

The Priesthood Of God (Part One)

The Temple and Its Priesthood

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The series makes a sharp but related turn at this point. I was mildly surprised by the lack of comments about what I think was perhaps the most significant item that came out of the "Born Again" sermon. It occupied a portion of the conclusion of the first "Born Again" sermon I gave on the Day of Pentecost.

Many, many times I have been asked, "Now that I am in the church, what am I to do?" Or people make a comment such as, "I wish I knew more specifically what God wants me to do." At the very least, a partial answer to those questions was in that Pentecost sermon.

Let me put this another way. I have read any number of books and articles about how to be a success in life, and almost all of them have a brief section that goes something like this. If the author is describing people who do not really have a specific goal in life, they say that those people are "shooting with a shotgun." In other words, the pellets, representing their energies, are going in every direction, when they should be shooting with a rifle, with all their energies following one area they are focused on.

Jesus stated in John 2 something that was extremely significant regarding the future for you and me. When I say *future*, I am not talking about the *far* future at this time. I mean the future that is right in front of us now in carrying right on out into the Millennium following the return of Jesus Christ. This is really significant. In verse 19 Jesus said, "Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up." Remember, He had just gone through the area of the Temple where they kept all the sheep and doves and so forth, scattering things all over the place, and the Jews got on Him for doing that.

John 2:19-22 Jesus answered and said to them, "Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up." Then the Jews said, "It has taken forty-six years to build this temple, and will You raise it up in three days?" But He was speaking of the temple of His body.

Therefore, when He had risen from the dead, His disciples remembered that He had said this to them; and they believed the Scripture and the word which Jesus had said.

What He said there is so significant that it reverberates all the way down passages of time to you and me, and enfolds us in its purpose. Hanging onto that thought of what He said, I want you to go back to the book of Matthew. This is at the time of His crucifixion. One of the witnesses against Him said:

Matthew 26:61 "This fellow [meaning Jesus Christ] said, 'I am able to destroy the temple of God and to build it in three days.'"

This statement Jesus made in John 2 was so significant it becomes one of the two charges that led directly to His crucifixion. Now to speak as Jesus did in John 2 was considered blasphemous because the Temple was considered so important to the Jews' concept of being the "chosen people," that they felt it was absolutely essential to their worship of God.

As for it reverberating down to this time, do you not hear plans and so forth about rebuilding the Temple once again in Jerusalem? That Temple was an important symbol to them, and when Jesus said what He did—"Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up"—they did not take flippantly at all what He said. To them it was blasphemous.

Jesus was given the death penalty, at least partly, on the strength of His remark about the Temple, and here He is, being crucified.

Matthew 27:38-44 Then two robbers were crucified with Him, one on the right and another on the left. And those who passed by blasphemed Him, wagging their heads and saying, "You who destroy the temple and build it in three days, save Yourself! If You are the Son of God, come down from the cross." Likewise the chief priests also, mocking with the scribes and elders, said, "He saved others; Himself He cannot save. If He is the King of Israel, let Him now come down from the cross, and we will believe Him. He trusted in God; let Him deliver Him now if He will have Him; for

He said, 'I am the Son of God.'" [That was the other charge.] Even the robbers who were crucified with Him reviled Him with the same thing.

Right up to Jesus' last breath, they were repeating what He said way back when He began His ministry. That is how important the Temple was to Him.

John 2:20-21 Then the Jews said, "It has taken forty-six years to build this temple, and will You raise it up in three days?" But He was speaking of the temple of His body.

After His resurrection, Jesus was saying that His *body* would become the Temple. *He* would become the Temple. Instead of the Temple being central to the worship of God, once He was resurrected *He* would be central to the worship of God. You can begin to understand why they considered that to be blasphemous.

The Temple though, despite its magnificence, despite the fact that it was central to their worship of God, was in reality an unfeeling and unresponsive material building. That is all it was. They perceived it of course as the dwelling place of God. What made the Temple important to them was to them the reality that God was in it, and if the Temple had not been there, where would God live? Make the connection between the building and God Himself. That is why the building was so important to them. They looked at it as that where God was. Let us build though on what Jesus said.

We are going to go to John 4:16-26. This gives every appearance of happening not long after Jesus made that statement in John 2 after cleansing the Temple.

John 4:16-26 Jesus said to her, "Go, call your husband, and come here." The woman answered and said, "I have no husband." Jesus said to her, "You have well said, 'I have no husband,' for you have had five husbands, and the one whom you now have is not your husband; in that you spoke truly." The woman said to Him, "Sir, I perceive that You are a prophet. Our fathers worshiped on this mountain, and you Jews say that in Jerusalem is the place where one ought to worship." Jesus said to her, "Woman, believe Me, the

hour is coming when you will neither on this mountain, nor in Jerusalem, worship the Father. You worship what you do not know; we know what we worship, for salvation is of the Jews. But the hour is coming, and now is, when the true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and truth; for the Father is seeking such to worship Him. God is Spirit, and those who worship Him must worship in spirit and truth." The woman said to Him, "I know that Messiah is coming" (who is called Christ). "When He comes, He will tell us all things." Jesus said to her, "I who speak to you am He.

In verse 26 Jesus revealed to the woman that He was the Messiah, and therefore God was standing right next to her. Through this discourse, beginning in verse 16, He also revealed that He knew her so well He knew that she had five husbands. Brethren, how in the world would a material temple know anything like *this*, about the intimate details of an obscure Samaritan woman? You begin to see what He is heading for here.

A temple cannot respond to anything. A temple is not hearing what you say. A temple cannot come to your aid. *"But I am God. I hear. I respond. I can come to your aid."* He then goes on to reveal to her that a major change in the worship of God involving Jerusalem, and therefore the Temple, was already underway, and that it would continue right on out—and the implication is—forever.

Note this, just so that you can see already that things were beginning to change. Jesus was not wrong when He said they were already changing. He said it had already begun. First of all, there He was, a Jew, talking to a woman right out in public, and she was not even a Jewish woman. She was a Gentile woman. Things were already changing.

If you read further in chapter 4 you will find that the disciples were kind of astounded and amazed that this was going on. Therefore Jesus was already intimating to this woman that she was free to worship God beginning right now, that she did not need the Temple. Second, that neither Jerusalem nor the Temple were needed to worship God, because salvation is of the Jews, and Jesus was a Jew.

I do not know whether you caught that, but already He is announcing that it is *He* who is central to the worship of God. He was not even dead yet, and already He was announcing that salvation was going to be of Him, a Jew, and here we are, only in the 4th chapter of John. This is where you and I begin to come into it in a big way, because it is right here that we come into the picture in a very significant way.

Romans 2:28-29 For he is not a Jew who is one outwardly, nor is circumcision that which is outward in the flesh; but he is a Jew who is one inwardly; and circumcision is that of the heart, in the Spirit, not in the letter; whose praise is not from men but from God.

I just want you to think about something. Paul was writing this letter to a Christian congregation in the city of Rome, and he was explaining who a Jew is. Already you can begin to understand that he was talking about these people in the congregation, which very likely was a mixed congregation. It had both Jews and Romans in it—Jews and Gentiles—and he was saying that anybody who is circumcised of heart is a Jew.

Start nailing this down, because it becomes very important. Now why is it important? Let me explain it this way. I will interpret what Paul was saying here. Anybody who considers himself converted, upon conversion, regardless of his ethnicity—whether Israelite or a Gentile—when that person is "born again" he becomes a *spiritual Jew*, and when he receives his spiritual circumcision—the circumcision of his *heart*—he becomes a Jew. Notice that all of those terms, like circumcision and so forth, are right in that context. They all fit together with what Paul was explaining to this Roman congregation. Let us continue to bring us into it.

We are going to go to Ephesians 1. Again, Paul was writing to a Gentile congregation.

Ephesians 1:15-23 Therefore I also, after I heard of your faith in the Lord Jesus and your love for all the saints, do not cease to give thanks for you, making mention of you in my prayers: that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give to you the

spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of Him, the eyes of your understanding being enlightened; that you may know what is the hope of His calling, what are the riches of the glory of His inheritance in the saints, and what is the exceeding greatness of His power toward us who believe, according to the working of His mighty power which He worked in Christ when He raised Him from the dead and seated Him at His right hand in the heavenly places, far above all principality and power and might and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this age but also in that which is to come. And He put all things under His feet, and gave Him to be head over all things to the church, which is His body, the fullness of Him who fills all in all.

Paul just told you and me that when we become converted we are put, by God, "in Christ." We become part of Him. Christ was a Jew. We become Jews—*spiritual* Jews. The spiritual reality is that we are part of the body of Jesus Christ. He is the Head. He does the thinking; we carry out what the Head thinks for us to do.

Ephesians 2:19 Now, therefore, you are no longer strangers and foreigners, but fellow citizens with the saints and members of the household of God.

When we become converted we become part of a family. That family is the Family of God, which is the Kingdom of God. That is why he says "fellow citizens with the saints."

Ephesians 2:20-21 Having been built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ Himself being the chief cornerstone, in whom the whole building, [The metaphor has changed from Christ and His body to that of a building.] being fitted together, grows into a holy temple in the Lord.

Now if Jesus becomes the temple, and we are in Him, we are part of the temple that is central to the worship of God, and this is why, for you and me, what He said there in John 2 is so important. We are now part of the temple that is central to the worship of God, and the Head of that temple is a Jew, and we become spiritual Jews because we are in Him.

Ephesians 2:22 In whom you also are being built together for a dwelling place of God in the Spirit.

From here I want you to go to II Corinthians 6.

II Corinthians 6:16 And what agreement has the temple of God with idols? For you are the temple of the living God. As God has said: "I will dwell in them and walk among them. I will be their God, and they shall be My people."

Let us consider something. Who is the High Priest of that temple? You know the answer to it. It is Jesus Christ. Now because we are part of Him, then we also become part of His priesthood. He is the High Priest. We do not have to wait till the resurrection. We are in Christ, and we are already part of Him. We are already part of His priesthood. Since He is the High Priest, brethren, His work becomes *our* work. All these things going together.

Revelation 14:1-5 Then I looked, and behold, a Lamb standing on Mount Zion, and with Him one hundred and forty-four thousand, having His Father's name written on their foreheads. And I heard a voice from heaven, like the voice of many waters, and like the voice of loud thunder. And I heard the sound of harpists playing their harps. They sang as it were a new song before the throne, before the four living creatures, and the elders; and no one could learn that song except the hundred and forty-four thousand who were redeemed from the earth. These are the ones who were not defiled with women, for they are virgins. These are the ones who follow the Lamb wherever He goes. These were redeemed from among men, being firstfruits to God and to the Lamb. And in their mouth was found no deceit, for they are without fault before the throne of God.

I said His work becomes our work. We are *in* Him. We go wherever *He* goes. We are not just here and now. We are talking about eternity—always with Him, "in Him," as it were.

This was what I was kind of expecting people to pick up on, but they did not, and so be it. God wanted me to preach it to you, hopefully in such a way that you really get it, understand it, and can take joy in something like that. I will probably repeat this again at the Feast of Tabernacles, maybe not the whole thing, because I am putting together a series to string my sermons together there at the Feast, and they are going to be on "The Faithfulness of God." This is God keeping His promise. That is how faithful He is, and you have been drawn into His promise. We will go through it in a little bit different direction during the Feast of Tabernacles. I will give something else to accomplish today.

In order to lay a foundation for this sermon we are going to take a look at what the Bible shows regarding priests and priesthood so that we might have a more focused understanding of what we have been called to be prepared for whenever Christ returns. We will go all the way back to the priesthood roots. There is a great deal of ground to cover to see how Jesus, our Creator and Savior, sets up this responsibility for us. We are disciples. We are learners. We are pupils of Christ. We are adherents of a movement that will culminate in being priests of the Most High God, and it is time, brethren, for us to get more specifically prepared.

Priesthood is a subject we all have some awareness of because it plays such a large part in the Bible's narrative. Because it is to be a major part of our future, some characteristics of it need to be already part of our present responsibilities, and we ought to take a bit closer look at it.

What the Bible does is it reveals a progressive time or development of priesthood. That in itself is God's pattern. Virtually every one of His purposes begins simply, but becomes more complex as it moves along.

I want to go back to some place where I left off before and we will start building upon the information God gives us regarding this.

Exodus 19:5-6 Now therefore, if you will indeed obey My voice and keep My covenant, then you shall be a special treasure to Me above all people; for all the earth is Mine. And you shall be to Me a kingdom of priests and a holy nation.' These are the words which you shall speak to the children of Israel."

There are two prospects that are going here: priesthood and nation. The Hebrew word translated "nation" is *goy*. Now *Vines* says, "It indicates a mass of people usually with overtone of territorial or governmental unity and/or identity." In other words, this is a people that are basically all alike.

We are going to go back to the New Testament to I Peter 2, and we will see the New Testament match for what we just read here.

I Peter 2:9 But you are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, His own special people, that you may proclaim the praises of Him who called you out of darkness into His marvelous light.

The word "nation" in I Peter 2:9 is translated *ethnos*, and *Strong's* says it means "a race or tribe as of the same habit." This is very similar in thought to the Hebrew word *goy*. *Vines* says it means "a multitude of people of the same nature, genus, a nation." So whether it is the New Testament or the Old Testament, God says that He is putting together a group of people with similar characteristics, and that is why He calls it "a nation."

Most of us do have similar characteristics. We know we are descended from Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob—but not all of us though. In fact I do not even know for sure of myself, having such a Germanic background, but I could have been from an Israelitish family that passed through Germany. I do not know.

Genesis 12:1-3 NOW the LORD had said to Abram: "Get out of your country, from your family and from your father's house, to a land that I will show you. I will make you a great nation; I will bless you and make your name great; and you shall be a blessing. I will bless those who bless you, and I will curse him who curses you; and in you all the families of the earth shall be blessed."

It is that last line I am thinking about here. I will not search this out in full detail, but Exodus 19 reveals a major step toward the fulfillment of that

promise to Abraham; and then I Peter 2:9 carries the fulfilling of that promise one step further; that is, from Israel to the church, and therefore brethren, to each one of us who is called individually.

The people spoken of in these two verses, especially that last line in verse 3, are those who will be the means of helping the mass of people of all nations recognize the sovereignty of God, and thus this in turn will lead to their salvation.

In brief, that is our future, but we have got to prepare for it. Jesus is our High Priest. He is the temple. We are *in* Christ. We are part of that temple. In the resurrection we become a *permanent* part of that temple, but between now and the resurrection of each one of us, we have to get prepared to help carry out the responsibility that Christ is going to have in the Millennium when He will be the moving, dynamic force for the salvation of the Israelitish people primarily. It will spread out from them and begin to encompass the whole earth. We are going to go where He goes, and therefore that is what we are going to be involved in. We need to get prepared.

Galatians 3:26-29 For you are all sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus. [I believe the KJV translates that word "sons" as "children." Incidentally, the NKJV is correct. It is the Greek word for "son."] For as many of you as were baptized into Christ have put on Christ. There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is neither male nor female; for you are all one in Christ Jesus. And if you are Christ's, then you are Abraham's seed [The very seed He was talking about in Genesis 12:3], and heirs according to the promise.

These verses stress our *oneness* with Christ and with each other. Notice the mention of "promise" in verse 29. If you have a center reference in your Bible, it will probably refer you to Genesis 12:3. It is the same promise we just read of. The church is the fulfillment of Genesis 12:3—"And in you all the families of the earth shall be blessed."

I want you to more specifically note the word "son" in verse 26. This is important. *Vines* says, "the word stresses the quality and essence of one solely resembling another that distinctions between the two are

indiscernible." Do you get what he is saying there? The oneness indicates, first of all, that unity is all being one with Jesus Christ and part of the same family.

The word "son" is emphasizing, implying, that the quality of each one of us is also the same. It of course means the quality of the character, the quality of the attitude, the quality of what we are prepared to do under Jesus Christ. In fact, the word almost gives the impression that we are almost mirror images of each other. That of course is the way God is looking at it. We are not that way yet. Our character and our attitudes are on rough edges compared to one another, but God does not fail in what He sets out to do, and if we allow Him, He is going to make us all so we basically all have the same character.

Our gifting will be different. That will *always* be different. God does not treat everybody equally that way. Incidentally, that is going to be part of my Feast sermon as well. It is something we have to live with. Everybody is not gifted by God equally. It is these qualities that are important to us at this time. These qualities are family and character traits. They are traits created in us for the performing of responsibilities that come with us being heirs with Jesus Christ, and it is those traits that enable us to carry out the responsibilities that we are going to inherit.

Revelation 5:9-10 And they sang a new song, saying: "You are worthy to take the scroll, and to open its seals; for You were slain, and have redeemed us to God by Your blood out of every tribe and tongue and people and nation, [That includes Gentile as well as Israelitish] and have made us kings and priests to our God; and we shall reign on the earth."

What we are looking at here is a scene, a vision of a prophecy fulfilled—something that is yet to take place in heaven. God is showing us that what He has set out to accomplish has been accomplished. He has put His family together to that point. His goal is not merely to create sons in the image of Jesus Christ, which of course it is, but that is quite a general goal. The more specific goal is that those sons will be prepared to be kings and priests under Jesus Christ. It is becoming a king, having rulership, that seems to get the most attention. A king's responsibilities are important, but they are broad and wide-ranging, covering many areas of life. But what are a priest's

responsibilities? What does a priest do? Is there anywhere in God's Word that describes a priest's character requirements?

We probably all know that a priest, especially a high priest, is garbed differently from others. Is there any significant regard that we should pay to the clothing? Questions can abound. Though we are vaguely familiar with Old Testament operations and the fact that priests, especially the high priest, played a large part in Israelite community life, we are very unfamiliar with the *specifics* of priesthood. I think we *are* unfamiliar with those specifics.

First, when it all began, people acted as priests merely for themselves or for their family, and then it expanded out in behalf of the nation, and lastly for the church. The last priest, of course, was Jesus Christ.

We are going to go back to the book of Genesis. Here is the beginning of God's revelation on priest and priesthood.

Genesis 4:3 And in the process of time it came to pass that Cain brought an offering of the fruit of the ground to the LORD.

This is the very first instruction of a priestly system in the Bible. It is introduced in such a way that leaves the door wide open to the fact that this is not the first time that any sacrificing had been done by Adam and Eve or their family. Because no instructions are given by God regarding what to offer, or how to make the offering, or who was to officiate the episode there in Genesis 4, it is told in such a way as to strongly imply that Adam and Eve and Cain and Able already *knew* what to do. Let us add to that information, and we will pick up the episode in verse 4.

Genesis 4:4-7 Abel also brought of the firstborn of his flock and of their fat. And the LORD respected Abel and his offering, but He did not respect Cain and his offering. And Cain was very angry, and his countenance fell. So the LORD said to Cain, "Why are you angry? And why has your countenance fallen? If you do well, will you not be accepted? And if you do not do well, sin lies at the door. And its desire is for you, but you should rule over it."

I think because God corrected Cain, we can safely assume that we are seeing the beginning of a sacrificial system instituted by God. Rules were already established by the time Genesis 4 comes along as part of the way He is to be worshipped by those wanting to pay honor to Him. If there had not been a system already established, then God had no basis for correcting Cain. Cain could have very easily said, "Hey, God, You never told us." But he did not. He knew better, because God had already instructed him. So a system was established, and I think that that system was established as soon as they sinned and were kicked out of the Garden. They may have been instructed before then, but it became operational, I am pretty sure, after they were kicked out.

We can also find history records that have been unearthed by archeologists of mostly every nation, including nations that no longer exist which passed entirely from the scene, but they have mention of a priesthood serving the worship of whatever god it was that the people worshipped. In addition to this, we know that from these records there was also usually one person mentioned as a high or a chief priest. That person was invariably very influential in the governing of the nation, and often, as history shows, this person was second in command to the king. There is an interesting remark made in the Bible regarding this.

Joshua 14:1 These are the areas which the children of Israel inherited in the land of Canaan, which Eleazar the priest, Joshua the son of Nun, and the heads of the fathers of the tribes of the children of Israel distributed as an inheritance to them.

The high priest was *directly involved* in the dividing up of the land with Joshua and the elders of each one of the tribes. Only two men are named there. One was Joshua, and the other was Eleazar. You expect Joshua to be mentioned, but I was surprised to find that Eleazar, the high priest, was *also* mentioned.

I would suggest to you that to take a nation's records of their practices are actually a reflection of what began in the Garden of Eden, but became badly corrupted as people spread from nation to nation. I think it highly likely an uncorrupted sacrificial system passed through the Flood in the person and

practice of Noah, and then became corrupted once again as men drifted away from the Ark, and then gathered in Babylon under Nimrod and his men of renown.

It is suggested by liberal commentators, that because Moses listened so readily to his father-in-law Jethro regarding the judicial system Moses established [Exodus 18], that Jethro, who was also a priest of Midian, may have been somewhat responsible for some ideas regarding the Israelitish priesthood. Well, I think those guys are way off base. I want you to go in the Bible to Exodus 25. God is speaking to Moses.

Exodus 25:40 And see to it that you make them according to the pattern which was shown you on the mountain.

He is not speaking directly here in regard to the high priest or to the priesthood, but it is a rule of thumb, I am certain, and one we can depend upon, that God laid down the rules for the priesthood—for the high priest and the priests—to Moses, and he took good notes, and he passed them on directly to Aaron and his sons.

Now regarding what Jethro did in regard to a judge, a judge is nowhere near as important as a priest. You will find this as we go along. I am talking about God's view of things. God delineates that a priest has to be this way, this way, and this way. He does not say anything about a judge, but a priest, who is going to directly represent Him in teaching a way of life had better get it right both in his teaching and in his life. Brethren, this is why I say we have got to put this back in practice *now* so that our character is at one with what God expects of a priest working directly for Him under Jesus Christ from the time of Christ's return.

I am very, very skeptical that Jethro had any influence whatever on Moses regarding the high priest and the priesthood. I think it best to believe that the Israelitish priesthood was established entirely by God through Moses, because a priest and priesthood are far more important to God's purpose than a mere judge. However, priesthood practices before Moses by other nations, and Israel, are shown in cases involving the practices of the Israelitish forebears. I will give you an example or two as we go along here.

First I want you to turn to Genesis 41. The context involves Joseph.

Genesis 41:45 And Pharaoh called Joseph's name Zaphnath-Paaneah. And he gave him as a wife Asenath, the daughter of Poti-Pherah priest of On. So Joseph went out over all the land of Egypt.

Here is one of our Israelitish forebears. Very interestingly, *Barnes' Notes* says that the priest was the most privileged and the highest class in Egypt, and that the marriage between Joseph and Asenath guaranteed Joseph's acceptance by the nation. That was a pretty smart move by the Pharaoh to do that. "Besides being a foreigner, let's overlook that. He's married to one of our priestesses." And so Joseph was right in there.

Joseph appeared in the Bible's narrative three generations before Moses. Moses was the great-grandson of Levi, and Joseph and Levi were of the same basic generation. Levi was a bit older than Joseph from everything that I have been able to see, but they were of the same generation, so we have gone back from Moses all the way to Joseph, four generations before.

We are now going to go back further. In Genesis 14 we are going to see Abram coming in contact with a priesthood. We started with Cain and Abel, went to Moses, and now we went back again to find out the contact that some of our forebears had with a priest and priesthood. We are all quite familiar with this, but I want you to pay attention, because, from everything that we are able to see, here we see a priest of God acting in His role as a priest. Notice what he does.

Genesis 14:18-19 Then Melchizedek king of Salem brought out bread and wine; he was the priest of God Most High. And he blessed him and said: "Blessed be Abram of God Most High, Possessor of heaven and earth; and blessed be God Most High, Who has delivered your enemies into your hand."

The first thing I want you to notice is that in verse 19 Melchizedek blessed. This great high priest *blessed* Abraham. This is remarkable to me in that this is the first place that the term "priest" appears in Scripture. Perhaps even

more interesting, it is Melchizedek, and He is described not only as king of Salem, but also as priest of the Most High God. This man was the real deal. Notice what he does. He blesses Abraham.

We do not know specifically what this consisted of, except for the few words that are recorded there. But the term "blessing" in the Bible, when used in this manner, generally means "to confer good upon." Melchizedek conferred *good*. Maybe they were kind and encouraging words, and He might have said something like, "You really represented God well." I am sure that He made Abram feel that what he had done was well worthwhile. He blessed him.

Now considering the source, which is the Bible, and who is involved—Abraham and the circumstance, which was his rescue of Lot—this is no small event to just brush aside as nothing. This is mostly because later on Paul uses Melchizedek as the model for Jesus Christ. Jesus Christ is a High Priest after the order, the rank, the manner of Melchizedek. In addition to the blessing, it is very likely that Melchizedek shared with Abraham bread and wine. That makes me think of something else, and that is these are the two ingredients for Passover representing Christ's body and blood. Did this event take place on the 14th of Abib? No proof of that, but on the other hand I think that God uses patterns like this. Every commentary that I checked on regarding the bread and wine feels it indicates that He brought food to strengthen those who went into the battle. Even if that is true, we see a priest encouraging, strengthening, and sustaining spiritually and physically.

Something else to notice here is that Abraham would accept nothing from the other kings except reimbursement for his expenses. But Abraham *tithed* to Melchizedek, and accepted without any demurring whatever Melchizedek offered. What this does is show the high regard that Abraham had for Melchizedek. Notice that no genealogy is given. He just suddenly appears on the scene. If this indeed was Christ, and I see no valid reason not to think that way even though there is no real solid proof, Melchizedek held the two highest offices on earth all wrapped up in one personage: King of Salem, and He was priest of the Most High God. That is a pretty good pedigree.

Exodus 12:3-6 Speak to all the congregation of Israel, saying: 'On the tenth of this month every man shall take for himself a lamb, according to the house of his father, a lamb for a household. And if the household is too small for the lamb, let him and his neighbor next to his house take it according to the number of the persons; according to each man's need you shall make your count for the lamb. Your lamb shall be without blemish, a male of the first year. You may take it from the sheep or from the goats. Now you shall keep it until the fourteenth day of the same month. Then the whole assembly of the congregation of Israel shall kill it at twilight.

The very first Passover observation took place before the making of the Old Covenant. The Old Covenant was not made really until Exodus 24, but the very first Passover was observed before the making of the Old Covenant and the formal appointment of a priesthood. Though it is unstated, it is clearly implied that the head of each family acted in the place of an officially-appointed priesthood. This has at least a hint of a responsibility that those of us who are the head of a household have, and that in a finer way we are to act as a priest for our family. Maybe it is not so stated, but there is a biblical basis for that even though in a formal sense it does not exist as a command from God.

I will pick up from there, God willing, the next time I speak on this subject, and we will go on with it. I am very excited about this. It is almost like I have been waiting fifty years to give this.