

The Tabernacle, Part 6: A Kingdom of Priests

God is bringing about a change that He is going to make in His people.

God has taken decisive action:

- *He has called them out of Egypt.*
- *He has called them to come to Him.*
- *He has called them into worship.*

Exodus 19:5–6 (NKJV) ⁵Now therefore, if you will indeed obey My voice and keep My covenant, then you shall be a special treasure to Me above all people; for all the earth is Mine. ⁶And you shall be to Me a kingdom of priests and a holy nation.’ These are the words which you shall speak to the children of Israel.”

Before God is finished with them, they will be a kingdom of priests and a holy nation.

- They have no idea what God is calling them into.
- They will be a kingdom of priests and a holy nation.
- They struggled in this area of worship.

It is important to remember the history of man.

- In **Eden**, sin excluded humanity from the presence of God.
- **Able** offered an acceptable sacrifice to God, but **Cain** attempted to worship God in his own wisdom. In this first period of history, a distinction was made between people of faith and the world. As humanity increased, cities began to be developed.
- **Cain** went into the land of Nod and laid the foundations of a kingdom in which ‘the spirit of the beast’ prevails.
- **Seth’s** descendants gathered around an open profession of faith in God's promises and man's purpose to serve God.
- After the birth of **Enosh**, men began to call on the name of the Lord, (Genesis 4:26).
- The Godly line follows to **Cainan, Mahaleel, Jarod, and Enoch**.
- **Enoch** was the seventh from Adam. Enoch stood out as one man who walked with God.
- After **Enoch, Methuselah, Lamech**, and then **Noah**. Humanity became extremely wicked and godless.
- Only **Noah** found grace in the eyes of God. He preached to corrupt and rebellious people for 120 years without results.
- After the flood, **Noah’s** descendants (**Shem, Ham, and Japheth**) repopulated the earth and little is said of a relation to or worship of God.
- **To Shem** was born **Eber**, who had two sons, **Peleg** and **Joktan**.
- **Job** is a distant relative of **Shem** from the land of **UZ**. The Bible calls Job a righteous man.
- The tower of **Babel**, represented a cultural, social, and personal rebellion against God. The Babylonians interpreted “**Babel**” to mean “**the gate of the god.**” Babel is related to the city Babylon, and the Babylonian god Marduk. *From the confusion of languages and dispersion of people came the many nations.*
- **Peleg** begot **Reu**.
- **Reu** begot **Serug**.
- **Serug** begot **Nahor**.

- **Nahor** begot **Terah** the father of **Abram**.
- **Abram** heard the voice of God calling him out of Ur of the Chaldeans in Mesopotamia, a center of pagan idolatry, to serve the living God.

Worship and service to God was not organized.

- The patriarchs were individuals who had a relationship with God Almighty. Very few individuals are mentioned in relation with God.

He is the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob.

- Jacob's sons were exposed to the God of Jacob.

Joseph was sold into Egypt.

- Egypt was corrupted by paganism. *Later, Jacob and his family go into Egypt.*

From Sinai, God called them to come out of Egypt and worship Him.

- *With a strong arm, God brings them out of Egypt.*

From this history, it is evident that the called-out people did not have a full appreciation of what that means.

- God made promises to Abraham about his descendants.

Now, through Moses, God brings them out of Egypt to worship Him.

- *Everything God is telling Moses is new for them. For the first time in history, God is instituting corporate worship.*

As we watch the people, we realize they do not understand what the holy almighty God requires.

- God starts demonstrating His holiness, power, and majesty to them. They did not know how to come close to God. So, God gave Moses instruction on Sinai for the people.

From the Mountain of God, the people heard God's voice and saw evidence of His holiness and power.

Then God laid out the plans and format of a worship and lifestyle they are to enter.

- It is important to remember who they are and where they came from. Although they refer to their fathers; Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, the people are just beginning to personally engage and encounter the living God.

God is ready to bring them near.

- He is ready to absorb them into this relationship and fellowship.
- He has devised and provided a covering and atonement for them.
- He is ready to dwell in the midst of His people.

While Moses is on the mountain with God, the people revert to the form and ritual of Egypt.

- God is ready for them, but they are not ready for God.
- God is revealing more of Himself than they are willing or able to take in.
- God is ready to inhabit the praises of His people.
- God is ready to tabernacle with them.
- God is prepared to bring His people into close fellowship.
- God told Moses every step that was required for the people to enter into His presence.
- He gave instructions on cleansing, atonement, worship, and fellowship.

God is prepared to tabernacle with them.

God wants to pull them into the Holy of Holies. He wants to sanctify them so He can come near.

God starts by revealing His holiness to them.

This area and idea of fellowship is new for them.

When we begin to understand what a Holy God is, we must evaluate what does the impure heart look like in the sight of God?

How do we prepare our body, mind, and spirit for God's presence?

The tabernacle provided an approach into God's holy presence.

As one entered into the tabernacle, the second piece of furniture is the laver.

- *It was a great bath.*
- *It was a place of baptism.*
- *It was a place for cleansing.*

Exodus 30:19-20 (NKJV) ¹⁹For Aaron and his sons shall wash their hands and their feet in water from it. ²⁰When they go into the tabernacle of meeting, or when they come near the altar to minister, to burn an offering made by fire to the LORD, they shall wash with water, lest they die.

- *The penalty for neglecting to wash was very severe.* The outward symbol of purity kept them from death.

What does the impure heart look like in the sight of God?

- The priests were required to draw near to God, with clean hands and feet, and a pure heart. No worship can be pleasing to God, if the heart is polluted.

The brazen altar typically pointed to the atoning work of Christ.

- *This is where the sacrifice was burned before God.* The brazen altar testified that only the blood of Christ can cancel the guilt of sin.

The laver referred to the sanctifying work of the Holy Spirit.

- The laver shows us that the defilement of sin can be washed away by the work of the Holy Spirit.

The laver represents two things:

- First, you are clean by the washing of water by the word.
- Second, it represents baptism.

At the age of 30, the priest was brought to the laver and was baptized.

- When he came out of the water, he was a priest unto God.
 - It does not matter what else you do...
 - It does not matter how many offices you have...
 - It does not matter how many degrees you have earned...

When you come out of the water, you are a priest unto God.

This is the sanctifying work of the Holy Spirit.

- God is indicating through them something He institutes within the Church.

1 Peter 2:9 (NKJV) ⁹But you are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, His own special people, that you may proclaim the praises of Him who called you out of darkness into His marvelous light;

Has He called you out?

If He has called you out, He has provided the washing and cleansing you need.

When you were washed and made clean by the work of the Holy Spirit, you became consecrated as a priest unto God.

You are called out to function as a priest unto God.

When He brought you into Christ, He raised you up as a new creation.

God brought you out to worship Him.

Worship is for God's pleasure. How we feel has nothing to do with worship. You are called to worship God because you are a kingdom of priests unto God.

Exodus 19:6 (NKJV) ⁶And you shall be to Me a kingdom of priests and a holy nation.'

These are the words which you shall speak to the children of Israel."

When Moses said this, they all answered together: "All that the Lord has spoken we will do." *It sounded good, but they really did not understand what God was saying.*

They did not know how to worship the Holy God.

- They did not know God.
- They had not been face to face with God.
- They had not been on the Holy Mountain with Him.
- They did not know what they were saying.
- They had not been on holy ground and removed their shoes.
- At times, Moses had found the presence of the holy God to be more than he could stand. *He became overwhelmed and trembled in the presence of God.*

Some things have to happen to us before we are able to stand in His holy presence and worship.

When they came out of bondage, they had never heard God speak.

- God was instituting a new form of worship. They had not lived in the presence of God.

Now, the Almighty God is revealing His glory and power to them.

They have been brought out of Egypt to worship the living God.

- They have not witnessed a god like this.
- They are fearful and tremble in His presence.
- The gods of Egypt were made of brass, wood, or stone.

The Lord their God was a living God.

- They never knew a God that could talk. He can make His glory known. Even the earth responds to His presence.

No wonder they wanted to go back.

- They knew Egypt. You can get used to bad situations. There had been 10 generations of slaves in Egypt. Egypt represents sin and the world.

Worshipping God brought them to new experiences.

- They did not know anything about **mountains shaking.**
- They did not know anything about **fire falling.**
- They did not know anything about **trumpets sounding.**
- They had not heard **the voice of God.**

It is natural to want to go back into what is familiar.

- There is something very calm about worshipping a dead god.

God is going to wean them from their past.

God has called them out into the desert to meet Him.

- The people did not know what to expect. God did not give them many details.
- *They had not known His miracles until He brought plagues down on Egypt.*
- *They saw His power when He opened up the Red Sea.*
- *They had not been to Sinai before.*
- *They had not stood before the burning bush.*
- *They did not know what Moses knew.*
 - Moses has stood on holy ground with God.
 - He has taken off his shoes on holy ground.

These people have not stood before God and worshipped Him.

- Moses has seen the fire of God.
- He has heard the voice of God.

They were going toward something they could not explain.

- They have witnessed His power.
- They saw the plagues and the Red Sea open.
- They saw the pillar of fire and the pillar of a cloud.

Now they are going to meet with God.

- They are being drawn toward the presence of God.