of the tribe of Levi. Their priesthood had its beginning with the consecration of Aaron and it was always changing, since each priest ended his function at the time of death. Their priesthood was not eternal.

2. Another Priesthood, not Aaronic nor Melchizedekian.

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1. Murray, Andrew: Op. Cit., pp. 240.

If the Aaronic priesthood had been satisfactory there would have been no promise of another priesthood, but that promise was made through the Psalmist, indicating the coming of a priest of another order than Aaron. There was a need for a change since the Aaronic priesthood could not fully mediate for man. Shepardson has indicated the need for a change in the following statement:

"The change was found by experience to be required and it was described long before it came to pass by one who lived under the Law and enjoyed its privileges. This change, too, must have been a tremendous necessity, for it involved nothing less than the change of the law. This necessary change has been recognized and met in the work of Christ. . . You ought not to stumble over the fact that Jesus did not come from the tribe of Levi, and think that therefore he cannot be a Priest."¹

Man cannot suppose a righteous and just God setting aside an old priest for a new priest unless the new priest were better than the old. The priesthood of Christ is superior to that of Aaron; for neither Melchizedek nor Christ was of the tribe of Levi and yet each was promised because needed. There was a need for a better priest even while the Aaronic priests were ministering.

E. Summary

In this chapter the comparison of Christ and the

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1. Shepardson, Daniel: Studies in the Epistle to the Hebrews, p. 335.

Old Testament priests has been considered. The basic features of Christ's priesthood were found in the Epistle to the Hebrews. Christ was compared to Aaron and Melchizedek, the two priests of the Old Testament. Christ is manifested to be superior to the Aaronic Priesthood by a comparison of the following necessary characteristics of a priest: Christ is more sympathetic because he was tempted as all men are and yet he was faithful and did not sin; the Aaronic priests needed to offer sacrifice to God for their own sin and faithlessness both to God and man; Christ had a superior form of appointment in that He was appointed a Son by an oath, while the Aaronic priests were merely appointed men without an oath; Christ has no successor for He is a priest forever, while the Aaronic priests only functioned during a life time and then were succeeded by others; Christ's offering was superior for He offered Himself as a sacrifice, which offering was adequate for all time, while the Aaronic priests offered animals and needed to do that continually every year; and finally, Christ as High Priest has a superior sanctuary in which to minister to the needs of man for He is in the Holy of Holies, which is heaven, while the Aaronic priests officiated in the Holy Place of the tabernacle prepared by man.

Christ is a priest after the order of Melchizedek and not after that of Aaron. The similarity of Christ

and Melchizedek is noted by each being a priest and king, and because their priesthoods are eternal. Melchizedek was the righteous, peaceful king of Salem, and at the same time he was a priest of God in that he blessed Abraham, who was returning from a victorious battle. Christ is a king sitting at the right hand of God ruling His people, and at the same time He is a priest interceding for His own believers. The Scriptures hold no record of Melchizedek's birth, death, or successors, and therefore he is a type of an eternal priesthood; this type of priesthood, which has no beginning or ending, is fulfilled in Christ for His priesthood has no predecessors or successor; He is a priest for ever.

The Epistle to the Hebrews reveals not only how Christ's Priesthood is similar to Melchizedek's, but also how Christ and Melchizedek are superior to Aaron. Christ and Melchizedek represent a priesthood that is eternal, that is, without beginning or end, while Aaron represents the transitory priesthood which had its beginning in Aaron and changed personality at the death of each priest. Christ and Melchizedek are superior to Aaron, for if Aaron had been adequate there would not have been a promise for another priest of another order. Thus the Melchizedekian Priesthood of Christ is superior to the Aaronic priesthood.

CHAPTER VI
GENERAL SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

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A. Purpose and Restatement

As stated at the outset of the present study, the purpose of this thesis has been to examine the Scriptures to discover the function of the priest in the spiritual life of a people by answering the question: How did the instituted priesthood of the Old Testament and the Superior Priest of the New Testament function respectively in uniting man to God? The procedure was to determine the origin, nature and ministry of the Old Testament priesthood and the nature and function of the New Testament priest, Jesus Christ, as compared with the Old Testament priest. This study of priesthood in the Old Testament in relation to that of Jesus Christ in the Epistle to the Hebrews has been pursued in two parts according to the delimitation and plan of procedure which was designated in the introduction of the present study. The findings now will be summarized and conclusions presented.

B. General Summary of Part One

The first part of this thesis was centered in a study of the nature and function of the Old Testament priest. To summarize the first chapter, it was found that the qualifications of a priest were that he be physically perfect and chosen of God. His duties were to officiate in the sanctuary of God and teach the law to the people. It was the purpose of the priest to bring man to God and God to man, and this was done primarily by the handling of man's offering at the altar in the sanctuary. The priest was first a mediator, and second a teacher. The various offerings which the priest needed to present to God were the burnt-offering, the meal-offering, the peace-offering and the sin-offering. The high priest was the superintendent over the sanctuary and the tithes; and his special duty was to go into the Holy of Holies once a year and there present a sin-offering for himself and the people.

The second chapter presented the study of the consecration of the Old Testament priesthood. The Old Testament priesthood, it was found, was identified by the name "Aaronical" and "Levitical". There is a distinction to be recognized between the Levites and the Aaronic priesthood. Aaron and his sons, a family of the tribe of Levi, were consecrated as priests first. At a later time the

tribe of Levi was consecrated to be assistants to Aaron and his sons. In the consecration of Aaron and his sons the entire congregation of Israel was called to the tent of meeting to observe the impressive ceremony. Moses acted as God's representative throughout the ceremony. They were washed with water to designate ceremonial cleanliness; and then the investiture was placed upon Aaron, who was to minister as high priest. The vestment, including the coat, girdle, robe of the ephod, ephod, breastplate, the miter and the golden plate, revealed the high priest to be the appointed minister of the tabernacle. The anointing of Aaron, symbolizing sanctification, took place immediately following his investiture. Following the anointing the consecration sacrifices, consisting of the sin-offering, the burnt-offering and the ram of consecration, were offered; and then the sacrificial feast concluded the consecration.

It was noted that the Levites, who were chosen because of their willingness to stand on the side of Jehovah at the testing time of the golden calf, did not have as complete a consecration as Aaron and his sons, though it was similar. The congregation again was called to the tent of meeting to witness the ceremony. The Levites were washed to represent cleanliness in preparation for divine service; then Moses presented them to the people, who laid

their hands on them as a sign that they were their offering to Jehovah, after which Aaron presented them to Jehovah. Following their being presented to Jehovah, they offered victims for sacrifice. The tribe of Levi, divided according to the three sons -- Kohath, Gershon, and Merari, were consecrated to their duties of being porters of the tabernacle, and assistants to the priests.

C. General Summary of Part Two

The second part of this thesis was a study of the nature and function of Jesus Christ as compared with the Old Testament priest. The Epistle to the Hebrews definitely states that its theme is the priesthood of Jesus Christ; therefore, this section was a study of Jesus Christ as revealed in the Epistle to the Hebrews in relation to the priesthood of the Old Testament.

To summarize the first chapter, it was found that the high priestly qualifications and ministry of Jesus Christ more than fulfilled the requirements of the Old Testament priest. Christ met the qualifications of the Aaronic high priest by being chosen of God, being sympathetic, faithful to God and man, and being immutable. The ministry of Jesus Christ as high priest was chiefly that of obtaining eternal redemption through sacrifice of Himself,

and by interceding in the Holy of Holies, which is Heaven. Christ was much better qualified to be a high priest than was Aaron, and He fulfilled His duties by superior means. He was both the Offerer and the Offering.

To summarize the second chapter, it was noted first that Christ is superior to Aaron by being more sympathetic; by having a superior form of appointment; by being a priest of longer duration; by having presented a superior offering; and by now having a superior sanctuary of service. In the second place it was noted that Christ and Melchizedek reveal a similarity in that both were kings and priests, and both represented eternal priesthods. And in the third place, it was noted that Christ and Melchizedek are superior to Aaron in that they are eternal rather than transitory, and Christ was promised as another priest of the order of Melchizedek rather than of Aaron, which revealed the inferiority of the Aaronic priesthood. Christ is a priest after the order of Melchizedek, for the Scriptures, through silence, reveal Melchizedek to be a type of eternal priest, which Christ truly fulfilled.

D. Conclusion

In conclusion let us briefly sum up the solution of the problem as to what is the function of the Scriptural priest in the spiritual life of a people?

The Old Testament priest, qualified by being physically perfect and divinely chosen, united man to God by offering man's sacrifice to God and by teaching God's laws to man. The priests needed continually to offer sacrifice. Jesus Christ, the Superior Priest of the New Testament, qualified by being sympathetic, faithful, divinely chosen, and immutable, united man to God by transcending the Old Testament priest and presenting Himself "once for all" as the perfect sacrifice for man.

The priest in the Old Testament is a type of which the perfect priest revealed in the Epistle to the Hebrews is the fulfillment. The Aaronic priesthood symbolized in a temporal and human way what is revealed in the Epistle to the Hebrews as a priest who is eternal and divine. The priesthood of the Old Testament, provided by God for man to be in right relationship with Him, was not abrogated but rather fulfilled in Christ. The perfect mediator for humanity is Jesus Christ who has already offered Himself as a sacrifice for everyone who will accept His offering by faith, and who is at the present time in Heaven, at the right hand of God, interceding for believers. Humanity has no need of the Old Testament priest, nor of another priest beside Christ.

CHAPTER VII

APPENDICES

APPENDIX I

CONTRASTS OF THE SACRIFICE OF CHRIST¹

Contrast 1.

The sacrifice of an animal, who was a passive victim, and who yielded up its life with such reluctance that it was bound with cords to the horns of the altar.

The sacrifice of Jesus Christ, who offered Himself--a voluntary self-oblation to God. Not in fear or of necessity did He become our sacrifice: "I lay down My life that I may take it again. No one taketh it away from Me, but I lay it down of Myself" (John 10:17,18.) Instead of the unwilling sacrifice of bulls and goats, it is the voluntary sacrifice of the Priest Himself.

Contrast 2.

According to the Mosaic law, the lamb of sacrifice must be a year old and without blemish, every joint in its place, and every limb perfect. It must go without injury through the four seasons, spring and summer, autumn and winter, and thus prove to all that it was healthy and sound. It was a sacrifice, materially perfect.

The sacrifice of Jesus Christ, whose blood was simply human blood, as contrasted with the blood of beasts, but holy as contrasted with man's sinfulness. He "offered Himself without blemish unto God" (ch. 9:14). Jesus was not only without blemish unto men, but He was without blemish unto God. At the close of His ministry He stood in His stainless integrity and said: "The prince of this world cometh, but he hath nothing in Me."

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1. Mantle, Gregory J.: "Better Things", pp. 114-119.

Contrast 3.

The sacrifice of an animal who had no spirit to consent to the sacrifice -- a valueless life, offered according to law, which could never take away sins, which could only shadow forth the true Sacrifice, and which needed to be constantly renewed.

The sacrifice of Jesus Christ, whose sacrifice was not only human and holy, but heavenly. It was "through the Eternal Spirit", i.e., possessed of a Divine nature, that He offered Himself, not in the power of perfect humanity, but in the power of the Eternal Spirit. As is the value of the life, so is the value of the sacrifice; and it was because the life of God dwelt in Jesus that His sacrifice is of such transcendent value.

Contrast 4.

The animal sacrifices by mere external or corporeal application produced a ritualistic purity, removed temporal penalties, bodily defilement, disabilities in the way of service, and ceremonial disqualifications. Sprinkled on the body of the unclean, they sanctified to the cleansing of the flesh, but could never reach the conscience. The continual sacrifice was a testimony to the abiding conscience of sin, and a proof that the sacrifices failed to take it away (ch. 10:2,3). The merit of these sacrifices was realized by sight.

The sacrifice of Jesus Christ, which alone can reach the inner sphere of a man's own consciousness. The man who is conscious of sins or dead works has his conscience defiled (ch. 9:14), or has an evil conscience (ch. 10:22), or a conscience of sins (ch. 10:2). Removal of sin and restoration to fellowship with a Living God produces a good conscience (ch. 13:18). Such a good conscience can only be found in a childlike and perpetual appropriation of the merit of Christ's oblation of Himself. The merit of His sacrifice is therefore realized only by faith.

Contrast 5.

The animal sacrifices were offered "day by day" (ch. 10:11), "year by year" (chs. 9:25; 10:1,3), "often" (chs. 9:25, 26:10:11). These sacrifices were many in number. There were sin-offerings, trespass-offerings, burnt-offerings, meat offerings, drink offerings, peace-offerings, wave-offerings manifold and multiplied.

The sacrifice of Jesus Christ offered "once in the consummation of the ages" (ch. 9:26). We are "sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all" (ch. 10:10). He offered one sacrifice for sins for ever" (ch. 10:12). "By one offering He hath perfected for ever them that are sanctified" (ch. 10:14). Sin, death, and hell are not temporary things, hence we need a sacrifice, which, because of the eternity of the Divine Spirit through whom it was offered, gives eternal efficacy to the offering.

Contrast 6.

The offerers under the Mosaic Law were always standing. "Every priest indeed standeth day by day ministering and offering oftentimes the same sacrifices, which can never take away sins (ch. 10:11). There was no place for sitting, because there was no time for sitting. The work of the offerer was never done. No sooner was one sacrifice presented than it was necessary to prepare for the offering of the next.

The sacrifice of Jesus Christ, who "When He had offered one sacrifice for sins for ever, sat down on the right hand of God, from henceforth expecting till His enemies be made the footstool of His feet" (ch. 10:12, 13). Words these, which suggest the place of rest, the place of grace, the place of honor, the place of power, and the place of expectation.

"To sum up the subject, the sacrifices of the Old Dispensation were complex, the sacrifice of the New Dispensation is simple. That belonging to the old was

restrictive, designed for the Jews only; this is so universal in its principles that the Jews could not understand it. How difficult Peter found it to shake off his sectarianism and declare the truth to Cornelius! What a change took place in John before he could say, "If any man sin, we have an Advocate with the Father"! The one was transient -- a great parenthesis, introduced, like the law of divorce, because of the hardness of men's hearts -- this is eternal. Both priesthood and offerings were after the law of a carnal commandment; Christ's priesthood and Christ's offering are "after the power of an endless life." The old was a splendid ritualism, and, as such, must be of necessity sensuous. It gratified the eye and ear, and produced a sense of fear and awe, but it could not change the heart. The New is, therefore, infinitely superior, because it is spiritual. Brought into perfect fellowship with the Living God, through the unchanging sacrifice of His Son, and through the administration of the Holy Spirit, we enter upon a life which is abundant both in its enjoyment and in its activities. The whole nature is instinct with it; it throbs in every pulse and energizes every act, filling the interior nature with a peace which passeth all understanding, and a joy that is unspeakable and full of glory."

APPENDIX II

COMPARISON BETWEEN MELCHISEDEC AND JESUS CHRIST¹

MELCHISEDEC

1. Was a King-priest.
2. Was a Righteous king-priest.
3. Was a King-priest in Salem, a city, the name of which signifies Peace.
4. Was not a Levitical priest:-- had no genealogy in the tribe of Levi; his father's name, his mother's name, the time of his birth, the time of his death; are not entered in the Levitical records.
5. Was a priest for a whole dispensation; and lived, and ministered, from the beginning of that dispensation to the end of it.
6. Was greater than Abraham after he had received the covenant and promises, and of consequence was greater than all the posterity of Abraham: received tythes from Abraham and blessed him, and of consequence received tythes from all his posterity, and from Levi among the rest; and blessed them.

JESUS CHRIST

1. Is a King-priest.
2. Is a Righteous king-priest.
3. Is a King-priest in the church of God, which is a peaceful community. Rom. 14:17.
4. Is not a Levitical priest: "for it is evident that our Lord sprang out of Juda; of which tribe Moses spake nothing concerning priesthood."
5. Is a priest for a whole dispensation; And because he continueth from the beginning to the end of it, hath an intransmissible priesthood.
6. Is greater than Abraham and his race, greater than the Levitical priests, on many accounts; among the rest, for this, that he was made a priest after the more honorable order of Melchisedec, and constituted by the oath of God: receives the tythes of his churches' adoration, and blesses the whole family of faith.

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1. Gray, James: A Dissertation on Christ & Melchisedec, pp. 110-112.

CHAPTER VIII

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CHAPTER VIII

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