

RESTORING THE PRIESTLY ROLE OF INTERCESSION (Part 5)

Going Beyond The Veil

Then we pass through the veil into the Holy of Holies and stand before the ark of the covenant where the cherubim of gold hover over the mercy seat, the place of God's manifest presence. The mercy seat is barely visible through the sweetly fragrant smoke of the incense of our prayers, praise, and worship. Only the high priest could enter this place in the days before the cross, and then only once a year on the Day of Atonement.

The functions of the Old Testament priests foreshadow the greater reality God longs to see manifested in His priestly people today. The writer of Hebrews declares, "But now He [Jesus Christ] has obtained a more excellent ministry, by as much as He is also the mediator of a better covenant, which has been enacted on better promises" (Heb. 8:6).

Each function of the Aaronic priesthood represents a truth about man's relationship with God that we need to understand in the light of the cross:

In the Old Testament, only the high priest could enter the place of God's "residence" and have fellowship with Him. Under the new covenant executed by the death of Jesus Christ, every believer is a priest.

The priests of old knew God ritually, and in a relationship that was bound in fear without a revelation of love. Today, every believer can know God intimately and personally in a relationship marked by love, mercy, and grace. The seemingly endless sacrifices of the old covenant had to be repeated each time the priest entered the tabernacle. Today, we have ready access to God anytime and all the time through the blood of Jesus, who paid the debt for our sin once and for all. Our sins are covered by His blood, and He has set us aside for Himself (sanctified us) as His prized possession, His Bride. The descendants of Abraham knew God as the invisible Spirit who lived in a tent (and for short time, in a stone house). Today, God has fulfilled His promise and He no longer resides in a tent. He lives among men, instead, dwelling in our hearts in the person of the Holy Spirit. This same Spirit reveals God to every believer on a personal level, and we have intimate fellowship with God as a result.

The priestly functions of the Old Testament point us to our duties as the children of God in the New Testament. We now have been made priests and kings in the line of the Messiah as sons and daughters of God. However, our priesthood still includes the instruments of the cross and an altar of sacrifice, just as it was for our Lord!