

DISPENSATIONAL PRIESTHOODS

Every dispensation has a special priesthood that officiate spiritual sacrifices and services to a holy God on behalf of others that is acceptable by both parties regarding spiritual matters.

“You also, as living stones, are being built up as a spiritual house for a holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ.” (1 Pet.2:5)

This lesson will study the four Dispensational Priesthoods and emphasis the church age priesthood.

1. In the Gentile dispensation, the priesthood was held by the genealogy head of the messianic family.

This genealogy is taught in Gen.5. It extends from Adam to Noah.

Cain’s slaying of Abel involved a priestly function of the Gentile dispensation (Gen.4:3-5; 1 John 3:12/ slew with sacrifice knife). During this period, animals were used for shadow Christology sacrifices but were not eaten (Gen.1:29; 4:3-5).

There was a system of clean and unclean animals for sacrifice but not for food (Gen.6:19-22; 7:2-5). After the flood, meat was permitted unless it had blood (Gen.9:3-5). This continued into the Jewish age (Lev.17:10-14). Under Mosaic Law, unclean animals were forbidden to eat (Lev.11). This was set aside in the Church age Acts 10-11 (10:12-16). However, Lev.17:14 was kept by the early church conference Acts 15:20,29 (shadow Christology Heb.9:12-15).

2. In the Jewish dispensation, there was a specialized Levitical priesthood.

In the Patriarchal period of the Jewish dispensation, Melchizedek was introduced to the family priesthood of Abraham. Melchizedek was a priestly king of Salem (Jerusalem). Abraham gave 10% of the spoils of victory and received a priestly blessing from Melchizedek (Gen.14: Heb.7:1-6). Jesus Christ was a priest after the order of Melchizedek not Aaron (Heb.5:6,10; 7:11-17).

In the holy nation period of the Jewish dispensation, two aspects of the priesthood are instituted for Israel: priest-nation of Israel status and the Leviticus priesthood.

- As a priest-nation, Israel was the divine agency of representing God in the world as custodian of His word and work of evangelizing other nations (Ex.19:5-6; Deut.7:6; 26:18-19).
- The Levitical priesthood was assigned to Aaron and the Tribe of Levi and was responsible for shadow Christology (Num.3-4; Deut.20:2/ chaplain; 21:5; 1 Sam.2:27-28).

Twice the sin unto death changed the priesthood status in the priest-nation of Israel.

The first sin unto death involved 2 of the 4 sons of Aaron (Lev.10:7). This resulted with two sons in line for high priesthood (Eleazar and Ithamar). At his death, Aaron appointed Eleazar as high priest (Num.3:4; 20:23-29; Deut.10:6).

The second sin unto death involved the sons of Eli (1 Sam.2:31-36). At the death of Eli, the priesthood went to the family of Ithamar. When this family aided David in the Nob incident, King Saul slaughtered them all but Abiathar who escaped to David (1 Sam.22:20-23; 23:6). Then Saul appointed Zadok of the family of Eleazar

in spite of the previous judgment (1 Sam.2:31-36). When David became king, he appointed Abiathar of Ithamar family (1 Kings 2:26-27).

For a short period of time there were two high priests (1 Kings 4:4). Abiathar sided with Adonijah's revolt while Zadok sided with Solomon (1 Kings 1:15-37; 2:26-27). This resulted in Abiathar being banished. The Zadok priesthood functioned historically until Rome destroyed the nation in 70AD.

"The line of Eleazer doubtless continued until the time of the Maccabees, when a decided change took place. About 153 BC Jonathan the Hasmonean was appointed by King Alexander, and thus the high priesthood passed to the priestly family of Jorarib (1 Macc.10:18-21). Whether the family of Jorarib was a brand of the Zadokites cannot be determined. After the appointment of Jonathan, the office became hereditary in the Hasmonean line, and continued until the time of Herod the Great." (ISBE, pg.2443)

- Annas and Caiaphas were high priest during the time of Herod the Great and Jesus Christ (Luke 3:2; Matt.26:3-5).
- John Baptist was a member of the Leviticus priesthood (Luke 1:5; 1 Chron.24:10).

3. During the Church dispensation, the priesthood is after the order of Jesus Christ (Heb.5-7). It is a royal and holy priesthood (1 Pet.2:5,9).

Jesus Christ fulfilled the OT shadow Christology and the Leviticus priesthood function (John 1:29; 1 Pet.1:18-19; Heb.7:11-12, 24-28; 8:1,6,13).

Therefore all church age believers are royal holy priests after the order of the priesthood of Jesus Christ (Heb.4:14-16; 13:15; Eph.18-22; 3:9-12).

Our Priesthood is 1 of the 50 things every believer receives at salvation that he can never lose in time or eternity. It is 1 of the 20 status privileges of the royal family of God (see pamphlet, "So Great a Salvation").

"And He has made us to be a kingdom, priests to His God and Father; to Him be the glory and the dominion forever and ever." (Rev.1:6)

Every church age believer belongs to the royal holy priesthood of Jesus Christ that officiates spiritual sacrifices and services to God on behalf of others that is acceptable to both parties regarding spiritual matters.

4. In the Millennium dispensation, Jesus Christ will return to earth and officiate the Melchizedek priesthood (Zech.6:9-15).

All Millennium believers will be royal and holy priests after the priesthood of Jesus Christ (Isa.61:6; 66:21).

All believers involved in the first resurrection will be royal holy priests in the Millennium (Rev.20:4-6; 5:10; 2:16-17; 2 Tim.2:12; Matt.19:28; Dan.7:22).