

International Training for Elders and Responsible Ones

Spring 2015

GENERAL SUBJECT:

THE RECOVERY OF THE PRIESTHOOD FOR GOD'S BUILDING

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Contents	Page
THE RECOVERY OF THE PRIESTHOOD FOR GOD'S BUILDING	
Message One: The Priesthood and the Kingship for God's Building	1
Message Two: The Definition of a Priest	15
Message Three: Christ as the Food, Clothing, and Dwelling of the Priests	23
Message Four: Lighting the Lamps and Burning the Incense	38
Message Five: The Two Orders of the Priesthood	47
Message Six: Being Laboring Priests of the Gospel of God by Serving God in Our Spirit in the Gospel of His Son	56
Message Seven: The Central and Ultimate Point of the Priesthood	71
Message Eight: The Recovery of the Priesthood for God's Building	83

THE RECOVERY OF THE PRIESTHOOD FOR GOD'S BUILDING
(Friday—First Morning Session)

Message One
The Priesthood and the Kingship for God's Building

EM Hymns 770, 813

Scripture Reading: Zech. 6:11-15; Gen. 1:26; 1 Pet. 2:5, 9; Heb. 4:16; Rev. 22:1

- Zech 6:11 Indeed, take the silver and gold, and make a splendid crown and put it upon the head of Joshua the son of Jehozadak, the high priest,
- Zech 6:12 And speak to him, saying, 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.
- Zech 6:13 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.
- Zech 6:14 And the splendid crown will be as a reminder in the temple of Jehovah to Helem, Tobijah, Jedaiah, and Hen the son of Zephaniah.
- Zech 6:15 And those who are far off will come and build the temple of Jehovah, and you will know that Jehovah of hosts has sent Me to you. And it will happen, if you fully obey the voice of Jehovah your God.
- Gen 1:26 And God said, Let Us make man in Our image, according to Our likeness; and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of heaven and over the cattle and over all the earth and over every creeping thing that creeps upon the earth.
- 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.
- 1 Pet 2:9 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;
- Heb 4:16 Let us therefore come forward with boldness to the throne of grace that we may receive mercy and find grace for timely help.
- Rev 22:1 And he showed me a river of water of life, bright as crystal, proceeding out of the throne of God and of the Lamb in the middle of its street.

I. The visions in Zechariah of comfort, consolation, and encouragement are confirmed by the crowning of Joshua the high priest—typifying Christ in His priesthood—linked with Zerubbabel the governor of Judah—typifying Christ as the Shoot of David in His kingship—6:11-15:

- Zech 6:11 Indeed, take the silver and gold, and make a splendid crown and put it upon the head of Joshua the son of Jehozadak, the high priest,
- Zech 6:12 And speak to him, saying, 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.
- Zech 6:13 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.
- Zech 6:14 And the splendid crown will be as a reminder in the temple of Jehovah to Helem, Tobijah, Jedaiah, and Hen the son of Zephaniah.
- Zech 6:15 And those who are far off will come and build the temple of Jehovah, and you will know that Jehovah of hosts has sent Me to you. And it will happen, if you fully obey the voice of Jehovah your God.
- A. Christ is the Shoot of Jehovah, referring to His divinity; *the Shoot of Jehovah* denotes that through His incarnation Christ is a new development of Jehovah God for the Triune God to branch Himself out in His divinity into humanity; this is for Jehovah God's increase and spread in the universe—Isa. 4:2; 7:14; Matt. 1:22-23.
- Isa 4:2 In that day the Shoot of Jehovah will be beauty and glory, and the Fruit of the earth, excellence and splendor, to those of Israel who have escaped.
- Isa 7:14 Therefore the Lord Himself will give you a sign: Behold, the virgin will conceive and will bear a son, and she will call his name Immanuel.

- Matt 1:22 Now all this has happened so that what was spoken by the Lord through the prophet might be fulfilled, saying,
- Matt 1:23 "Behold, the virgin shall be with child and shall bear a son, and they shall call His name Emmanuel" (which is translated, God with us).
- B. Christ is also the Shoot of David (typified by Zerubbabel), referring to His humanity and royal faithfulness—Zech. 3:8; Jer. 23:5.
- Zech 3:8 Hear then, Joshua the high priest, you and your fellows who sit before you—for they are men of symbol—for I am about to bring forth My servant, the shoot.
- Jer 23:5 Indeed, days are coming, / Declares Jehovah, / When I will raise up to David a righteous Shoot; / And He will reign as King and act prudently / And will execute justice and righteousness in the land.
- C. Christ, typified in Zechariah 6:11-13 by two persons, Joshua and Zerubbabel, is the unique One to hold the two offices of the priesthood and the kingship in God's administration for the building up of the church as the temple of God (cf. 1 Cor. 3:12, 17; 2 Cor. 6:16).
- Zech 6:11 Indeed, take the silver and gold, and make a splendid crown and put it upon the head of Joshua the son of Jehozadak, the high priest,
- Zech 6:12 And speak to him, saying, 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.
- Zech 6:13 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.
- 1 Cor 3:12 But if anyone builds upon the foundation gold, silver, precious stones, wood, grass, stubble,
- 1 Cor 3:17 If anyone destroys the temple of God, God will destroy him; for the temple of God is holy, and such are you.
- 2 Cor 6:16 And what agreement does the temple of God have with idols? For we are the temple of the living God, even as God said, "I will dwell among them and walk among them; and I will be their God, and they will be My people."
- D. "The counsel of peace will be between the two of them" (Zech. 6:13b); *between the two* means between the priesthood and the kingship (cf. 1:1; Ezra 5:1).
- Zech 1:1 In the eighth month, in the second year of Darius, the word of Jehovah came to Zechariah the prophet, the son of Berechiah, the son of Iddo, saying,
- Ezra 5:1 Now the prophets, Haggai the prophet and Zechariah the son of Iddo, prophesied to the Jews who were in Judah and Jerusalem in the name of the God of Israel who was over them.

II. The focus of Hebrews is the heavenly Christ, and the main point of the heavenly Christ is that He is both the High Priest and the King (the King of righteousness and the King of peace), as typified by Melchizedek—5:10; 7:1-3, 28; 8:1-2:

- Heb 5:10 Being addressed by God as a High Priest according to the order of Melchizedec;
- Heb 7:1 For this Melchizedec, king of Salem, priest of the Most High God, who met Abraham returning from the slaughter of the kings and blessed him,
- Heb 7:2 To whom also Abraham apportioned a tenth part of all; first being interpreted king of righteousness, and then also king of Salem, which is king of peace;
- Heb 7:3 Being without father, without mother, without genealogy; having neither beginning of days nor end of life, but likened to the Son of God, abides a priest perpetually.
- Heb 7:28 For the law establishes men as high priests who have weakness, but the word of the oath, which was after the law, establishes the Son, perfected forever.
- Heb 8:1 Now in the things which are being said the chief point is this: We have such a High Priest, who sat down on the right hand of the throne of the Majesty in the heavens,
- Heb 8:2 A Minister of the holy places, even of the true tabernacle, which the Lord pitched, not man.
- A. Christ is not only the King with power and authority but also the High Priest according to the order of Melchizedek—2:17; 4:14; 5:6, 10; 6:20; 8:1; 9:11; Psa. 110:1-4:
- Heb 2:17 Hence He should have been made like His brothers in all things that He might become a merciful and faithful High Priest in the things pertaining to God, to make

- propitiation for the sins of the people.
- Heb 4:14 Having therefore a great High Priest who has passed through the heavens, Jesus, the Son of God, let us hold fast the confession.
- Heb 5:6 Even as also in another place He says, "You are a Priest forever according to the order of Melchizedec."
- Heb 5:10 Being addressed by God as a High Priest according to the order of Melchizedec;
- Heb 6:20 Where the Forerunner, Jesus, has entered for us, having become forever a High Priest according to the order of Melchizedec.
- Heb 8:1 Now in the things which are being said the chief point is this: We have such a High Priest, who sat down on the right hand of the throne of the Majesty in the heavens,
- Heb 9:11 But Christ, having come as a High Priest of the good things that have come into being, through the greater and more perfect tabernacle not made by hands, that is, not of this creation,
- Psa 110:1 Jehovah declares to my Lord, / Sit at My right hand / Until I make Your enemies / Your footstool.
- Psa 110:2 Jehovah will send forth / The scepter of Your strength from Zion: / Rule in the midst of Your enemies.
- Psa 110:3 Your people will offer themselves willingly / In the day of Your warfare, / In the splendor of their consecration. / Your young men will be to You / Like the dew from the womb of the dawn.
- Psa 110:4 Jehovah has sworn, / And He will not change: / You are a Priest forever / According to the order of Melchizedek.
1. Christ's heavenly ministry in His ascension includes both His kingship and His priesthood for the building up of the church as the temple of Jehovah, the temple of God—Heb. 7:1-2; Zech. 6:13, 15; 1 Cor. 3:16-17.

Heb 7:1 For this Melchizedec, king of Salem, priest of the Most High God, who met Abraham returning from the slaughter of the kings and blessed him,

Heb 7:2 To whom also Abraham apportioned a tenth part of all; first being interpreted king of righteousness, and then also king of Salem, which is king of peace;

Zech 6:13 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.

Zech 6:15 And those who are far off will come and build the temple of Jehovah, and you will know that Jehovah of hosts has sent Me to you. And it will happen, if you fully obey the voice of Jehovah your God.

1 Cor 3:16 Do you not know that you are the temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwells in you?

1 Cor 3:17 If anyone destroys the temple of God, God will destroy him; for the temple of God is holy, and such are you.
 2. As the King, Christ has the scepter to rule over the earth and to manage our affairs, and as the High Priest, He is interceding for us and taking care of our case before God—Heb. 4:14-16; 7:25-26; 9:24; Acts 5:31; Rom. 8:34; Rev. 1:12-13.

Heb 4:14 Having therefore a great High Priest who has passed through the heavens, Jesus, the Son of God, let us hold fast the confession.

Heb 4:15 For we do not have a High Priest who cannot be touched with the feeling of our weaknesses, but One who has been tempted in all respects like us, yet without sin.

Heb 4:16 Let us therefore come forward with boldness to the throne of grace that we may receive mercy and find grace for timely help.

Heb 7:25 Hence also He is able to save to the uttermost those who come forward to God through Him, since He lives always to intercede for them.

Heb 7:26 For such a High Priest was also fitting to us, holy, guileless, undefiled, separated from sinners and having become higher than the heavens,

Heb 9:24 For Christ did not enter into a holy place made by hands, a figure of the true, but into heaven itself, to appear now before the face of God for us;

Acts 5:31 This One God has exalted to His right hand as Leader and Savior, to give repentance to Israel and forgiveness of sins.

Rom 8:34 Who is he who condemns? It is Christ Jesus who died and, rather, who was raised, who is also at the right hand of God, who also intercedes for us.

Rev 1:12 And I turned to see the voice that spoke with me; and when I turned, I saw seven golden lampstands,
 Rev 1:13 And in the midst of the lampstands One like the Son of Man, clothed with a garment reaching to the feet, and girded about at the breasts with a golden girdle.

B. As the kingly High Priest according to the order of Melchizedek, Christ ministers God into us as our supply to fulfill God's eternal purpose—Heb. 7:1-2; 8:1-2; Gen. 14:18-20:

Heb 7:1 For this Melchizedec, king of Salem, priest of the Most High God, who met Abraham returning from the slaughter of the kings and blessed him,
 Heb 7:2 To whom also Abraham apportioned a tenth part of all; first being interpreted king of righteousness, and then also king of Salem, which is king of peace;
 Heb 8:1 Now in the things which are being said the chief point is this: We have such a High Priest, who sat down on the right hand of the throne of the Majesty in the heavens,
 Heb 8:2 A Minister of the holy places, even of the true tabernacle, which the Lord pitched, not man.
 Gen 14:18 And Melchizedek the king of Salem brought out bread and wine. Now he was priest of God the Most High.
 Gen 14:19 And he blessed him and said, Blessed be Abram of God the Most High, / Possessor of heaven and earth;
 Gen 14:20 And blessed be God the Most High, / Who has delivered your enemies into your hand. And Abram gave him a tenth of all.

1. In His earthly ministry Christ was a High Priest according to the order of Aaron for the putting away of sin—Heb. 9:14, 26.

Heb 9:14 How much more will the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered Himself without blemish to God, purify our conscience from dead works to serve the living God?

Heb 9:26 Since then He would have had to suffer often since the foundation of the world. But now once at the consummation of the ages He has been manifested for the putting away of sin through the sacrifice of Himself.

2. Then, in His heavenly ministry Christ was designated a High Priest according to the order of Melchizedek (5:6, 10), not to offer sacrifices for sin but to minister to us the very God who was processed through incarnation, human living, crucifixion, and resurrection, signified by the bread and the wine (Matt. 26:26-28), as our life supply to nourish, refresh, sustain, comfort, and strengthen us so that we may be saved to the uttermost (Heb. 7:25).

Heb 5:6 Even as also in another place He says, "You are a Priest forever according to the order of Melchizedec."

Heb 5:10 Being addressed by God as a High Priest according to the order of Melchizedec;

Matt 26:26 And as they were eating, Jesus took bread and blessed it, and He broke it and gave it to the disciples and said, Take, eat; this is My body.

Matt 26:27 And He took a cup and gave thanks, and He gave it to them, saying, Drink of it, all of you,

Matt 26:28 For this is My blood of the covenant, which is being poured out for many for the forgiveness of sins.

Heb 7:25 Hence also He is able to save to the uttermost those who come forward to God through Him, since He lives always to intercede for them.

C. Christ's kingly priesthood is for fighting against God's enemies to bring in righteousness and peace so that He may minister the processed Triune God into us as our daily supply and enjoyment—vv. 1-2; Gen. 14:18-20.

Heb 7:1 For this Melchizedec, king of Salem, priest of the Most High God, who met Abraham returning from the slaughter of the kings and blessed him,

Heb 7:2 To whom also Abraham apportioned a tenth part of all; first being interpreted king of righteousness, and then also king of Salem, which is king of peace;

Gen 14:18 And Melchizedek the king of Salem brought out bread and wine. Now he was priest of God the Most High.

Gen 14:19 And he blessed him and said, Blessed be Abram of God the Most High, / Possessor of heaven and earth;
Gen 14:20 And blessed be God the Most High, / Who has delivered your enemies into your hand. And Abram gave him a tenth of all.

- D. Christ's divine priesthood is for saving us to the uttermost in His life unto glorification from all the by-products of death, such as vanity, groaning, sighing, decay, bondage, corruption, and slavery; His divine priesthood is the absence of death and the presence of life—Heb. 7:25, 28; Rom. 5:10; 8:19, 21, 23, 30.

Heb 7:25 Hence also He is able to save to the uttermost those who come forward to God through Him, since He lives always to intercede for them.

Heb 7:28 For the law establishes men as high priests who have weakness, but the word of the oath, which was after the law, establishes the Son, perfected forever.

Rom 5:10 For if we, being enemies, were reconciled to God through the death of His Son, much more we will be saved in His life, having been reconciled,

Rom 8:19 For the anxious watching of the creation eagerly awaits the revelation of the sons of God.

Rom 8:21 In hope that the creation itself will also be freed from the slavery of corruption into the freedom of the glory of the children of God.

Rom 8:23 And not only so, but we ourselves also, who have the firstfruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan in ourselves, eagerly awaiting sonship, the redemption of our body.

Rom 8:30 And those whom He predestinated, these He also called; and those whom He called, these He also justified; and those whom He justified, these He also glorified.

III. The priesthood and the kingship are for God's image and dominion; the priesthood causes man to have the image of God, and the kingship causes man to have the dominion of God to accomplish God's original intention:

- A. There are two main aspects in the creation of man: image and dominion (Gen. 1:26); image is for the expression of God, and dominion is for the representation of God to deal with His enemy.

Gen 1:26 And God said, Let Us make man in Our image, according to Our likeness; and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of heaven and over the cattle and over all the earth and over every creeping thing that creeps upon the earth.

- B. The priesthood is for the expression of God; the priests enjoy the Lord, and they become His expression, manifestation, habitation, and dwelling place (His spiritual house as His holy priesthood)—1 Pet. 2:5:

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.

1. The line of "image" is the line of the priesthood, because only when man draws near to God and allows God to flow through him can God be expressed in His image.

2. The priesthood is for contacting God to be mingled with God and to be transformed into and conformed to Christ's image for His expression—2 Cor. 3:18; Rom. 8:28-29.

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.

Rom 8:28 And we know that all things work together for good to those who love God, to those who are called according to His purpose.

Rom 8:29 Because those whom He foreknew, He also predestinated to be conformed to the image of His Son, that He might be the Firstborn among many brothers;

- C. The kingship is for the Lord's authority, His dominion; the kings represent God with His authority to deal with His enemy—Matt. 28:19-20; Rom. 16:20:

Matt 28:19 Go therefore and disciple all the nations, baptizing them into the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit,

Matt 28:20 Teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you all the days until the consummation of the age.

Rom 16:20 Now the God of peace will crush Satan under your feet shortly. The grace of our Lord Jesus be with you.

1. The line of “dominion” is the line of the kingship, because a king receives authority from God in order to reign for God.
 2. The kingship is for reigning in life (by the abundance of grace and the inward reigning of grace) over Satan, sin, and death to represent God with His dominion for His kingdom—5:17, 21.
 - Rom 5:17 For if, by the offense of the one, death reigned through the one, much more those who receive the abundance of grace and of the gift of righteousness will reign in life through the One, Jesus Christ.
 - Rom 5:21 In order that just as sin reigned in death, so also grace might reign through righteousness unto eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.
- D. The redemption accomplished through Christ’s blood “made us a kingdom, priests to His God and Father”—Rev. 1:5b-6a.
- Rev 1:5b ... To Him who loves us and has released us from our sins by His blood
 - Rev 1:6a And made us a kingdom, priests to His God and Father, ...
- E. In the millennium the overcomers will be priests, drawing near to God and Christ, and they will also be kings, reigning over the nations with Christ—2:26-27; 20:4, 6.
- Rev 2:26 And he who overcomes and he who keeps My works until the end, to him I will give authority over the nations;
 - Rev 2:27 And he will shepherd them with an iron rod, as vessels of pottery are broken in pieces, as I also have received from My Father;
 - Rev 20:4 And I saw thrones, and they sat upon them, and judgment was given to them. And I saw the souls of those who had been beheaded because of the testimony of Jesus and because of the word of God, and of those who had not worshipped the beast nor his image, and had not received the mark on their forehead and on their hand; and they lived and reigned with Christ for a thousand years.
 - Rev 20:6 Blessed and holy is he who has part in the first resurrection; over these the second death has no authority, but they will be priests of God and of Christ and will reign with Him for a thousand years.
- F. The believers who are defeated will forfeit this reward; however, after being dealt with in the millennium, these defeated ones will participate in the blessing of this reward in that they will serve God in the priesthood and represent God in the kingship as the New Jerusalem in the new heaven and new earth—22:3, 5:
- Rev 22:3 And there will no longer be a curse. And the throne of God and of the Lamb will be in it, and His slaves will serve Him;
 - Rev 22:5 And night will be no more; and they have no need of the light of a lamp and of the light of the sun, for the Lord God will shine upon them; and they will reign forever and ever.
1. When the New Jerusalem is manifested, the holy city is like jasper (21:11, 18a); jasper denotes the image of God, because God’s appearance is like jasper (4:3); in the holy city the water of life—the Spirit of life—flows to fill the city with God; hence, the image of God, the expression of God, is fully realized.
 - Rev 21:11 Having the glory of God. Her light was like a most precious stone, like a jasper stone, as clear as crystal.
 - Rev 21:18a And the building work of its wall was jasper; ...
 - Rev 4:3 And He who was sitting was like a jasper stone and a sardius in appearance, and there was a rainbow around the throne like an emerald in appearance.
 2. Furthermore, those who are a part of the New Jerusalem will reign as kings and exercise God’s authority for eternity—22:5.
 - Rev 22:5 And night will be no more; and they have no need of the light of a lamp and of the light of the sun, for the Lord God will shine upon them; and they will reign forever and ever.

IV. The throne and the river of water of life in Revelation 22:1 speak of Christ being both the King and the Priest:

- Rev 22:1 And he showed me a river of water of life, bright as crystal, proceeding out of the throne of God and of the Lamb in the middle of its street.

- A. According to the picture of the New Jerusalem, the authority of the throne and the fellowship of life, the flow of life (v. 1), are for the building of the New Jerusalem; this corresponds to Zechariah 6:12-13, which speaks of the offices of the priesthood and the kingship converging in Joshua and Zerubbabel, who are types of the Lord Jesus, for the sake of the building of God's temple:
- Rev 22:1 And he showed me a river of water of life, bright as crystal, proceeding out of the throne of God and of the Lamb in the middle of its street.
- Zech 6:12 And speak to him, saying, 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.
- Zech 6:13 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.
1. The river of water of life, the flow of life, is the divine fellowship of being saturated and soaked with God for His holy priesthood with His image, His expression—1 Pet. 2:5.

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.
 2. The throne of God and of the Lamb is the rule and headship of Christ as the embodiment of God for His royal priesthood with His dominion, His kingdom—v. 9.

1 Pet 2:9 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;
- B. The priests draw near to God, enter into the Holy of Holies to touch the throne of God, and allow God as rivers of living water to flow through them and into other persons (John 7:37-39a); the flowing of the water of life from the throne into us and out from us is the only way that builds up the church of God.
- John 7:37 Now on the last day, the great day of the feast, Jesus stood and cried out, saying, If anyone thirsts, let him come to Me and drink.
- John 7:38 He who believes into Me, as the Scripture said, out of his innermost being shall flow rivers of living water.
- John 7:39a But this He said concerning the Spirit, whom those who believed into Him were about to receive; ...
- C. In Hebrews Christ as the Priest brings the believers into the Holy of Holies, that is, into fellowship with God (2:17; 3:1; 4:14; 5:6; 7:1); in Matthew Christ as the King is Emmanuel, God with us, the One who joins God with man and brings the authority of God to man (1:1, 23; 2:6):
- Heb 2:17 Hence He should have been made like His brothers in all things that He might become a merciful and faithful High Priest in the things pertaining to God, to make propitiation for the sins of the people.
- Heb 3:1 Therefore, holy brothers, partakers of a heavenly calling, consider the Apostle and High Priest of our confession, Jesus,
- Heb 4:14 Having therefore a great High Priest who has passed through the heavens, Jesus, the Son of God, let us hold fast the confession.
- Heb 5:6 Even as also in another place He says, "You are a Priest forever according to the order of Melchizedec."
- Heb 7:1 For this Melchizedec, king of Salem, priest of the Most High God, who met Abraham returning from the slaughter of the kings and blessed him,
- Matt 1:1 The book of the generation of Jesus Christ, the son of David, the son of Abraham:
- Matt 1:23 "Behold, the virgin shall be with child and shall bear a son, and they shall call His name Emmanuel" (which is translated, God with us).
- Matt 2:6 "And you, Bethlehem, land of Judah, by no means are you the least among the princes of Judah; for out of you shall come forth a Ruler, One who will shepherd My people Israel."

1. Hebrews speaks of the building of a city (11:9-10, 16; 12:22), whereas the Gospel of Matthew speaks of the building of the church (16:18); the building of the church and the building of the city are the same thing.
 - Heb 11:9 By faith he dwelt as a foreigner in the land of promise as in a foreign land, making his home in tents with Isaac and Jacob, the fellow heirs of the same promise;
 - Heb 11:10 For he eagerly waited for the city which has the foundations, whose Architect and Builder is God.
 - Heb 11:16 But as it is, they long after a better country, that is, a heavenly one. Therefore God is not ashamed of them, to be called their God, for He has prepared a city for them.
 - Heb 12:22 But you have come forward to Mount Zion and to the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem; and to myriads of angels, to the universal gathering;
 - Matt 16:18 And I also say to you that you are Peter, and upon this rock I will build My church, and the gates of Hades shall not prevail against it.
2. Christ is both the Priest and the King for God's building; in Christ there is the fellowship of the priesthood and the authority of the kingship, both of which are for God's building; on the one hand, Christ flows out the fellowship of life to us for God's image, and on the other hand, He brings us under the authority of the throne for God's dominion.
 - D. First Peter 2:9 reveals that the redeemed ones are a "royal priesthood"; the word *royal* means that we have the position and authority of a king (the throne), and the word *priesthood* indicates that we have the fellowship of life (the river of water of life).
 - 1 Pet 2:9 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;
 - E. Everyone among us should be a royal priest (v. 9), one who has the flow of life from the throne; in every one of us there should be an expression of both the priesthood and the kingship; God's intention for His people is to make them a kingdom of priests (Exo. 19:4, 6; Rev. 5:10).
 - 1 Pet 2:9 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;
 - Exo 19:4 You have seen what I did to the Egyptians and how I bore you on eagles' wings and brought you to Myself.
 - 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.

V. According to Hebrews 4:16, the way to minister as a priest is simply to come forward to the throne of grace to receive mercy and find grace for timely help:

- Heb 4:16 Let us therefore come forward with boldness to the throne of grace that we may receive mercy and find grace for timely help.
- A. We should compare Hebrews 4:16 with Revelation 22:1, which says that the river of water of life proceeds out of the throne of God.
 - Heb 4:16 Let us therefore come forward with boldness to the throne of grace that we may receive mercy and find grace for timely help.
 - Rev 22:1 And he showed me a river of water of life, bright as crystal, proceeding out of the throne of God and of the Lamb in the middle of its street.
 - B. When we come forward to behold God and contact Him by praying in our spirit to touch His throne, we experience the Spirit flowing in us, flowing through us, and supplying us.
 - C. This supply, this flow of the Spirit of life, is the timely help, which is the mercy and grace of God; mercy and grace refer to God flowing through us and being gained by us.

- D. Timely help is the living God, the flowing God, coming into us and flowing through us to refresh, water, and supply us; whenever, by the Lord's blood (Heb. 10:19-20), we come forward and touch the throne of grace, God flows to refresh and water us, and we experience indescribable joy, no matter how harsh the circumstances are (1 Pet. 1:8).
- Heb 10:19 Having therefore, brothers, boldness for entering the Holy of Holies in the blood of Jesus,
 Heb 10:20 Which entrance He initiated for us as a new and living way through the veil, that is, His flesh,
 1 Pet 1:8 Whom having not seen, you love; into whom though not seeing Him at present, yet believing, you exult with joy that is unspeakable and full of glory,
- E. To the believers this throne is the throne of grace, but to God's enemy it is the throne of authority; the throne of grace is related to the priesthood, and the throne of authority is related to the kingship:
1. Out from the throne of God flows the river of water of life for grace (Rev. 22:1) and the river of fire for judgment (Dan. 7:9-10).
 Rev 22:1 And he showed me a river of water of life, bright as crystal, proceeding out of the throne of God and of the Lamb in the middle of its street.
 Dan 7:9 I watched / Until thrones were set, / And the Ancient of Days sat down. / His clothing was like white snow, / And the hair of His head was like pure wool; / His throne was flames of fire, / Its wheels, burning fire.
 Dan 7:10 A stream of fire issued forth / And came out from before Him. / Thousands of thousands ministered to Him, / And ten thousands of ten thousands stood before Him. / The court of judgment sat, / And the books were opened.
 2. The flow of the river of water of life produces the New Jerusalem as a city of water, but the river of the fire of God's judgment flows into the lake of fire.
 3. When we touch the throne of grace and allow the water of life to flow through us, we receive mercy and grace for timely help; then we can touch His throne of authority so that He can judge the improper situations within us.
- F. God wants us to enter into the Holy of Holies, our spirit, in order to touch the throne of grace and allow the water of life to flow through us; this flow will bring us into the fellowship with God and will cause us to be built up in His life to be His dwelling place, His spiritual house, His holy and royal priesthood—1 Pet. 2:5, 9.
- 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.
 1 Pet 2:9 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;

Excerpts from the Ministry:

THE CONTENT OF THE HOLY CITY—A THRONE AND LIVING WATER

Chapters 21 and 22 of Revelation present a clear picture of the content of the New Jerusalem, the holy city. The throne of God and of the Lamb is at the center of the city; it is the peak of the city. A river of water of life proceeds out of the throne and flows throughout the entire city (v. 1). There is one street in the city, and the river is in the middle of the street. On this side and on that side of the river of life is the tree of life (v. 2). Although chapters 21 and 22 speak of many things, the main content is the throne of God and of the Lamb and the river of water of life that proceeds out of the throne. All the other items supplement these two items. For example, the tree of life and the street follow the flow of the river. Even the matters of God being light and the Lamb being the lamp are related to the flow of the river of life (v. 3; John 1:4). Without the flowing of the river of water of life, there would be no shining of light. Also, the matter of God and the Lamb being the temple is related to the throne (Rev. 21:22). God and the Lamb being the temple refers to the presence of God and the Lamb, and the presence of God and the Lamb cannot be separated from the throne of God and of the Lamb. Without

the throne of God and of the Lamb, there would be no presence of God and the Lamb. Therefore, the main content of the New Jerusalem is the throne of God and of the Lamb and the river of water of life that proceeds out of the throne.

THE THRONE AND THE FLOWING WATER SIGNIFYING AUTHORITY AND FELLOWSHIP

The throne and the flowing water of life signify authority and fellowship. The throne of God and of the Lamb signifies authority, whereas the flow of the water of life signifies the fellowship of life. God is God, and He is the Lamb (John 1:36). He is also life (11:25). The New Jerusalem speaks of Christ, who came as the Lamb of God to accomplish redemption through His death and to release His divine life. This picture begins with the Lamb and ends with life; it speaks of Christ coming as the Lamb of God for the purpose of flowing out Himself as life (10:10). This picture is quite profound; it presents the clear revelation in the Bible through a sign presented in a simple writing style. The whole Bible shows that God desires to be received by us and to mingle Himself with us in Christ. In order to make this receiving and mingling possible, God released Himself as life through the death of Christ as the Lamb (Rev. 5:6). Through His death, we can receive Him as life. Hence, Christ is the Lamb as well as life.

In the Gospel of John and in Revelation, the apostle John consistently presents the matter of Christ being the Lamb and being life. The Gospel of John begins by speaking of Christ as the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world (1:29). The Gospel of John also records the Lord's words concerning His coming so that we may have life (10:10). This promise is confirmed by the Lord's speaking in chapter 7, when He stood and cried out, saying, "If anyone thirsts, let him come to Me and drink. He who believes into Me, as the Scripture said, out of his innermost being shall flow rivers of living water" (vv. 37-38). John also presents a unique record of the Lord's death, revealing that blood and water came out of His side when He was crucified (19:34). Blood is for redemption, and water signifies the impartation of life. The sign of the New Jerusalem shows that God in Christ as the Lamb flows out as life into man. John repeatedly speaks of the relationship between the water of life and the Lamb (Rev. 7:17; 21:6; 22:1). All these verses speak of Christ as the Lamb being slain in order to release the divine life so that it can flow into man. This is the aspect of fellowship.

THE COORDINATION OF THE THRONE AND THE LIVING WATER

According to the picture in Revelation, the river of water of life flows out of the throne. This, in turn, signifies that the flow of life, the fellowship of life, conveys the authority of the throne. The authority of the throne is present wherever the river flows. Authority and fellowship, the two main components of the New Jerusalem, are coordinated. The authority of the throne flows to every part of the city through the fellowship of life; the entire city is in fellowship and under authority.

On one hand, the authority of the throne is located at the center of the city, and on the other hand, the fellowship of the river of water of life flows throughout the entire city. This picture shows that the flow of the river of water of life brings the authority of the throne throughout the entire city. In the New Jerusalem there is not only authority but also fellowship; fellowship is coordinated with authority, and authority is blended with fellowship.

Everything in the New Jerusalem depends upon the coordination of fellowship and authority. The water that the thirsty can drink is related to the coordination of fellowship and authority; the food in the city, that is, the fruits from the tree of life, is related to the coordination of fellowship and authority. Even the street in the city is related to the coordination of fellowship and authority. Everything related to our living, our way, and our experience of the presence of God depends upon the coordination between fellowship and authority. Without the coordination of fellowship and authority in this city, there would be no food, no drink, and no street.

In the church today, our spiritual food, our spiritual drink, our spiritual path, and our experience

of the presence of God depend upon the coordination of fellowship and authority. If there is a full coordination between fellowship and authority in a local church, the church will be filled with living water, food, and God's way. There will not only be water for drinking, food for eating, and a pathway for walking but also the presence of God. Without such a coordination of fellowship and authority, the temple for God's dwelling will be lacking, and His presence will not be apparent. The aspect of God being the light and Christ being the lamp to shine out the glory of God is also related to the coordination between fellowship and authority. Without this coordination, knowing God as light and Christ as the lamp would not be possible. Everything in the New Jerusalem depends upon the throne and the river of water of life. There is no lack wherever the throne and the river of water of life are present.

THE THRONE AND THE LIVING WATER PRODUCING GOLD, PEARL, AND PRECIOUS STONES

The city is pure gold, the gates are pearl, and the foundations of the wall and the wall itself are precious stones (21:18-21). The city is built with these three materials because there is a flow of life with authority in the city. The flow of the river of water of life produces gold, pearl, and precious stones. This is clearly seen in Genesis 2:10-12, which speaks of a river producing gold, bdellium, which is a pearl-like material produced from the resin of a tree, and onyx, which is a precious stone. Hence, without the flow of the living water, there would be no gold, pearl, and precious stones.

Verses 8 and 9 speak of God putting man in the garden with the tree of life. Verses 10 through 14 speak of the river that went forth from Eden in four branches, and then verses 16 and 17 return to speak of the tree of life. Verses 10 through 14 are an inserted word concerning the flowing of water. The implication of this picture is that when man receives life from the tree of life, life will flow within him and result in gold, pearl, and precious stones. Hence, in order for the church to be full of gold, pearl, and precious stones, it must have the flow of the river of water of life, that is, the fellowship of life. If there is no flow of God's Spirit and God's life in a local church, it will be difficult for such a church to produce much gold, pearl, or precious stones. These three precious materials can only come out of the flow of life. If we want to pay attention to God's building, we must pay attention to the flow of life.

Today the Lamb of God is emphasized very much in the preaching in Christianity. Everywhere we can hear people say, "Behold, the Lamb of God!" However, it is rare to hear people speak of the Lamb releasing God's life so that we may receive His life and be built up as the church. There is little speaking concerning the flow of His life in the church, and there is even less speaking concerning the flow of life bringing the authority of the throne and the fellowship of life to every member so that the church may be full of authority and the fellowship of life. The church must have the fellowship of life that comes with authority so that gold, pearl, and precious stones can be produced for the building. This is the ultimate goal of Christ being the Lamb of God.

THE THRONE AND THE LIVING WATER SPEAKING OF THE LORD HOLDING THE OFFICES OF THE KINGSHIP AND THE PRIESTHOOD

Revelation 22 is a picture that portrays how the redeemed Israelites in the Old Testament age and the saints in the New Testament age are built into a city, the New Jerusalem. The Bible concludes with the throne of God and of the Lamb being the center among God's people; this throne is also the center of the whole Bible.

The river of water of life that proceeds out from the throne of God and of the Lamb is Christ as the Lamb of God who was put to death and who was released as the Spirit in resurrection in order to flow as life into those who are redeemed. Christ is the way, the reality, and the life of the redeemed, just as He is the way, the reality, and the life of the New Jerusalem. All these items flow from the

throne of God and of the Lamb, which is at the center of the New Jerusalem. As the way, the reality, and the life of God's people, Christ brings God's authority, the authority of the throne, to God's people. The throne and the water of life speak of Christ being both the King and the Priest. He came to be the way, the reality, and the life so that the redeemed could have fellowship with God and blend with one another. The water of life points to the aspect of Christ as the Priest. He also brings the authority of the throne to the redeemed. The throne points to the aspect of Christ as the King. The fellowship of life and the authority of the throne are related to the offices of the priesthood and the kingship, both of which belong to the Lord.

According to the picture of the New Jerusalem, the authority of the throne and the fellowship of life are for the building of the New Jerusalem. This corresponds to Zechariah 6:12-13, which speaks of the offices of the priesthood and the kingship converging in Joshua, who is a type of the Lord Jesus, for the sake of the building of God's temple.

In the New Testament the book of Hebrews deals particularly with the aspect of Christ as the Priest. This book shows that Christ, as the Priest, enables us to enjoy God as our way, our reality, and our life. He brings the believers into the Holy of Holies, that is, into fellowship with God (2:17; 3:1; 4:14; 5:6; 7:1). In the New Testament the Gospel of Matthew deals particularly with the aspect of Christ as the King. This book shows us that Christ is Emmanuel, joining God with man and bringing the authority of God to man (1:1, 23; 2:6). Although Hebrews speaks of Christ as the Priest and the Gospel of Matthew speaks of Christ as the King, both books speak of the matter of building. Hebrews speaks of the building of a city (11:9-10, 16; 12:22), whereas the Gospel of Matthew speaks of the building of the church (16:18). The building of the church and the building of the city are the same thing.

Christ is the Priest for God's building, and Christ is the King for God's building. These are not two separate matters. Although Hebrews speaks in a detailed way concerning the Lord Jesus as a priest, it speaks of the Lord Jesus being a priest according to the order of Melchizedek, who is the king of Salem (6:20—7:1). Hence, the Lord as a priest is also a king. Similarly, although the Gospel of Matthew shows that Christ is the King, there is also an indication of His being a priest. For example, He came to shepherd His people Israel and to serve (2:6; 20:28). These examples speak of His being a priest. In Christ there is both the fellowship of the priesthood and the authority of the kingship, both of which are for God's building.

The Lamb of God was with the Israelites in the Old Testament in type and with the church of the New Testament in fulfillment. With the redeeming Lamb there is a flow of the water of life into man. As Christ flows out God's life, He also brings the redeemed under God's throne. On one hand, He flows out the fellowship of life to us, and on the other hand, He brings us under the authority of the throne. He is both the Priest and the King. Revelation 21 and 22 present such a descriptive picture.

In principle, the elements in this descriptive picture were present when the tabernacle was erected at Mount Sinai. The tabernacle speaks of Christ as the center of God's people. As the Passover lamb, He was killed so that the Israelites could have fellowship with God in God's building. Furthermore, He brought God's authority to man. As a result of the building of the tabernacle, God's people had the fellowship of God's life and the authority of God's throne. They were able to enjoy all that God is and has and to be built up together as God's dwelling place. Hence, when the Israelites built the tabernacle, it was a miniature of the New Jerusalem. The city of Jerusalem, which the Israelites built in the land of Canaan, also was a miniature of the New Jerusalem. In Ezekiel 47 the prophet Ezekiel saw a river flowing out of God's temple in Jerusalem, and wherever this river went, everything lived and prospered (vv. 9, 12). God's purpose will be fulfilled when the New Jerusalem is manifested in the new heaven and the new earth. All the elements in the picture of the tabernacle and the picture of the New Jerusalem point to Christ being life to God's people, which brings them under the authority of the throne to be built up together as God's dwelling place.

THE REDEEMED HAVING THE OFFICES

OF THE KINGSHIP AND THE PRIESTHOOD

According to the Bible, in addition to Christ, who has the offices of the kingship and the priesthood, the redeemed ones have both offices as well. First Peter 2:9 reveals that the redeemed ones are a “royal priesthood.” The word *royal* means that we have the position and authority of a king. The word *priesthood* indicates that we have the fellowship of life. Revelation 5:10 speaks of God making us priests to reign on the earth. We are joined to Christ, and we have the offices of the kingship and the priesthood. Thus, we are able to meet God’s need for the building.

BEING OPEN FOR THE RELEASE OF THE SPIRIT

Now that we have seen the need for the priesthood to balance the kingship, that is, for fellowship to balance authority, we must open ourselves and release our spirit so that the Spirit of life can flow freely among us. The best way to open ourselves and to release our spirit is to pray. Once we open ourselves to pray, our spirit will be released to supply others. If all the saints open themselves to pray and release their spirits in the meeting, we will experience the living water of life gushing forth and flowing in the meeting, and the whole meeting will be an expression of the New Jerusalem.

Some may be concerned about the topic of our prayer, but we should not be concerned about this. The topic of our prayer can be according to our situation at any given time. For example, since we are currently considering the matter of opening and releasing our spirit to fellowship, we can ask the Lord to open our spirit, release our spirit, and blend our spirits together. Having a particular topic is not the most important aspect of prayer. The most important aspect is to genuinely open up our spirit and exercise our spirit to pray. We need to use our spirit in addition to our mouth. We must release our spirit. If our spirit is released, even a seemingly insignificant topic will become a very good topic. For example, a number of brothers who come together to pray may not have a specific topic, but just their coming together is an adequate topic. They can open their spirits and pray, “Lord, we thank You and praise You for gathering us together. We ask You to lead us so that we may touch You in this meeting. Lord, cause us to open to You so that none of us will be closed in our spirit and so that You may operate freely among us.” This kind of prayer is quite adequate.

If our spirits are open, there is no limit to the topics of our prayer. Worshipping God can be a topic, giving thanks to God and praising God can be a topic, and building can be a topic, even the biggest topic. When we come together, we can pray for the building. We can say to the Lord, “We would like to be built up, and we would like the church to be built up. We are willing to have a part in the building. Shine on us and show us what is not fit in us for the building. We are willing to let You remove it. We are willing to receive the breaking and dealing from Your hand.” These are all possible topics. Hence, the topic of our prayer is not important. What is important is whether or not we will open up our spirit. Whenever we gather with the saints, we must always open ourselves.

When we speak of opening ourselves, we may think that this means to be blunt with others or even to point out their mistakes. This is not the meaning of being open. Being open means that our spirit comes forth. Whenever we come and meet together, we must be open to allow God’s Spirit to flow into us and to flow through us. If the brothers and sisters are open in a meeting and allow the Holy Spirit to flow into and pass through them freely, our meeting will be full of supply.

In the past, our problem was that our spirits were not open. When we came to a meeting, our spirits were closed. This was true not only in meetings involving a message, but even in our prayer meetings and bread-breaking meetings. Our preference has been to be independent, watching others and receiving some blessing from them. We never had the thought that every meeting was an opportunity to open ourselves to God and to open ourselves to God’s children. Hence, in the meetings our spirits were closed, and the flow of life was cut off with no avenue to flow out. As a result, there was a shortage of spiritual food and living water in the meeting, and people were neither fed nor watered. Moreover, there was even a sense of being unable to go on, because God’s presence was not with us.

Such an abnormal condition in a church meeting is related to the fact that the water of life has no way to flow out. Our meetings should not be like a person who has all kinds of diseases because there is a problem of poor blood circulation. We need to focus on clearing a way for the circulation of the fellowship of life in the church. If the river of water of life is flowing through the church, there will be the bread of life and the living water of life; there will also be the presence of God and the way of God. Furthermore, this flow will issue in gold, pearl, and precious stones, ultimately consummating in God's building. (*The Priesthood and God's Building*, pp. 27-35)