

THE HIGH PRIEST & PRIESTS

SABBATH DAY REMNANT CHURCH OF NAMIBIA (SDRCN)

WEEK 2-LESSON 1

SECTION A: THE HIGH PRIEST

The Saviour has many titles, for He “hath by inheritance obtained a more excellent name” (Hebrews 1:4.) than all the angelic host of heaven. Of the many titles bestowed upon Him, there is none more dear to humanity than the “Lamb of God” (John 1:29,36.) and “High Priest.” By virtue of these two offices He lifts poor fallen humanity up where they can share in His glorious kingdom of grace, even while in the midst of this sin-cursed earth.

In the typical service the one who realized he was a sinner must bring a lamb for a sin-offering. The priest could not officiate for him without this offering. (Leviticus 4:27-29.) That entire service was but a great kindergarten lesson, making the way of salvation so simple that none could fail to comprehend it. When we realize that we have sinned, we remember our “Lamb,” confess our sins, and in His name they are forgiven; then He officiates as High Priest in our behalf before the Father. He pleads the merits of His blood, and covers our life, stained with sin, with the robe of His spotless righteousness, and we stand before the Father “accepted in the Beloved.” (Ephesians 1:6.)

How can we fail to love Him who offered His life for us? Christ could say of His Father, “Therefore doth My Father love me, because I lay down My life.” (John 10:17.) Even the infinite love of the Father for His Son was increased by that act. In the type, the blood of the sin-offering was shed in the court, and then the priest entered the sanctuary with the blood to present it before the Lord. (Hebrews 9:12.) The Saviour gave His life a sacrifice for sin here upon the earth; and as he entered the heavenly sanctuary as High Priest, He is called the “Forerunner.” Under no circumstances, except as He enters “within the veil” of the heavenly sanctuary, is that name applied to the Saviour. (Hebrews 6:19,20.)

In all monarchical forms of government the forerunner is a familiar character. In gorgeous uniform, with waving plumes, he rides before and announces the approach of the royal carriage. While he is always hailed with joy by the waiting crowds, yet he is not the center of attraction; their eyes do not follow him as he passes on, but are turned down the road whence he came to get the first glimpse of the royal personage of whom he is the forerunner.

Of the many condescensions on the part of our blessed Master, this is one of the grandest. When He entered heaven a mighty Conqueror over death and the grave, before the entire heavenly host and representatives of other worlds, He entered a forerunner for us. He presented the “wave sheaf,” those brought forth from their graves at the time of His resurrection, as a sample of the race He had died to redeem, (Ephesians 4:8, margin; Matthew 27:52,53.) thus directing the attention of that wonderful assemblage down the road whence He came to watch – for royalty? – yes, for royalty made so by His precious blood. (Revelation 1:6; 5:10.)

It is only a company of poor, frail mortals stumbling along and often falling by the way; but when they reach the heavenly gate, they will enter “heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ.” (Romans 8:17). It meant much for us that Christ entered within the veil as our Forerunner, for all heaven is watching the church of God on earth. When tempted by the enemy to doubt God’s love and care, remember that on account of the great sacrifice made, you are so dear to the Father that “he that toucheth you toucheth the apple of His eye.” (Zechariah 2:8.) Heaven and earth are closely united since Christ entered within the veil as our Forerunner. The attention of every angel in glory is centered upon those striving to follow in Christ’s footsteps. (1 Peter 2:21). “Are they (the angels) not all ministering spirits, sent forth to minister for them who shall be heirs of salvation?” (Hebrews 1:14.) Why should we falter by the way, and disappoint the heavenly host who are watching for us to come over the same road that our Forerunner passed as a mighty Conqueror over death and the grave?

But let us never forget that it is a blood-stained pathway. "Who, when He was reviled, reviled not again; when He suffered, He threatened not; but committed Himself to Him that judgeth righteously." (1 Peter 2:23). We can not follow in His footsteps in our own strength. For that reason "in all things it behooved Him to be made like unto His brethren, that He might be a merciful and faithful High Priest in things pertaining to God, to make reconciliation for the sins of the people. For in that He Himself hath suffered being tempted, He is able to succor them that are tempted. Wherefore, holy brethren, partakers of the heavenly calling, consider the Apostle and High Priest of our profession, Christ Jesus." (Hebrews 2:17,18; 3:1).

In the earthly sanctuary not only the high priest but also common priests officiated, because it was impossible for one man to perform all the work; but it required the work performed by all the priests in the typical services to represent the work of our High Priest. The work of one year was taken as a type of the entire work of our High Priest. During the year "the priests (plural, both high and common) went always into the first tabernacle, accomplishing the service of God." This continued all the year, except one day; on that day, the service changed and "into the second (apartment) went the high priest alone, ... not without blood, which he offered for himself, and for the errors of the people." (Hebrews 9:6,7).

These priests served "unto the example and shadow of heavenly things." (Hebrews 8:5). When Christ entered heaven, He went as the Antitype of the earthly service God had ordained, and entered upon His work within the first veil of the heavenly sanctuary. When the typical work ordained by God in the first apartment of the earthly sanctuary had fully met its Antitype, He passed through the second (6 Hebrews 9:3.) veil into the glorious apartment of the antitypical holy of holies. There He is to perform the marvelous service which will end in the blotting out and total destruction of the sins of the righteous, nevermore to be remembered by the redeemed host nor by God Himself.

When Christ stands upon the sea of glass, and places the glittering crowns upon the heads of the company who have traveled the road made sacred by the foot prints of their Forerunner, albeit with faltering step and through falling tears, and who are clad in robes made white in the blood of the Lamb, He will see of the travail of His soul and be satisfied. (Isaiah 53:11.). He will rejoice over them with singing, and all heaven will ring with melody as the angels who have served under their Commander in the work of saving souls, join in singing, (Zechariah 3:17.). "Blessing, and honor, and glory, and power, be unto Him that sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb forever and ever." (Revelation 5:13.).

In early times the patriarchs were priests over their own households, and God's original design was that the eldest son should take his father's place as priest of the family; but the plan of God was often thwarted by the sins of the eldest son. The Lord's words to Cain would indicate that he was debarred of his inherited position on account of sin: "If thou doest well, shalt thou not have the excellency? and if thou doest not well, sin lieth at the door." (Genesis 4:7). Sin prevented Cain from having "the excellency."

On account of sin, Reuben, the first-born of Jacob, lost "the excellency of dignity, and the excellency of power," which was his inherited right. (Genesis 49:3,4; 1 Chronicles 5:1,2.). When but a youth, Joseph cultivated those traits of character that gave him "the excellency" above his brethren. It is very probable that the coat of many colors given him by his father, (Genesis 37:3,4) was interpreted by his brethren as indicating his accession to the priesthood.

God gave His First-born for the redemption of the world; and for that reason in God's plan the first-born always inherited special privileges. To him came a double portion of his father's estate, (Deuteronomy 21:17.) the priesthood, and, the first-born in the descent from Isaac, the honor of being the progenitor of the Messiah. If the first-born proved unworthy, his inheritance was given to others, as in the case of Reuben, where Judah became the progenitor of Christ, Joseph received the double portion, and Levi received the priesthood. (1 Chronicles 5:1,2; Numbers 3:6,9.). The first-born was so often unworthy on account of sin that when the Lord brought Israel out of Egypt, He said, "I have taken the Levites from among the children of Israel instead of all the first-born . . . of Israel: therefore the Levites shall be mine." (Numbers 3:12,13.). It was because the tribe of Levi stood true to God in time of a crisis, that God chose them to serve before Him; (Deuteronomy 33:8-11.) and when the service of the sanctuary was established, the priesthood was

given to Aaron and his sons, and the remainder of the tribe of Levi were to do the work of the sanctuary under the direction of the priests. (Exodus 28:1.)

Aaron was appointed to officiate as high priest and his sons as common priests, the eldest son to take the office of high priest on Aaron's death. (Exodus 29:29; Numbers 20:25-28.) The consecration to the priest's office was a most imposing ceremony. Aaron was clothed in the garments which were made for him under God's direction. Several sacrifices were slain, and the blood of the ram of consecration was touched to the tip of the right ear, the thumb of the right hand, and the great toe of the right foot of both Aaron and his sons, signifying that their ears, hands, and feet were consecrated to the service of God. Unleavened bread, denoting "sincerity and truth," (1 Corinthians 5:8.) and the right shoulder of the sacrifice of consecration, were all put upon Aaron's hands and upon his sons' hands. The priests were to typify the One of whom Isaiah said, "The government shall be upon His shoulder." (Isaiah 9:6.) They were to bear the burdens of the people. The anointing oil and the blood was then sprinkled upon Aaron and his sons, typifying the blood of Christ and the Holy Spirit, which alone could fully qualify them to fill the holy office. (Exodus 29:5-35.)

The priesthood remained unbroken in Aaron's family until the sins of Eli and his sons made it necessary to change, and for a time Samuel, an Ephrathite, filled the office of leading priest in Israel. (1 Samuel 1:1,19,20.) Abiathar was thrust out of the office of the priesthood in fulfillment of the prophecy given to Eli. (1 Kings 2:26, 27.) But Zadok, who filled the office of high priest in the time of David and Solomon, was thought by many to be a grandson of Eli. As the Israelites departed from the Lord, the priesthood became corrupt, until in the time of Christ it was bought and sold for money.

God designed that the high priest should more nearly represent Christ than any other priest. The work of every priest was a type of Christ's work, but the common priests performed work only in the court and the first apartment of the sanctuary, while the high priest officiated not only in the court and the first apartment, as well as the common priests, but went alone into the holy of holies. (Hebrews 9:7.) Aaron at times offered burnt-offerings on the brazen altar in the court. (1 Chronicles 6:49.)

It was impossible for one man to perform all the work of the sanctuary that typified the work of Christ, and for that reason there was a company of common priests to assist the high priest. It is always a rule that a higher official can fill the offices below him. The high priest offered burnt-offerings in the court and sin-offerings in the first apartment. Paul speaks of the high priest offering the sin-offerings where the blood was taken into the sanctuary. (Hebrews 13:11.) In the sin-offerings for the priests and the congregation the blood was taken within the sanctuary. (Leviticus 4:3-7,13-18.)

It seems very fitting that the high priest should offer the sin-offerings for the common priests and the entire congregation. In most of the sin-offerings the flesh was eaten in the holy place, and the blood was not taken into the sanctuary. (Leviticus 10:17,18.) While the high priest could perform any work in the first apartment that other priests could perform, there was a daily service in the first apartment of the sanctuary that none but the high priest could perform. He alone could burn incense upon the golden altar before the Lord, and trim and light the lamps on the golden candlestick. Each morning and evening, twice every day throughout the entire year, the high priest officiated in the first apartment of the sanctuary. (Exodus 30:7,8.) The crowning service of the whole year was on the tenth day of the seventh month, when the high priest entered the holy of holies alone to make atonement for the sins of the people. Upon his breast in the stones of the breast-plate were inscribed the names of the twelve tribes, typifying Christ our High Priest as He thinks upon us individually, and confesses our names as they come up in review before God.

SECTION 2: THE PRIESTS

There were two orders of the priesthood, the Melchizedek and the Levitical. The Melchizedek order preceded the Levitical order. In Abraham's day the priest Melchizedek was king of Salem as well as priest of the Most High God. (Genesis 14:17-20). Although there is not much said in the Bible of the Melchizedek order of the priesthood, it was superior to the Levitical order, for Christ was made a priest after the order of Melchizedek. (Hebrews 6:20).

The Levitical order extended from the time Israel came out of Egypt until the cross; since that time we have the priesthood of Christ, of which all earthly priests were a type. Christ being a priest after the order of Melchizedek, we are now living under the Melchizedek order of the priesthood.

There are many particulars given in regard to the Levitical order; and as all the Levitical priests served “unto the example and shadow of heavenly things,” when we study the Levitical priesthood we are really studying the priestly work of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.

The Levitical priesthood was divided into twenty-four courses. (1 Chronicles 24:1-19). Each course had its chief or governor of the sanctuary. (2 Chronicles 8:14). This continued down to the time of Christ. (Luke 1:8). When the Saviour ascended to heaven, He led a multitude of captives; (Ephesians 4:8) and when John in vision was shown the first apartment of the heavenly sanctuary, with its seven lamps of fire burning before the throne of God, he saw four and twenty elders seated upon four and twenty seats, and they worshiped the Lamb, saying, “Thou . . . hast redeemed us to God by Thy blood out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation; and hast made us unto our God kings and priests.” (Revelation 4:4; 5:8-10). In this we see the antitype of the twenty-four courses of priests. The chiefs, or elders, of each course have seats of honor, and they are kings and priests after the order of Melchizedek. The remainder of the multitude Christ took into heaven are not mentioned, but it is reasonable to suppose that they constitute the courses of which the four and twenty elders are the chiefs.

Only the descendants of Aaron were allowed to serve as priests. (Numbers 3:10). In the type the priest who could not prove his genealogy direct from Aaron, the first high priest, was cast out of the priesthood; (Ezra 2:26) so in the antitype, the Christian who cannot prove his direct connection with Christ, the heavenly High Priest, will never become one of the “royal priesthood.” (1 Peter 2:9; Revelation 20:15). God has provided for the support of all the different orders of the priesthood by the same method. “The earth is the Lord’s, and the fulness thereof.” (Psalms 24:1). The silver and the gold and the cattle upon a thousand hills all belong to Him. (Psalms 50:10-12). Man is placed as steward over the Lord’s heritage, and the Lord claims one tenth of everything on the earth as His portion. “All the tithe of the land, whether of the seed of the land, or of the fruit of the tree, is the Lord’s: it is holy unto the Lord.” (Leviticus 27:30-33).

Of the tithe the Lord says, “I have given the children of Levi all the tenth in Israel for an inheritance, for their service which they serve, even the service of the tabernacle of the congregation.” (Numbers 18:20-24). The individual who selfishly uses the entire ten portions for himself, not reserving one tenth for the Lord, is guilty of robbing the Lord. “Will a man rob God? Yet ye have robbed Me. But ye say, Wherein have we robbed Thee? In tithes and offerings.” (Malachi 3:8-11). Abraham paid a faithful tithe to Melchizedek; (Genesis 14:17-20) and Jacob promised to pay tithe of all, if he received only food and raiment. (Genesis 28:20-22). Those who belong to the great household of faith and are children of Abraham, will “do the works of Abraham.” (John 8:39). They will pay a faithful tithe for the support of those who, like the Levitical priests, give their lives for the advancement of Christ’s kingdom upon the earth. just as the priest lived “of the things of the temple. . . . even so hath the Lord ordained that they which preach the gospel should live of the gospel.” (1 Cor 9:9-14).

One entire tribe of Israel was set apart for the service of the sanctuary. As we recall the last words spoken to Levi by his father Jacob as he lay on his death-bed, we might wonder that his descendants were chosen for that sacred work. When Jacob remembered the sins of Levi, he pronounced almost a curse instead of a blessing upon his son, and closed it with these words: “I will divide them in Jacob, and scatter them in Israel.” (Genesis 49:5-7).

Wondrous is the love of our God that can change a curse into a blessing. (Nehemiah 13:2). Only a mighty God can make scarlet sins as white as snow. (Isaiah 1:18). The impulsive nature which, under the control of Satan, drives a man to commit desperate crimes, is not removed when he is converted. That same impetuosity, consecrated and under the control of Christ, makes him a valiant warrior for the Lord. Saul, the desperate persecutor, when converted, became Paul, the leading apostle.

The fearless character which, under the control of Satan, led Levi to murder the Shechemites, when controlled by the grace of God, enabled his descendants to take their stand boldly on the Lord’s side when the mass of Israel went into idolatry. (Exodus 32:26-29). God then turned the curse into a blessing; He said

because they had observed His law and kept His covenant, they should “teach Jacob His judgments and Israel His law.” (Deuteronomy 33:8-11). In order that their influence for good might be more widely felt throughout Israel, the Lord, instead of giving them one portion of the land for their inheritance, as He had given the other tribes, appointed as their portion forty-eight cities scattered among all the tribes. (Numbers 18:20; 35:1-8). Truly they were divided in Jacob and scattered in Israel, but the curse was turned into a blessing.

Our God is “the same yesterday, and to-day, and forever.” (Hebrews 13:8). When He pronounces evil against a nation or an individual because of their wickedness, if they turn from their wrong-doing, God says He “will repent of the evil” He “thought to do unto them,” and as in the case of Levi, a blessing will come instead of the curse. (Jeremiah 18:7-10). The term “Levite” was applied to all the priests, but only the descendants of Aaron were to hold the sacred office. The remainder of the tribe were to do the service of the sanctuary under the direction of the priests. They were not allowed to officiate at the altar of burnt-offering, nor to burn incense, nor to do any of the priest’s work within the veil. The Levites were to serve, or minister to, the priests; but the priests were to minister for the people before the Lord. (Numbers 18:1-7). The Levites were consecrated to the work of the sanctuary by the laying on of hands by the whole assembly of Israel, and then Aaron offered them “before the Lord for an offering of the children of Israel.” (Numbers 8:9-14).

The Levites were chosen by the Lord instead of the firstborn of Israel. (Numbers 8:17,18). While journeying in the wilderness, they carried all that pertained to the tabernacle; but although they bore the sacred furniture, they were never permitted even to look upon it. (Numbers 4:20). After the temple was built, the Levites were assigned the work of waiting on the priests in the sanctuary service. They prepared the showbread, often led the singing, collected the tithe, and did a large amount of work in connection with the service of the Lord. (1 Chronicles 23:24-32). In the time of David the Levites began to serve in the sanctuary at the age of twenty-five. At fifty years of age they were to “return from the warfare of the service.”¹ They were not discharged; they still had an oversight of the work, but were not expected to perform arduous duties. The work of the Levites was largely confined to the court, and thus typified the work of the gospel ministry of the present.

WEEK 2-LESSON 1 QUESTIONS
Sabbath Day Remnant Church of Namibia (SDRCN)

Student Full names: _____
Student Identification ID. _____
Country of Origin. _____
Date of submission. _____

Instructions. Answer all questions within one week of the commencement of your study. Some questions will require detailed explanation. Your answers should not exceed two typed pages or four hand written pages. Send your answers through WhatsApp to 0811271961. OR to the following email: drfmwilima@gmail.com

Question 1. Upon many titles bestowed upon Christ, there are two that are most dear to humanity. What are these titles and why do they stand out for the human race?
Answer. _____

Question 2. What process must sinful man go through to be accepted as son and daughter of God?
Answer. _____

Question 3. Explain the statement that Christ has become the forerunner for the redeemed.
Answer. _____

Question 4. Describe the work of the priests and high priest in the earthly sanctuary and how they relate to the work of Christ in the heavenly sanctuary.
Answer. _____

Question 5. In ancient times, the office of the High Priest was exclusively for the sons of Levi. However, this has changed. Explain how the change occurred.
Answer. _____

Question 6. God can turn a curse into a blessing. Give a Bible examples of how a curse was turned into a blessing.
Answer. _____

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