

PRESENT TRUTH

A Teaching Letter of Lifestream Teaching Ministries

For this reason I will not be negligent to remind you always of these things, though you know and are established in the present truth. (2 Peter 1:12 NKJV)

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Functioning Priests

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Introduction

In our last issue I expressed my belief that the next major move of the Holy Spirit would be in the area of our priesthood and that we would be receiving new understanding about what it means to be a New Testament priest. Since then I have begun a teaching series on this subject that I have called “[Priests of God](#)”, which is available on the website. The teaching lessons go into more detail than is possible in these teaching letters.

In this issue of Present Truth we will begin to look at what it means to be a functioning New Testament priest. Jesus will be our pattern for He performed His priestly functions as a Melchizedek type of priest before He was designated or appointed as our High Priest (Hebrews 5:9-10). We saw in the last issue that Jesus invalidated the Levitical priesthood along with the Law for righteousness and the Old Covenant (Hebrews 7:11-12; 18-19; 22) Therefore, nothing that I say in this lesson relates to the Old Testament priesthood as shown by the types and shadows of the Levitical or Aaronic priestly functions.

Jesus has received an Eternal Priesthood for He is our High Priest forever (Hebrews 5:4-6). The Melchizedek priesthood had existed prior to Jesus' incarnation and will continue to exist eternally with Jesus as High Priest. Because of this, I prefer to call the Melchizedek priesthood either the Eternal Priesthood or the New Testament Priesthood for it is in that priesthood that we function.

No Intermediaries

The Levitical priesthood were intermediaries between people and God—they represented man to God and God to man. They taught the people God's word, performed the sacrifices, prayed the prayers, and performed the housekeeping work for the Tabernacle and, eventually, the Temple. After the coming of Jesus as Messiah, the functions of the Levitical priests ceased. Jesus had offered Himself as the permanent sacrifice and He has sent us the Holy Spirit as the promise of the Father to teach us all things and the temple has become a spiritual house built of living stones. All of the functions of the Levitical priesthood have now been superseded by the Lord and His

provision.

The early Church understood that the Levitical priesthood was dead. If there was any doubt, God resolved it with the destruction of the Temple in 70 AD just as Jesus prophesied. However, as time moved on and the teachings of the early Church were corrupted the idea of a Levitical style priesthood was introduced into the Church during the time of Constantine. While patterned after the Roman ruling hierarchy, elements of Levitical procedure and heathen concepts were added to what was to become the Roman Catholic priest system. The people of God were divided into two groups—those who were priests and those who were not. This was a step backward to the Law and the Scriptures tell us that grace becomes ineffective to those under the Law (Galatians 5:4), which is why so much abuse of God's people has occurred under the Catholic priest system.

The Protestant Reformation sought to correct the wrongs of the Catholic system and restore Truth that had been lost to those walking under the Catholic legal system. The goal of the Reformation was not to eliminate the priests but to eliminate the laity because we are all priests to our God. The desired result was only partially achieved. The Protestant Reformation established our modern Pastoral model of leadership, which is actually a slightly modified priest hierarchy of Roman Catholic origin. Although different titles are used, in functional application our pastor system is styled like the Levitical system with the “pastors” doing the praying, the teaching, the care of the “house”, and the other priestly functions. With the Catholics the people of God are divided into priests or not priests; whereas, with the Protestants the people are divided into clergy or not clergy. We need to continue the Reformation by eliminating the Levitical style of priest and restoring the Melchizedek style of priest.

The Scriptures make it clear that there are no priest mediators anymore. There is one and only one mediator.

For there is one God, *and* one mediator also between God and men, *the* man Christ Jesus, who gave Himself as a ransom for all, the testimony *given* at the proper time. (1 Timothy 2:5-6 NASB)

Jesus opened a new and living way into the Holiest of Holies. The veil has been ripped apart. We now enter by faith through Him (Hebrews 10:19-20). Therefore, we can eliminate any form of mediation between man and God as a function of New Testament priests.

So, what does a New Testament priest do?

Revealing the Father

Jesus, as our pattern, shows us one of the primary aspects of a New Testament priest.

"If you had known Me, you would have known My Father also; from now on you know Him, and have seen Him." Philip *said to Him, "Lord, show us the Father, and it is enough for us." Jesus *said to him, "Have I been so long with you, and *yet* you have not come to know Me, Philip? He who has seen Me has seen the Father; how *can* you say, 'Show us the Father'? "Do you not believe that I am in the Father, and the Father is in Me? The words that I say to you I do not speak on My own initiative, but the Father abiding in Me does His works. "Believe Me that I am in the Father and the Father is in Me; otherwise believe because of the works themselves. (John 14:7-11 NASB)

Jesus said this as He began speaking to His disciples of His upcoming death and resurrection. What did Jesus mean when He said, “If you had known Me...”? The disciples had walked with Him for more than three years. They knew He was the Messiah. They had seen the miracles. They had heard the teaching. They obviously *knew* Him.

I think that He meant that they knew Him within the limits of their expectations but did not know Him in the fullness of His purpose. They knew Him as a national, temporal Messiah. They still expected a restored Kingdom of Israel. If they could lay aside the traditions that they had been taught, if they could know Him as greater than their teaching had allowed, then they would know Him fully and know His Father also. Jesus was showing them that He is in the Father and the Father is in Him. He was showing them the Father.

To me, this is the mark of the New Testament priest. He doesn't show forth himself—he shows the Father. Nothing is more important than showing a person the Father. Jesus came to show us the Father. He went away and sent us the Holy Spirit who shows us Jesus. A New Testament priest, by the power of the Holy Spirit, shows the unbeliever Jesus as the Son of God. A New Testament priest shows the believer, who already knows Jesus, the Father.

A New Testament priest doesn't get between people and God. He reveals the Father in his character and in his actions. Jesus as the Word made flesh, works through the Holy Spirit to make the Word flesh in us. As we become like Jesus, the Word reveals us in the Father and the Father in us. We stand then as a *facilitator* and *not a mediator* of the Father.

In other lessons I have spoken of the necessity of [Developing a Father's Heart](#) if one wants to mature in the Lord and minister among God's people. Now, I am beginning to see that it is the development of the Father's heart in us that brings us into Melchizedek priesthood as a functional priest.

The Lord has called us to be a kingdom of priests and kings. However, not all of us function as kings and priests. The Scriptures make it clear that only those who overcome actually become functional kings in His Kingdom.

'He who overcomes, and he who keeps My deeds until the end, TO HIM I WILL GIVE AUTHORITY OVER THE NATIONS; AND HE SHALL RULE THEM WITH A ROD OF IRON, AS THE VESSELS OF THE POTTER ARE BROKEN TO PIECES, as I also have received *authority* from My Father; and I will give him the morning star. (Revelation 2:26-28 NASB)

'He who overcomes, I will grant to him to sit down with Me on My throne, as I also overcame and sat down with My Father on His throne. (Revelation 3:21 NASB)

In the same manner, I now believe that the same principle applies to our priesthood. We are all called to be priests but not all of us actually function as priests. Only those who develop the heart of the Father actually function as New Testament priests.

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