

The Priestly Service – the Final Preparation for the Lord’s Return

- I. A brief review of the fulfillments of biblical prophecies and the signs of the times (Dan. 2:19-47; Mt. 16:3)
 - A. The great image in the dream of King Nebuchadnezzar (Dan. 2:19-47)
 1. Depicting the beginning of the “Times of the Gentiles <Nations>” when the Jews were taken into captivity between 605 B.C. and 597 B.C.
 - a. King Nebuchadnezzar of the Babylonian empire – the head of gold (vv. 37-38)
 - b. The Persian/Median empire under King Cyrus the Great, 550 B.C. – the chest and arms of silver (v. 39a)
 - c. The Grecian empire of Alexander the Great, 330 B.C. – the belly and thighs of bronze (v. 39b)
 - d. The Roman empire officially beginning with Augustus, the first Roman emperor, 27 B.C. – the legs of iron (v. 40)
 - e. The age of *democracy* – the feet and the toes partly of baked clay and partly of iron (vv. 41-43); officially starting in America in 1776 until today (250 years)
 2. Ending with the age of the beast with the 10 nations – the 10 toes, the last 3.5 years (Rev. 17:12-13, 16-17)
 3. Finally, the coming of Christ and His kingdom – the stone cut out of the mountain not by hands (Dan. 2:44-45; Rev. 14:19-20; 19:11-21)
 4. 2020-2024 – Evidence of the end of democracy, total corruption and lawlessness
 - B. The mystery of lawlessness is at work (2 Thess. 2:6-12)
 - C. Wars and rumor of wars (Matt. 24:6-7)

- D. Prophecy regarding the nation of Israel (Dan. 9:24-27)
 - 1. Destroyed in the year 70 A.D. by the Roman army under Titus (Lk. 19:41-44; 21:20-24)
 - 2. Reborn on May 14, 1948 after World War II, led by Ben Gurion- the parable of the fig tree (Mt. 24:32; Lk. 21:29-33)
 - 3. The Six-Day War, June 5-10, 1967 – Jerusalem was restored to the control of Israel, marking the end of “the Times of the Gentiles”; in 2017, Trump declared Jerusalem “the eternal capital of Israel”
 - 4. September 2020 – The beginning of the Abraham Accords
 - 5. October 2025 – The Gaza Peace Agreement, evidence of fulfillment of the covenant with many
 - 6. 2 remaining signs:
 - a. The restarting of animal sacrifices
 - b. The rebuilding of the “Third Temple”
- E. Creation is groaning (Rom. 8:19-22; Matt. 24:7)
- F. Our attitude and response (Lk. 21:28-33)
 - 1. The evil servant and scoffers say the Lord is delaying (Matt. 24:45-51; 2 Pet. 3:3-4, 9)
 - 2. Prepare with godly fear (Heb. 12:28-29; Is. 11:2-3; 2 Pet. 3:10-12; 2 Cor. 5:9-11)
- II. God’s unchanging plan with His redeemed people on this earth – both ages of the Old and the New Covenant:
 - A. To make them His special treasure
 - B. A kingdom of priests and a holy nation (Ex. 19:4-6) with God Himself as their King (1 Sam. 8:6-7; 10:19; 15:23, 26)
 - C. The requirements:
 - 1. To hear and fully obey His voice
 - 2. To keep the covenant which He established with them
 - a. The new covenant (Heb. 10:15-17)
 - b. The commandments of God (the law)

- i. Not the “Old Covenant” – God’s dealing with Israel according to the law
 - ii. Christ came not to abolish the law, but to fulfill it (Mt. 5:17)
 - c. The covenant with Levi – a covenant of life and peace (Mal. 2:4-7)
- D. Priests must be sanctified (Ex. 19:10)
 - 1. **Pursue** <Gk. Διώκω, to “persecute, press on” > peace and holiness <the divine nature> (Heb. 12:14; 1 Th. 3:13; 4:7; 1 Pet. 1:15-16; Lev. 11:44; 19:2; 20:7)
 - a. Resulting in having a pure heart (Mt. 5:8)
 - b. To see God
 - 2. **Exercise** vigorously <Gk. γυμνάζω> to become godly <the divine expression> (1 Tim. 4:8; Tit. 2:11-14)
 - 3. **Perfecting** holiness in the fear of God (2 Cor. 7:1; 5:10-11)
 - 4. **Constrained by the love of God** (2 Cor. 5:14; 1 Th. 3:12-13)
 - 5. Be constantly reminded concerning God’s will for us: **our sanctification**
 - a. To abstain from lust and uncleanness (1 Th. 4:3-8)
 - b. To abstain from every form of evil (1 Th. 5:22)
 - c. To be sanctified completely by the God of peace – our whole spirit, soul and body (1 Th. 5:23-24)
 - 6. **Do not love the world** (1 Jn. 2:15-17)
- III. The ceremony of consecration for the priests (Ex. 28:40-43; Lev. 8) – as commanded by the LORD God (Lev. 8:5)
 - A. Meaning of the word consecration <Heb. מלא / מלא> “to fill” or “to be full of” – learn from the woman who brought an alabaster flask of fragrant oil (Lk. 7:36-47)
 - 1. The more we gain Christ, the more we appreciate and love Him
 - 2. Consecration to God comes out of our love for Him (2 Cor. 5:14-15ff, see II-D-4)

- B. The preparation of the priests to be consecrated (Lev. 8:6-13) – to put on the priestly garments, to be anointed and sanctified in order to minister unto the Lord in the priestly office (Ex. 28:41)
 - 1. The priests must be washed with pure water (Lev. 8:6)
 - 2. They must put on the priestly garments
 - a. to cover their nakedness as Adam and Eve after the fall (Gen. 3:21; Is. 61:10a; 2 Cor. 5:2-3; Rom. 13:14; Gal. 3:27; Rev. 3:18; 7:9; 19:7-8, 14)
 - b. For glory and beauty - expressing the glory and beauty of the Lord and not expressing ourselves
 - 3. To be anointed with the holy anointing oil (Ex. 28:41; 30:26-38; 40:15; Lev. 8:12, 30; Nu. 3:3)
- C. The process for the consecration
 - 1. The **bull** for the sin offering – a strong sin offering to deal with our sinful nature (Lev. 8:14-17)
 - 2. Two rams:
 - a. The first one is for the burnt offering (Lev. 8:18-21)
 - b. The second one is the ram of consecration (vv. 22-36)
 - i. Its blood is applied on the tip of Aaron's **right ear** – an ear to hear the Holy Spirit speaking (Rev. 2-3)
 - ii. On the **thumb** of his right hand – whatever we do, do it heartily unto the Lord according to His will (Col. 3:17; Jn. 4:34; 6:38; Heb. 10:7, 9)
 - iii. On the **big toe** of his right foot – the walk of the priests must be holy (Rom. 6:4; 8:4; 13:13; 1 Cor. 7:17; 2 Cor. 5:7; 12:18; Gal. 5:16, 25; Eph. 5:2, 8, 15; Phil. 3:17-18; Col. 1:10; 2:6; 4:5; 1 Jn. 1:7; 2:6)
 - iv. The same was applied on Aaron's sons
 - v. The rest of the blood sprinkled all around the altar

3. Additional details concerning the ram of consecration (Lev. 8:25-33)
 - a. The wave breast (*of love*) – the part for Moses
 - b. The rest to be eaten with the unleavened bread by Aaron and his sons
 - c. They shall stay at the door of the tabernacle of meeting for 7 days – they must get used to staying in the tabernacle; it is their home

IV. The services of the priests in the sanctuary (the holy place)

- A. The **golden table** with the showbread (Ex. 25:23-30)
 1. Christ being the bread of life which came down from heaven – heavenly manna, bread of life without leaven
 2. Must be set before God's presence for 6 days
 3. Eaten by the priests on the 7th day
- B. The **golden lampstand** of pure gold – fresh oil daily; shining forth the light of life, signifying the churches with the great heavenly High Priest walking in their midst
- C. The **golden incense altar** – the priestly prayer with Christ as incense ascending to God (Ps. 141:2; Rev. 5:8; 8:3-4)
- D. The **throne of grace** – the Ark of the Testimony (Heb. 4:16; 10:19-25, 35-39)
 1. Intimate fellowship with God through Jesus Christ – to hear His speaking
 2. To obtain mercy
 3. To find grace in time of need
 4. To partake of the hidden manna

V. The responsibilities of the priests

- A. To bring the offerings, "My offerings, My food" as a sweet aroma to God the Father (Lev. 1-7; Nu. 28:2ff; 1 Pet. 2:5; Jn. 4:22-24; Heb. 13:15-16 <Hos. 14:2> = "...so will we render the calves/bullocks of our lips")
 1. Our daily experiences of Christ as the reality of all the offerings (Lev. 1-7)

2. This is the wisdom and love of our Father God to us
 - a. On the one hand the offerings are His food
 - b. On the other hand, it is for us, e.g. the meal offering, only a handful of fine flour for God, the rest is for the priests
 - c. Through our daily experience of Christ as the reality of the offerings, we are being transformed into His image from glory to glory to reach spiritual maturity by the Spirit of the Lord (2 Cor. 3:17-18)
- B. To keep the covenant God made with Levi, that it may continue (Mal. 2:4-7; Rom. 8:6)
 1. A covenant of **life and peace** – unique characteristics of the priesthood
 2. The priesthood is the most wonderful gift of God to Aaron and his sons (see Nu. 18)
- C. A priest is a messenger of the LORD of hosts (Mal. 2:6-7)
 1. The law of truth must be in his mouth, and injustice should not be found on his lips
 2. He should walk with God in peace and equity (uprightness, straightforward)
 3. And turn many away from iniquity
 4. The priest's lips should keep knowledge (דעת da'ath wisdom, discernment and understanding) – people should seek instruction from His mouth; remember the Urim and Thummim (Ex. 28:30)
 5. A warning (Mal. 2:8-9ff; Mal. 3:1-5, 16-18; 4:1-3) to the priests
- D. Further rules for the priestly service in Ezekiel 44 in the Millennial Kingdom, but also applicable today for the faithful priests
 1. Warning and judgment to the unfaithful Levites (Ezek. 44:6-14)
 2. Reward to the faithful Zadok and his sons (44:15-31)

- a. They shall come near to the Lord to minister to HIM
- b. They shall stand before the Lord to offer to Him the fat and the blood
- c. They shall enter His sanctuary and come near to His table to minister to Him, and keep His charge
- d. Instructions concerning their priestly garments and sundry laws (Ezek. 44:17-19)
 - i. They shall put on linen garments (see Rev. 19:8) – to do everything righteously through Christ, our righteousness (Rom. 3:10; Is. 64:6; 1 Cor. 1:30; 2 Cor. 5:21)
 - ii. No wool shall come upon them while they minister – not to serve according to the flesh and self. Sweat signifies curse, which brings forth death (Ezek. 44:17-18; Gen. 3:17-19)
 - iii. Wear linen turbans on their heads – setting our minds on things above and on the Spirit
 - iv. Take off the holy garments and leave them in the holy chambers (see Ezek. 42:14)
 - v. They shall neither shave their heads nor let their hair grow long (Ezek. 44:20; 1 Cor. 11:14)
 - vi. Drink no wine when they go in to serve (see Lev. 10:9; Prov. 31:1-5; Eph. 5:18)
 - vii. Not to marry widows or divorced women, only virgins of Israel descent or widows of priests (Ezek. 44:22)
 - viii. Teach God's people the difference between holy and the unholy (common), and cause them to discern between the unclean and the clean (v. 23)
 - ix. In controversy the priests shall stand as judges, and judge it according to God's judgment (v. 24)

- x. The priests shall not defile themselves by coming near a dead person. Only for immediate close relatives. Then he should go through the cleansing process (vv. 25-27)
 - xi. God Himself is their inheritance. They shall have no possession in Israel (vv. 28-30; 1 Jn. 2:15)
 - xii. The priests shall not eat anything that died naturally or was torn by wild beasts (Ezek. 44:31; Mt. 16:11; Mk. 8:15; Lk. 12:1; 1 Cor. 5:6-8)
- E. We have a Great High Priest according to the order of Melchizedek (Rev. 1-3)
- 1. Walking in the midst of the golden lampstands
 - 2. Able to save us to the uttermost (Heb. 7:25)
 - 3. Serving us with the power of an endless life (Heb. 7:15-17)
 - 4. To lead us into glory (Heb. 2:10)