

B. The Priesthood

This is foundational to the whole worship system. It is not only a part of individual life but a large part of corporate life. The priesthood easily becomes a force in the society of any time since it asserts the ability to link the known and the unknown. A study of priestly cultures outside the Bible is rather frightening and the tyrannies that have often been enforced by the priestly classes makes one wonder about the salvific character of the work. But in our case we are working with the Bible and while some of these exterior societal forces are seen in part within its scope, there is a divine perpetuation in the Bible that makes its priestly class less a determining force and more a serving unit. When, however, in the history of Israel, this fact has been forgotten in the priestly areas, the Hebrew priesthood also quickly turned into a less than salutary arm of the people or of God.

1. Who...what is a priest? *Jesus*

2. Phases of the Priesthood

- a. Pre-patriarchal - ? *Job?*
- b. Patriarchal - *family head... Jethro, Jacob, etc.*
- c. Mosaic - *transitions, Ex 30:30, 24:1, 28:1, Num 18:1, 20:22, 22:10*
- d. Kingdom *Eli: 1 Sam 1:9, Samuel: 1 Sam 3:19, 8:5 } side priest, 21:1, 22:20, 1 K. 4:4, 2:35*
- e. Exilic / *Ezra*
- f. Post-Exilic / *Ezra*

Naturally our understanding of the office and knowledge of the work of the priests grows through these periods. It is not always healthy growth but progressive revelation allows us to see both sides of the issue. That priestly authority will ebb and flow is not surprising..that it will survive is not surprising...what is surprising is the way in which it becomes subverted and often ruinous to its own cause. Well, maybe that is also not surprising.

3. The Priestly Person under the Law of God

- 1. Pre-law priesthood is an interesting subject and cannot be totally ignored. A few comments on it are necessary but because of its non-prescriptive character we are only able to make a few observations: