

BIBLE CLASS 1.02.2024 EZEKIEL'S TEMPLE AND THE PRIESTHOOD
READING EZEKIEL CHAPTER 44

Ezekiel 44:1 Then he brought me back the way of the gate of the outward sanctuary which looks toward the east; and it *was* shut.

² Then said Yahweh unto me; "This gate shall be shut, it shall not be opened, and no man shall enter in by it; because the Yahweh Elohim of Israel, has entered in by it, therefore it shall be shut.

³ It is for the Prince; the Prince, he shall sit in it to eat bread before the LORD; he shall enter by the way of the porch of that gate, and shall go out by the way of the same.

⁴ Then he brought me the way of the north gate before the house: and I looked, and, behold, the glory of the LORD filled the house of the LORD: and I fell upon my face. ⁵ And the LORD said unto me, Son of man, mark well, and behold with thine eyes, and hear with thine ears all that I say unto you concerning all the ordinances of the house of the LORD, and all the laws thereof; and mark well the entering in of the house, with every going forth of the sanctuary. (Eze 44:1-5)

The prophet Ezekiel was well well-appointed to relate the procedures of the Temple of the coming millennium, as he was by birth a priest according to the Law of Moses. When Moses rebuked the Israelites when they worshipped the golden calf, Moses cried out "Who is on the Lord's side let him come unto me." (Ex.32:26) In Numbers 8:14 Moses was directed to separate the Levites from among the children of Israel: and the Levites shall be mine. It was the Levites that responded and destroyed all the idolaters. For this the Levites were appointed as priests, "The sons of Levi shall come near; for them the LORD thy God hath chosen to minister unto him, and to bless in the name of the LORD; and by their word shall every controversy and every stroke be tried: (Deut. 21:5)

However when Zechariah prophesied of the coming Messiah he writes Behold the man whose name *is* The BRANCH; and he shall grow up out of his place, and he shall build the temple of the LORD:

¹³ Even he shall build the temple of the LORD; and he shall bear the glory, and shall sit and rule upon his throne; and he shall be a priest upon his throne: and the counsel of peace shall be between them both. Interestingly the name Nazareth in Hebrew signifies 'branch' so the title of Jesus of Nazareth 's means Jesus the Branch. And there shall come forth a rod out of the stem of Jesse, and a Branch shall grow out of his roots: (Isa 11:1 KJV) Branch here in the Hebrew is Netser.

After Armageddon the Lord Jesus will set about constructing a New World Order. The Lord Jesus will establish a New World Order in which He will occupy the place of Moses and the brethren of Christ will take the place of the Levitical priests and also a lower grade of priests of the natural tribe of Levi. This is because under the Mosaic constitution they had been responsible for allowing unqualified strangers who were uncircumcised in heart and in the flesh to enter God's sanctuary ⁷ In that you have brought into my sanctuary strangers, uncircumcised in heart, and uncircumcised in flesh, to be in my sanctuary, to pollute it, *even* my house, when ye offer my bread, the fat and the blood, and they have broken my covenant because of all your abominations. And ye have not kept the charge of mine holy things: but ye have set keepers of my charge in my sanctuary for yourselves. (Eze 44:7-8) Consequently in the Temple of the future age it will be the saints who will be responsible for entering the sanctuary at the appointed times. The Lord Jesus and his brethren (including His sisters) will openly and obviously reign as Kings and priests in the places where in this life they have openly testified to the truth and suffered.

It is clear from the questions asked by the apostles before the Lord Jesus ascended into heaven, that the Kingdom of Heaven is not where the majority of churchgoers expected to be, somewhere in outer space. On the contrary his disciples after intense training for three and a half years were not mistaken when they asked, Lord will you at this time restore again the Kingdom unto Israel? The confirmation that it would be restored in due time is given in Matt.19:28 "When the Son of Man shall sit on the throne of His glory

You (his disciples) shall also sit on twelve thrones judging the twelve tribes of Israel. Paul also made it abundantly clear “I stand and am judged for the **hope of the promise made of God** unto our fathers: **Unto which promise** our twelve tribes, instantly serving *God* day and night, **hope to come**. (Act 26:6-7) and later “For this cause therefore have I called for you, to see *you*, and to speak with *you*: because that **for the hope of Israel** I am bound with this chain. (Act 28:20). When “the kingdoms of this world shall become the Kingdoms of our Lord and of his Christ,” it is because of the change in the possessors. “The saints of the Most High shall take the kingdom and possess the kingdom” (Dan. 7:18). God rules in the kingdoms of men now, indirectly, guiding all things to the accomplishment of His own purpose. Could we call them the Kingdoms of God on that account? Certainly not because there has to be a change in the visible administration. Mankind have had their turn for 6,000 years and a fine mess they have made of it. God Himself will judge the world in the next phase, “by that man whom he hath ordained,” who will be assisted by those whom God is preparing for and by Him. This is the testimony (Acts 17:31; 1 Cor. 6:2).

In this vision you will notice there are *two orders of priests*. The one—the lower order. Natural Levites—described (chap. 40:45) as “the keepers of the charge of the house,” and the other as “the keepers of the charge of the altar” (verse 46). There is a considerable difference between these two than at first sight appears, but it is evident in the description of their duties, and the explanation in the definition that follows. Of the one—the lower order—it is said, “*They shall not come near to me to do the office of a priest to me, nor to come near to any of my holy things in the most holy*” (Ezek. 44:13).

The *Levites* that went far away from me *when Israel* went astray, which went astray from me after their idols; they shall *bear their iniquity*. Yet they shall be ministers in my sanctuary, having oversight at the gates of the house, and ministering in the house: *they shall slay the burnt offering and the sacrifice for the people*, and they shall stand before them to minister unto them. (Chap. 44:10, 11.)

And it shall come to pass, that when they enter in at the gates of the inner court they shall be clothed with linen garments, and no wool shall come upon them, while they minister *in the gates of the inner court, and within*. They shall have linen bonnets upon their heads, and shall have linen trousers upon their thighs, and shall not gird themselves with anything that causes sweat. (Verse 18.) And when they go forth into the outer court, even into the outer court to the people, *they shall put off their garments* wherein they minister, and *lay them in the holy chambers*, and they shall put on other garments, that they sanctify not the people *with* their garments.

Of the other, the first order, it is said, “THEY SHALL COME NEAR TO ME to minister unto me, and they shall stand before me to offer unto me the fat and the blood, says the Lord God. They shall enter into my sanctuary and they shall come near to my table to minister unto me, and they shall keep my charge” (verses 15, 16). Here is a complete contrast. The reason given reveals the great difference between the two orders. Briefly put, this reason is:—*The reward for obedience* in the one case, *the punishment for disobedience* in the other. In the one case, it is thus defined: “The priests, the Levites, the sons of Zadok, of the order of Melchizedek that *kept the charge* of my sanctuary *when the children of Israel went astray* from me, they shall come near,”. In the other, it is thus given: “The Levites that are *gone away far from me when Israel went astray*, which went astray from me after their idols, they shall even bear their iniquity.” The full nature of the difference between the two types of priests is seen in priests who are **the natural descendants of the tribe of Levi** who are obliged to wear linen garments to avoid sweat and to make the offerings for the people.

The other priests are those described as the First or the Higher order who will be permitted to minister to their Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ. They will stand before Him to offer the fat and the blood. Just think to have developed from sinners by nature, to having had our conscience cleansed in the waters of Baptism and the blood of the

lamb and to serve the Lord Jesus Christ, King of Kings and Lord of lords. WE call to mind the Apostle John's exhortation, "Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, when he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is. And every man that hath this hope in him purifies himself, even as he is pure. (1Jo 3:2-3)