

WEEK 12 — OUTLINE

A Kingdom of Priests

Scripture Reading: Exo. 19:4-6a; 1 Pet. 2:5, 9; Rev. 1:6; 5:10

«DAY 1»

I. “You shall be to Me a kingdom of priests” (Exo. 19:6a):

- A. God chose the Israelites to be a kingdom of priests; He wanted the whole nation to be priests, and His salvation was to obtain a kingdom of priests (v. 4):
 - 1. The Lord brought the children of Israel out of Egypt in order to make them a kingdom of priests, a kingdom in which everyone would be a priest, one who serves God; hence, God’s goal was to have a priestly nation (v. 6a):
 - a. This nation was to be different from all other nations on earth, for all the people of this nation would be priests—those who live solely for God’s interests and serve Him.
 - b. Every person in the nation would have one unique occupation—serving God.
 - 2. The priests wait on God and follow God, and their job is to serve God; the whole nation of Israel was to be a nation of priests serving God; everyone in this kingdom was to serve God alone (v. 6a; Rom. 1:9).
- B. What is depicted in the Old Testament is merely a picture; in the New Testament we have the reality (1 Pet. 2:5, 9):
 - 1. God’s intention toward the church today is for everyone to be a priest; we are a kingdom of priests (Rev. 5:10).

«DAY 2»

- 2. The Lord Jesus, the Priest, brought us into the priesthood through His redemption, and the whole church should now be the priesthood (1:5-6).
 - 3. All the saved ones are called to be priests; as to our person, we are sons of God (Eph. 1:5; Heb. 2:10), and as to our spiritual occupation, we are priests of God (Rev. 1:6; 5:10).
 - 4. Since we are priests, we should be serving God all day long in whatever we do (Rom. 1:9).
- #### II. In order to realize what a priest is, we need to see God’s eternal plan (Eph. 3:11; Gen. 1:26):
- A. God’s plan is to work Himself into a group of people in order that He might be their life and that they might be His expression (Eph. 3:16-17a, 21; Col. 3:4).
 - B. From the beginning to the end of the Bible, God wants to gain a priesthood; all the glorious things in the Bible are related to the priesthood

(Rev. 21:11; 22:3b).

- C. Man was destined and created to receive God, to be filled, saturated, and permeated with God, and to have God flow out of him so that he might be a living expression of God; this is a brief definition of a priest.

<<DAY 3>>

III. As one who serves God continually, a priest is a particular kind of person:

- A. A priest is a person who serves God by enjoying God in Christ (Rom. 1:9; Gal. 5:22).
- B. A priest is a person who serves God through Christ as the reality of the offerings (1 Pet. 2:5).
- C. A genuine priest of God is one who serves God with Christ, through Christ, and by Christ (Phil. 1:8; Col. 1:27-28; 2:9-10).
- D. A priest is a person who enjoys Christ (Phil. 3:1; Eph. 3:8).
- E. A priest is a person who lives by Christ; his eating, clothing, and dwelling are Christ (John 6:57b; Gal. 3:27; John 15:4).
- F. A priest is a person who contacts God in the mingling with God (1 Cor. 6:17).
- G. A priest is one who is absolutely and thoroughly mingled with God (John 14:20).
- H. A priest is one who becomes a part of God's dwelling, God's house (1 Pet. 2:5).
- I. A priest is a person who bears the testimony of God (Rev. 1:2, 9).
- J. A priest is a person who ministers Christ to others (Rom. 15:16; 2 Cor. 4:5).
- K. A priest is one who brings man into fellowship with God and brings God into fellowship with man (1 John 1:3).
- L. A priest is a person who builds up the dwelling place of God (Eph. 2:21-22).
- M. A priest is a person who is a laboring priest of the gospel of God (Rom. 15:16).

<<DAY 4>>

IV. To be a priest is not mainly to do something for the Lord but to be taken over by Him (Eph. 3:17a):

- A. The main function of a priest is not to work but to spend time in the

presence of the Lord until he is one with Him in spirit (2 Cor. 3:18; 1 Cor. 6:17).

- B. The Lord's intention is for us to open ourselves to Him and let Him come into us to fill us, saturate us, and be one with us; then He will do something through us, and whatever He does will flow out of Himself (Rev. 22:1-2).
- C. The priesthood that God desires to have is a corporate man who is saturated and permeated with Himself (Eph. 3:17a; 4:23-24; 5:18b):
 - 1. If we are saturated and permeated with the glory of the Lord, we will be one with Him and one with one another in Him (2 Cor. 3:18; John 17:22, 24).
 - 2. If we realize the desire of God's heart, we will be fully open to Him so that He may flood us with Himself (Eph. 1:5, 9; 3:17a).
 - 3. All Christian work and service must issue out of this priesthood (Acts 13:1-2).

<<DAY 5>>

V. As a kingdom of priests, we are both a holy priesthood and a royal priesthood (Rev. 5:10; 1 Pet. 2:5, 9):

- A. The holy priesthood is typified by the order of Aaron, and the royal priesthood is typified by the order of Melchizedek (Exo. 29:1, 4; Gen. 14:18; Heb. 2:17; 6:20).
- B. The order of Aaron is the holy order (1 Pet. 2:5):
 - 1. To be holy is to be separated from the worldly things unto God (1:16).
 - 2. The holy order is an order separated from common things unto the divine things and unto the use of the Lord.
 - 3. The holy priests are those who are separated to go to God to represent God's people (2:5).
- C. The order of Melchizedek is the royal order (v. 9; Gen. 14:18):
 - 1. Melchizedek was a king, and he was a kingly priest (Heb. 7:1).
 - 2. The kingly priests come from God to care for God's people, just as Melchizedek came from God to meet Abraham to minister bread and wine to him (Gen. 14:18-19).
- D. On the one hand, we are the holy priests, going to God to represent God's people; on the other hand, we are the royal priests, coming from God to the people to represent God (1 Pet. 2:5, 9):
 - 1. The holy priesthood offers spiritual sacrifices to God (v. 5), and the kingly priesthood tells out the virtues of God (v. 9).
 - 2. The holy priests offer something to God for the sake of the people, and the royal priests declare the things of God to people.

3. We are the holy priests and the kingly priests, going and coming in two directions.

«DAY 6»

VI. The building of God's house is related to the priesthood and depends on the priesthood (Exo. 19:6a; 25:8-9; Zech. 6:12-13; 1 Pet. 2:5):

- A. The building of God as the dwelling place of God is the priesthood; the holy priesthood is the spiritual house (Eph. 2:21-22; 1 Pet. 2:5).
- B. The priesthood upholds the building of the church; without the priesthood it is impossible to build up the church.
- C. The building of the church depends on whether or not the saints will bear the priesthood before God (Heb. 3:6; 6:20; 7:26; 8:1; 10:19).
- D. If we are willing to come forward to God, fellowship with God, live before God, and allow God to flow through us, we will enjoy the riches of Christ and express the glory of Christ in a full way; in this way we will bear the testimony of the church, and the building of the church will be realized among us (11:6; 1 John 1:3; Eph. 3:8; 2:21-22).
- E. In order to recover the building of God, God must first recover the priesthood (Ezra 1:1-4; 7:1-7).

VII. The Lord's recovery is the recovery of the priesthood (Zech. 3:1-5; 6:12-13; Hag. 1:8, 12, 14):

- A. What the Lord needs today is a group of people who are brought into His presence and even into the Lord Himself until they are one with Him (Heb. 10:19; 2 Cor. 3:18; John 17:22, 24).
- B. When the Lord has such a priesthood—a kingdom of priests—He will have the freedom to flow out and work out His will for the fulfillment of His eternal purpose (Eph. 1:5, 9, 11; Phil. 2:13; Rev. 4:11).

Morning Nourishment

Exo. 19:6 And you shall be to Me a kingdom of priests and a holy nation. These are the words that you shall speak to the children of Israel.

Rev. 5:10 And have made them a kingdom and priests to our God; and they will reign on the earth.

[In Exodus 19:6] God told the Israelites that they would be a kingdom of priests. This expression is somewhat difficult to understand. Why did God say that they would be a kingdom of priests? He meant that He wanted the whole nation to be priests. No one in the nation would be an ordinary person; the whole kingdom would be priests. This was God's purpose.

When God chose Israel to be His people, He set this goal before them. This nation was to be different from all other nations on the earth. It was a kingdom of priests. All the people of this nation would be priests. This meant that every person in the nation would have one unique occupation, the occupation of serving God. God delights in separating men from the earth for His service. He delights in seeing men live solely for His affairs. God wants all of His children to be priests and to serve Him. (CWWN, vol. 50, "Messages for Building Up New Believers (3)," pp. 852-853)

Today's Reading

Priests are those who wait on God and follow God. No one is able to come closer to God than the priests. Their job is to serve God. The Israelites were to be a kingdom of priests; the whole nation was to be priests.

The priests' eating, living, and slaughtering of bulls and goats were all for the purpose of serving God. The proper profession of the priests was to serve God; everything else was a sideline. They did not work as teachers, doctors, or in any other profession. Exodus 19 tells us that God intended that all the Israelites, old or young, great or small, male or female, were to be priests [v. 6].

The goal of God's salvation is to gain priests (Rev. 1:5-6a). The blood of the passover lamb delivered the Israelites with the goal of obtaining and ushering in a kingdom of priests. The greatest calling and also the greatest grace is that men can serve God as priests. The number of those who left Egypt was the number of those who should have served God. The number of those who reached Sinai was the number of those who should have served the Lord. (CWWN, vol. 57, pp. 199-200)

As we stay in the Lord's presence, we become a kingdom of priests to Him. What is portrayed concerning this in the Old Testament is fulfilled in the New Testament. We, the believers, are a kingdom of priests unto God (Rev. 1:6). As priests, we live in God's presence, enjoying Him as our portion, even as He enjoys us as His treasure. This is a mutual enjoyment. If such a thing could exist in Old Testament times, how much more should it be our experience in the New Testament age! What is depicted in the Old Testament is merely a picture; in the New Testament we have the reality. Praise the Lord that we are God's peculiar treasure and priests enjoying Him as everything to us! (Life-study of Exodus, pp. 588-589)

The Israelites had to ask the Levites to serve for them (Judg. 17), and it took a great effort for men to invite a Levite to serve in their house....This arrangement lasted for over fifteen hundred years. During this time eleven tribes were kept outside the tabernacle. Only the tribe of Levi was admitted into the tabernacle. This lasted until the New Testament age, as Peter said in his first Epistle, "But you are...a royal priesthood" (2:9). Now every believer has become a servant of God. At the end of the New Testament, when John was about to die in A.D. 95, he said that we have been made "a kingdom, priests to His God and Father" (Rev. 1:6). God's intention toward the church today is for every believer to be a priest. We are a kingdom of priests. What the Israelites lost, God is recovering through the church. Through their unfaithfulness, the Israelites lost the priestly kingdom. God's intention today is for every Christian to be recovered to be a priest. (CWWN, vol. 57, p. 201)

Further Reading: CWWN, vol. 50, "Messages for Building Up New Believers (3)," ch. 48; Life-study of Exodus, msg. 50

<< WEEK 12 — DAY 2 >>

Morning Nourishment

Rev. 1:5-6 And from Jesus Christ, the faithful Witness, the Firstborn of the dead, and the Ruler of the kings of the earth. To Him who loves us and has released us from our sins by His blood and made us a kingdom, priests to His God and Father, to Him be the glory and the might forever and ever. Amen.

The Lord Jesus, who is the Priest of all priests, brought us into the priesthood through His redemption. The whole church must now be the priesthood. However, this priesthood has...been lost. Therefore, the recovery of the church life is the recovery of the real priesthood. (CWWL, 1966, vol. 1, "The Priesthood," p. 440)

Today's Reading

It is a great matter that we, who once were sinners, sons of disobedience, children of wrath, children of the devil, enemies of God, and sons of Gehenna, are now priests of God serving Him. As to our person, we are sons of God. As to our spiritual occupation, we are priests of God (Rev. 1:6; 5:10). Some of us may be teachers, doctors, or lawyers, but our real occupation is that of priests. In the Old Testament only certain men were priests, but in the New Testament all believers are priests.

When Peter received the revelation from the Father concerning the Lord Jesus, he said, "You are the Christ, the Son of the living God" (Matt. 16:16). In His person the Lord Jesus is the Son of God, and in His work He is the Christ, the One anointed by God to carry out God's commission. Even as the Lord Jesus is the Son of God in His person and the Christ of God in His work, we, the believers in Christ, are sons of God in our person and priests of God in our spiritual occupation. Since we are priests, we should be serving the Lord all day long in whatever we do. (The Conclusion of the New Testament, p. 1097)

The dictionary tells us that a priest is a person who serves God professionally. Most Christians would tell us that a priest is one who serves God. This is right, but what does it mean to serve God? Today's Christians would answer that to serve God is to work for God. This answer is wrong! To say that a priest is a person who serves God is right, but to say that to serve God is merely to do something for God is wrong.

To realize what a priest is, we must first see God's eternal plan. God is a God of purpose. He has a purpose which He wants to accomplish. According to the revelation of the Scriptures, God has a plan to work Himself into a group of people in order that He might be their life and they might become His expression. Based upon this plan, God created man. (CWWL, 1966, vol. 1, p. 426)

The priesthood is crucial because the enjoyment and expression of God depend upon the priesthood. Furthermore, the building of God as the dwelling place of God is the priesthood. From the beginning to the end of the Bible, we see that God wants to gain a priesthood. All the glorious items in the Bible are related to the priesthood. (The Priesthood and God's Building, p. 118)

Man was destined to receive God, to be filled, saturated and permeated with God, and to have God flow out of him that he might be the living expression of God. This is a brief definition of a priest. He must contact God, be filled with God, and be possessed by God completely that he may be built up with others in the flow of the life of God. Then the priesthood will be God's living, corporate expression.

Christianity's concept is that if we love the Lord, we must work for Him. This is a natural, religious concept, not the revelation of the Bible. God never intended to call us merely to work for Him. God's intention is that we must first open ourselves to Him that He may come into us to fill and flood us until He has taken possession of every part of our being. Our whole being must be saturated and permeated with Him. Then we will be one with Him. We will not only be clothed outwardly with Him as power, but permeated inwardly with Him as everything. Then spontaneously, God will flow out of us, and we will be built up with others in this flow of life. (CWWL, 1966, vol. 1, pp. 426-427)

Further Reading: CWWL, 1966, vol. 1, "The Priesthood," chs. 1-6

« WEEK 12 — DAY 3 »

Morning Nourishment

Rom. 1:9 For God is my witness, whom I serve in my spirit in the gospel of His Son, how unceasingly I make mention of you always in my prayers.

15:16 That I might be a minister of Christ Jesus to the Gentiles, a laboring priest of the gospel of God, in order that the offering of the Gentiles might be acceptable, having been sanctified in the Holy Spirit.

We should not say that the first priest in the Bible was Aaron or even Melchizedek. Abel made an offering to God (Gen. 4:4), and no doubt Adam already had done the same thing. Noah also offered to God as a priest (8:20), and Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob each built an altar and offered something to God (12:7; 26:25; 33:20). None of them when they offered sought an “official” priest to make the offering for them. This proves that every chosen person of God is a priest...A priest is one who serves God by enjoying God in Christ. God’s intention is that all His people enjoy Him as priests. God’s original intention was to present Himself as the tree of life to be enjoyed by man, and those who enjoy God the most are the priests. (CWWL, 1965, vol. 2, p. 461)

Today’s Reading

It is not sufficient to say that a priest is simply a person who serves God. Rather, we must say that a priest is a person who serves God through Christ as the reality of the offerings (Lev. 1—7).

Moreover, a priest is a person who enjoys Christ. The priests eat what they offer as the sacrifices. The serving ones serve God with Christ and through Christ, and they enjoy Christ.

A priest is also a person who lives by Christ. His eating is Christ, his clothing is Christ, and his dwelling is Christ.

A priest is a person who contacts God in the mingling with God. The priest’s passing through the Holy Place and into the Holy of Holies is his contact with God, and this contact is not in himself but in a mingling with God. A priest’s contact with God is in God. That is, as he contacts God, he is mingled with God, not objectively but subjectively. This is very deep. Today as the priests, when we go to contact God, we contact Him not merely objectively but also subjectively. We do not contact God apart from God; we contact God in God, that is, in the mingling with God.

A priest is one who is absolutely and thoroughly mingled with God. Everything in the atmosphere of the tabernacle, including the smoke, flavor, and substance of the offerings, signifies an aspect of God. For the priest to come into the tabernacle signifies a person coming into God. Once the priest is in the tabernacle, the atmosphere, the flavor, and even the shekinah glory gets into him, producing a mingling of the priest with God.

A priest is a person who becomes a part of God’s dwelling, God’s house. In the New Testament, in 1 Peter 2, we see that the house of God is the priesthood composed of all the priests (v. 5). Therefore, every priest is an item of the material for the building of the house.

A priest also is a person who bears the testimony of God....To bear the testimony means that we ourselves become a part of the testimony.

A priest is one who ministers Christ to others. If we are a part of Christ, then whatever we minister is Christ. We are filled with Christ, covered with Christ, one with Christ, and mingled with Christ, so whatever we pass on, share, and minister to others is Christ—not knowledge, forms, or anything else.

A priest is one who brings man into fellowship with God and God into fellowship with man.

Lastly, a priest is a person who builds up the dwelling place of God. The priesthood was necessary for the building up of the tabernacle and later for the building of the temple and the recovery of the temple. (CWWL, 1965, vol. 2, pp. 455-459)

[Romans 15:16 indicates] that the apostle Paul preached the gospel as a priest. (CWWL, 1966, vol. 1, “The Priesthood,” p. 468)

Further Reading: CWWL, 1965, vol. 2, “Functioning in Life as Gifts Given to the Body of Christ,” chs. 7-8; The Advance of the Lord’s Recovery Today, chs. 1-2

« WEEK 12 — DAY 4 »

Morning Nourishment

2 Cor. 3:18 But we all with unveiled face, beholding and reflecting like a mirror the glory of the Lord, are being transformed into the same image from glory to glory, even as from the Lord Spirit.

John 17:22 And the glory which You have given Me I have given to them, that they may be one, even as We are one.

As we come to the New Testament, we realize that the apostles were priests. They were continually opening themselves to the Lord to be saturated with Him. Thus, they were a real corporate expression of the Lord. In fact, according to the New Testament, a believer must be this kind of person. Peter and John especially emphasized this. Peter was the first apostle, and John ministered as the last one. Both of them told us that we are priests and that we are a priesthood. (CWWL, 1966, vol. 1, p. 430)

Today's Reading

Our concept of serving God has to be transformed and adjusted. To be a priest is not mainly to do something for the Lord but to be taken over by the Lord. We must spend much time in the presence of the Lord and let Him come in to fill and saturate us.

I must repeat that a priest is not one who merely works for God. God has no intention of calling us to do something for Him. His intention is that we answer His call by opening ourselves to Him and saying, "Lord, here I am, not ready to work for You, but ready to be filled and possessed by You and to be one with You." Not until we are one with the Lord can we ever work for Him and be a real priest. The main function of a priest is not to work but to spend time in the presence of the Lord until he is one with Him in the spirit. The priesthood that God plans to have is a corporate man who is saturated and permeated with Himself.

We may read the Bible many, many times yet never realize that knowledge, work, and even good things other than God do not belong to the divine source....To do something for the Lord may be good, but its source is the wrong tree. We must realize that to do something for the Lord is awful, even terrible! What brought death into humanity? It was the tree of knowledge, and any consideration of doing something for the Lord comes from the same source.

The Lord's only intention is for us to open ourselves to Him and let Him come into us to fill us and be one with us. Then He will do something through us. Whatever He does through us will flow out of Himself. This is the real service which God is seeking today.

In the beginning of my Christian life, I liked to talk with people about the Lord's work. Now I simply do not have the appetite to talk about work. It is not a matter of working for the Lord but a matter of being possessed by the Lord in the presence of His shekinah glory. Then He will flow out, and that flow will be the real work! The outflow of God is the real service. Only this flow can fulfill the purpose of the Lord. It is not a matter of a message, a form, or any kind of teaching. It is a matter of being fully and thoroughly permeated by and with Him. Then He will flow out of us. In this flow we will not only be one with Him but also one with all who open themselves to Him. In this flow is the work, the service, the flow of life, the Body life, and the building up of the Body. We must realize that the building up of the Body is not a work or a kind of organization. It is a corporate life in the flow of God Himself.

We must be saturated and permeated by His shekinah glory. Then we will be one with Him and one with one another in Him. All Christian work and service must issue out of this priesthood. Please be impressed that God has no intention for us to work for Him. No, absolutely not! If we realize His heart's desire, we will be fully opened to Him that He may flood us with Himself. This is the priesthood, and this is the kind of person God desires to have today. (CWWL, 1966, vol. 1, pp. 430, 427, 435, 430-431)

Further Reading: CWWL, 1966, vol. 1, "The Priesthood," chs. 8-10

<< WEEK 12 — DAY 5 >>

Morning Nourishment

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

9 But you are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people acquired for a possession, so that you may tell out the virtues of Him who has called you out of darkness into His marvelous light.

We are the holy priesthood on the one hand, and the royal priesthood on the other hand. In the Old Testament types there are two different orders of priests—the order of Aaron and the order of Melchizedek. The order of Aaron is the holy order. To be holy is to be separated from the common things, the worldly things, unto the Lord. The holy order is an order separated from the world, from the common things, unto the use of the Lord. To have the church service, all of us need to be built together, and we should be separated people, separated from the world, from the common things, from the ordinary way. To be separated unto God is to be holy unto God. To be holy simply means to be sanctified, and to be sanctified simply means to be separated from the common things unto the divine things. This is the holy order, the holy priesthood. (To Serve in the Human Spirit, p. 81)

Today's Reading

The believers are not only holy priests but also royal priests. Whereas the holy priests are according to the order of Aaron, the royal, kingly priests are according to the order of Melchizedek. Melchizedek was a king and a kingly priest (Heb. 7:1). The holy priests are those who are separated to go to God to represent God's people, whereas the kingly priests come from God to care for us, just as Melchizedek came from God to meet Abraham to minister bread and wine to him (Gen. 14:17-18). On the one hand, we are the holy priests, always going to God to represent the people, and on the other hand, we come from God to the people to represent God. (CWWL, 1964, vol. 2, "A General Sketch of the New Testament in the Light of Christ and the Church, Part 3: Hebrews through Jude," pp. 424-425)

The order of Melchizedek is the royal order. Melchizedek was a king, and he was a kingly priest. On one hand, we are the sons of Aaron, the holy priests separated from the world unto the Lord. On the other hand, we are Melchizedeks, the kingly priests.

Suppose the church here is going to preach the gospel. First of all, we need to be built up together as one body; we must be formed together as an army. Then we all should be separated from the world unto the Lord. We all need to go to the Lord and pray for a period of time, like those one hundred twenty in Acts who prayed for ten days. They separated themselves from the worldly things unto the Lord, and they stayed with the Lord for ten days. As a result, they were all filled with the Lord. At that moment they were the holy priests. After those ten days, when they came out to the people to tell them that Jesus is the Lord, the Savior, they did this in a royal way. When they went to the Lord, they were holy. When they came out from the presence of the Lord with the heavenly authority, they were kings; they were royal.

When we give up the whole world and go to the Lord to pray for sinners, saying, "Lord, be merciful, remember them, save them, deliver them," we are the holy priests. But when we come out of the presence of the Lord after much prayer to minister something of the Lord as life in a powerful way, in a way of heavenly authority, we are royal priests. (To Serve in the Human Spirit, pp. 81-82)

The holy priesthood in 1 Peter 2:5 offers spiritual sacrifices to God, whereas the kingly priesthood in verse 9 tells out the virtues of God. The holy priests offer something to God for the sake of the people, whereas the royal priests declare the things of God to people. We are the holy priests and the kingly priests, going and coming in two directions. (CWWL, 1964, vol. 2, p. 425)

Further Reading: To Serve in the Human Spirit, ch. 6; CWWN, vol. 46, ch. 177; The Priesthood and God's Building, ch. 1

<< WEEK 12 — DAY 6 >>

Morning Nourishment

Zech. 6:12-13 ...Thus speaks Jehovah of hosts, saying, Here is a man, whose name is the Shoot; and he will shoot forth from his place and will build the temple of Jehovah. Indeed, it is he who will build the temple of Jehovah; and he will bear majesty and will sit and rule on his throne; and he will be a priest on his throne; and the counsel of peace will be between the two of them.

The building of God's dwelling place depends upon the priesthood. The building materials of gold and precious stones that were worn by the priests signify the building materials of the New Jerusalem. The New Jerusalem is built with gold and adorned with precious stones (Rev. 21:18-19). Similarly, on the breastplate of the priests, precious stones were enclosed in settings of gold (Exo. 28:11). The twelve precious stones enclosed in settings of gold were one item that signifies all the people of God. This shows that the priests wore the building of God and that the building of God was upon the priests. Without the priesthood, there is no building of God. (The Priesthood and God's Building, p. 118)

Today's Reading

The tabernacle is a dwelling place. But how can such a dwelling place be a living people? With the fulfillment of these types in the New Testament, the tabernacle and the priesthood are put together. First Peter 2:5 says that we are built up into a spiritual house, a holy priesthood. In this verse, according to the grammar, the spiritual house and the holy priesthood are in apposition. This means that these terms refer to the same thing. Therefore, the spiritual house is the holy priesthood.

The saints who are built together are a spiritual house. This spiritual house is a collective people. My point here is that the house and the priesthood are one entity. (Life-study of Exodus, p. 1326)

To recover the building of His church, God must first recover the priesthood. The priesthood upholds the building of the church; without the priesthood, it is impossible to build up the church. Hence, God is sounding out a call for us to fulfill the priesthood, just as He called the Levites at the foot of Mount Sinai. Who is willing to stand on God's side in order to fellowship with God and allow God to flow through him by rising up to be a priest of God?

The building of the church depends on whether or not the saints will bear the priesthood before God. Only the priests draw near to God, touch the throne of God, and allow God to flow through them. The water of life can flow through them and into other persons. The flowing of the water of life is the only way that builds up the church of God.

If we are willing to come forward to God, fellowship with God, live before God, and allow God to flow through us, we will enjoy the riches of Christ and express the glory of Christ as priests in a full way. In this way we will bear the testimony of the church, and the building of the church will be realized among us. We need to see that the Lord's purpose in the universe will be fulfilled only by a group of people who enjoy and express Christ in a genuine and full way. Such a group of people, as God's corporate priesthood, will uphold the church, bear the testimony of the church, and bring in the building of God. (The Priesthood and God's Building, pp. 95, 91, 118)

We need some time to be separated and shut up unto the Lord so that we may spend not just our time but have our very life and person in His presence. Then He will occupy us, and our whole concept will be changed to the heavenly view of the priesthood.

The recovery of the Lord is the recovery of the priesthood. The recovery of the church life is not a movement, work, or activity, but only the recovery of the priesthood. What the Lord needs is a group of people who are brought into His presence and even into the Lord Himself until they are one with Him. Then He will have the freedom to flow out and work out His will for the fulfillment of His purpose. (CWWL, 1966, vol. 1, "The Priesthood," p. 441)

Further Reading: The Priesthood and God's Building, chs. 8-15; The Blueprint and Ground for the Building Up of the Church, ch. 2

<< WEEK 12 — HYMN

Hymns, #848

1

What a blessing, what a priv'lege!
Called of God a royal priest,
That this glorious, holy office
I should bear, though last and least.
All the building of the Body
On the priesthood doth depend;
Ever praying in the spirit
I this office would attend.

2

If I keep this royal calling
Under Thine authority,
Priestly duty thus fulfilling,
Then the church will builded be.

3

Now the church is but the priesthood;
Thus the priesthood formed we need;
When the priests are knit together,
Then the church is built indeed.

4

Through the church's degradation,
Saints this office desolate;
Through the weakness of their spirits
Preaching doth predominate.

5

Most are leaning on the message
And the preaching emphasize,
Yet neglect the priestly praying
And their spirits' exercise.

6

Deal with me and make me balanced,
As in preaching, so in prayer;
Leading others oft in praying,
As Thy Word I too declare.

7

Only serving by our praying
Will our spirits mingled be;
Stressing prayer as much as preaching—
Thus the church is built for Thee.