

## ***AN OVERVIEW OF THE NEW TESTAMENT PRIESTHOOD***

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**INTRODUCTION** — After dealing with idols for the past few weeks, we are now entering into the discussion about our calling, identity, and ministry as New Testament Priests. Today we will be covering an overview of the historical, theological, and practical concepts regarding the New Testament Priesthood, providing a foundation for understanding priestly theology.

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### **I. THE PRIESTLY LINEAGE (HISTORICAL)**

- A. **ADAM:** The priestly lineage begins with the historical Adam and Eve who dwelled in the Garden of Eden. The Lord threaded into their genetic makeup the priestly identity, which is passed down to every human; we have been born with the innate desire to worship. Yet, all who remain under Adam have their priestly nature twisted by sin.
- B. **MELCHIZEDEK:** The Priest-King of Salem, Melchizedek, is the first priest of God mentioned in the Scriptures (Gen 14:18). Though he is only mentioned a total of three times in the entirety of Scripture (Gen 14; Ps 110; Heb 7), what is said about him gives us a wealth of information about Jesus' priestly ministry as well as our own.
- C. **LEVI:** Jacob, son of Abraham and Isaac, the father of the Israelites, had twelve sons whose families developed into twelve tribes. Jacob's third son Levi is the father of the Levitical priests (Gen 29; Exod 6; 1 Chron 6). The Levites were separated from their brothers and consecrated to minister to God in His Tabernacle (Ezek 44: 15-27).
- D. **JESUS:** The Levitical priesthood remained for many generations until a new High Priest came, one from heaven, Jesus of Nazareth. Because there was a change in the priesthood, there also came a change to the law; we are no longer under the Law but under Grace (Heb 7:12). All who trust in Christ have been made priests (Rev 1:6).

### **II. THE PRIESTLY IDENTITY (THEOLOGICAL)**

- A. **ORIGINAL DESIGN:** The priestly ministry is not something that we attain or gain as we follow Christ, but it is intrinsic to our human nature (Gen 1-2). The installment of the priestly ministry is God's way of restoring our original design. *The priestly ministry is the truest, fullest, and most glorious expression of our humanity!*
- B. **CORPORATE IDENTITY:** By the blood of Christ we each have an individual priestly ministry before the Lord, but as a community of people we are a *Kingdom of Priests* (Exod 19:7-8; Deut 7:6-8; 1 Pt 2:9; Rev 1:5-6, 5:9-10). We, as a people, have been called out of the world to minister to the heart of God.
- C. **ETERNAL VOCATION:** Our identity as priests is not constrained to this age but will extend into the age to come (Rev 20:6). Our eternal vocation is to minister to God and rule the earth with Him, partnering with Him in the leadership of the new creation. The Lord is awakening the priestly identity of the Church to prepare for the next age.

### III. THE PRIESTLY MINISTRY (PRACTICAL)

- A. **GARMENTS OF HOLINESS:** Everything that New Testament Priests do is centered around the presence of God, therefore we must cherish holiness. We have been consecrated by the blood of Christ, the waters of baptism, and the oil of the Spirit that we may stand before God offering pure, spiritual sacrifices to Him.

*As obedient children, do not be conformed to the passions of your former ignorance, but as he who called you is holy, you also be holy in all your conduct, since it is written, “You shall be holy, for I am holy” (1 Pt 1:14-16; cf. Lev 11:44-45).*

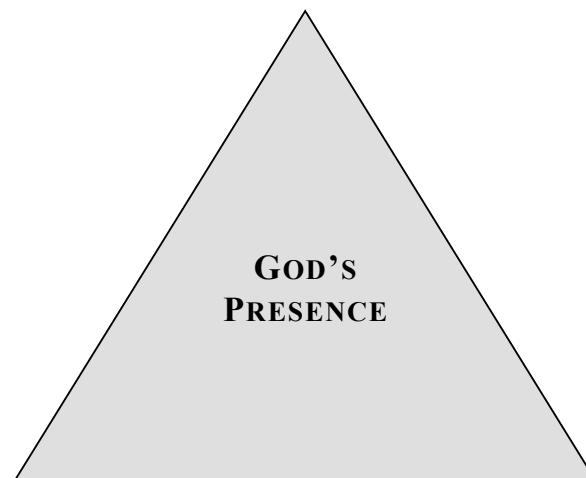
- B. **THE KNOWLEDGE OF GOD:** It is the mandate for every New Testament Priest to grow in the knowledge of God by studying the Scriptures. Just as the Old Testament priests were the teachers of the Law, so also is it the responsibility of New Testament priests to understand the Scriptures and declare its truths (Deut 31:9-13; Neh 8:7-8).

*That the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give you the Spirit of wisdom and of revelation in the knowledge of him (Eph 1:17).*

- C. **WORSHIP & PRAYER:** No longer do we offer the sacrifices of bulls and goats upon the fire of an altar, but the sacrifices of the New Testament Priest are the fragrance of our words from a burning heart (Heb 13:15). Old Testament priests were forbidden to bring tainted offerings, so also must our worship be pure and acceptable (1 Pt 2:5).

*Through him then let us continually offer up a sacrifice of praise to God, that is, the fruit of lips that acknowledge his name (Heb 13:15).*

#### GARMENTS OF HOLINESS



**KNOWLEDGE OF GOD**

**WORSHIP & PRAYER**