

Redemption 304: Priesthood & the Kinsman Redeemer



biblestudying.net

Brian K. McPherson and Scott McPherson

Copyright 2012

Priesthood and the Kinsman Redeemer – Part 6

Section Four: Priestly Service in the New Testament

Introduction

In the previous sections of this study we examined the concept of priestly service in the period before the Law of Moses. We saw that, in part, the Book of Genesis chronicles the transmission of priestly intercession from Abel to Abraham. Without an awareness of the scriptural presentation of these matters, modern Christians may tend to reduce their concept of priestly service solely to the Levites and Christ. Such limitations can result in eliminating any consideration of real acts of priestly service that may be required of us under the New Covenant.

Having become familiar with the greater (pre-Levitical) biblical discussion of priesthood in earlier sections of this study, we can now turn to an examination of the nature of any priestly service that participants in the New Covenant may have. In addition, this section of our study will also consider how New Testament priestly service may relate to end-times events. As we proceed it will be important to consider several relevant questions that emerge when the idea of priestly service in the New Testament is posited.

First, we must consider if Christians today have priestly service how does their priestly service relate to the priestly service of Christ. The New Testament clearly considers Christ to have sufficiently and completely provided atonement through his work as High Priest. As such, Christ's accomplishments may seem to leave no room or necessity for priestly service to be performed by others under the New Covenant. However, a fuller knowledge of priestly service in the Law of Moses will show that, while atonement for sin is the main aspect of priestly service, priestly service and sacrifice were not limited solely to providing atonement for sin. There were also offerings and sacrifices that were required to be made by the priests and people for such things as fellowship, thankfulness, and peace. With this broader understanding in mind it is possible to consider the continuation and transfer of non-atoning aspects of priestly service to us in the New Covenant without risking any infringement or undermining of the sufficiency or uniqueness of Christ's work as High Priest. (Additional consideration of the nature and purpose of priestly service in the New Covenant can be found in our addendum to this section, entitled "Alms-Giving.")

Second and correspondingly, it may be wondered what purpose our priestly service might have given that Christ alone provides atonement for sin. Here, several explanations are possible. For one, we can consider what was stated immediately above. Not all priestly service in the Law of Moses was for the atonement of sin. It is therefore possible that in the New Testament priesthood would serve these other functions including giving thanks and making intercession through prayer.

Furthermore, additional explanation is available through a consideration of the nature of the millennium and what role we will serve in it under Christ's reign over the earth. Earlier in our study we saw that Melchizedek and Christ (as well as David) operated as both priests and kings. Likewise, the New Testament describe our priesthood in the New Covenant as one involving kingship and rule over the nations (Hebrews 7:1, 1 Peter 2:9, 2 Timothy 2:12, Rev. 1:6, 5:10, 20:6, 1 Cor. 6:2, Romans 5:17, Daniel 7:27). In addition, as Hebrews 2:5 states, the world to come will not be ruled by angels as is the case at the present time (Ephesians 6:12, Daniel 10-12). From these texts we can see that our priesthood, like that of Melchizedek and Christ, involves reigning. And yet, according to Christ, leadership in his kingdom is for the sake of serving those under you, not to benefit yourself (Matthew 20:25-28). As Christ himself exemplifies, this kingly priesthood involves serving by interceding for those under your care (Romans 8:34, Hebrews 7:24-27). In the church today and in the earthly kingdom to come, we will be appointed to serve as priests and kings. As we will continue to see, such service involves prayerful intercession before God for those under your care. And, as this study will continue to demonstrate, prayerful intercession is appropriately understood as a priestly service.

Lastly, because of the centrality of animal sacrifice as a feature of Old Testament priestly service, the consideration of priestly service in the New Covenant may invite concerns that such service would likewise involve animal sacrifices. While not all animal sacrifices were for atoning for sin under the Law of Moses, we nevertheless want to clearly and unequivocally state up front that it is our understanding that the New Testament does not instruct or allow for us to offer animal sacrifices as a part of our priestly service. We believe this conclusion is established by New Testament passages, which discuss priesthood under the New Covenant. As we will see, these passages do not include animal sacrifice.

As we conduct this portion of our investigation we will first review some of the findings from earlier sections whose subject matter is related to our current inquiry. We will then take some time to become familiar with the language that the bible uses in reference to various elements associated with priestly and prayerful service.

Review: A Non-Levitical and Non-Israelite Order of Priests

Reading Genesis 3-5 in the historical context of the Exodus and the Mosaic Law produces the idea that Genesis identifies certain descendants of Adam and Eve (such as Cain, Abel, and Seth) who acted in priestly intercession for mankind. The proximity with which the events in Genesis 3, 4, and 5 are presented indicates that Cain and Abel's actions were in accordance with Genesis 3's predictive description that from Adam and Eve would come an offspring who would defeat satanic angels that had acquired dominion over sinful men. Related to Cain and Abel's actions and that of Christ is the Mosaic concept of a kinsman redeemer who likewise interceded for the redemption of his people. For later reference, it is also worth noting that the phrase "in the process of time," in Genesis 4:3 can be understood to designate when Cain and Abel brought their offerings. It is comprised of the two words "qets" (Strong's Number 07093) and "yowm" (Strong's Number 03117). These words mean "end" and "day" respectively and the phrase can more simply be translated as at or after the "end of the year."

The Temple in Jerusalem resembled the pattern of the garden in Eden in décor, orientation, and location within the larger local geography. Likewise, the placement of cherubim in the Temple before the presence of the Lord parallels the location and function of the cherubim in Genesis 3. These two angelic figures parallel the highest ranking, satanic angel who has the power of death and his associate angel who rules over hell as described in both the Old Testament and NT. Both angelic figures are associated or at least affiliated directly with the serpent of Genesis 3 and featured prominently in the events of the final years before Christ's return where they struggle against the two witnesses. Linguistic parallels between Zechariah and Revelation also support this conclusion. Likewise, Genesis 4 and Paul's remarks in Romans 5-6 identify the angelic adversary as the figure identified as "sin" who desired to rule over Cain in Genesis 4 and who came to rule over all men as each individual sinned.

The existence of such priestly intercessors is recorded in Genesis from the time of Seth to the time of Abraham. Abraham's offspring (the people of Israel) are then given the responsibility of continuing this legacy, now as a nation of priests (Ex. 19:6.) Among the Israelites, the tribe of Levi was set apart to carry out priestly function and minister in tabernacle and Temple activities (Numbers 1:5-53, Numbers 18:1-7). Among the Levites, the family of Aaron was especially designated to serve as high priests (Exodus 28:1, 4, 41; 29:44, 30:30, 31:10).

Both the Old Testament and New Testament recognize a priestly order that predated the Levitical priesthood. Melchizedek is identified as a priest of this earlier, non-Levitical order. The New Covenant (itself prescribed by the Mosaic covenant) was established by Christ through his death and resurrection. According to Hebrews 7:12-14, the New Covenant removes the Levitical tribal requirements for priests and reverts to the Melchizedekian order of priests. The New Covenant carries over the priestly nationhood of Israel and allows Gentiles who repent and convert to faith in Christ Jesus to participate in God's covenant with Israel so that through Abraham all nations will be blessed (Gal. 3, 1 Peter 2:9.)

Besides the Levites, only the following biblical figures are ever credited with making sacrificial offerings to God: Cain, Abel, Noah, Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Jethro, Manoah, David, (David's sons), Solomon, Elijah, Job, and perhaps Jephthah and Gibeon. A study of Melchizedek also provides good reason to consider that he may have, in fact, been Noah's son, Shem. David's descent from Tamar who was the daughter of a priest (perhaps of Melchizedek/Shem himself) may explain the allowance for David and his sons to serve as priests due to their close ancestral ties with the pre-Levitical priestly line. It is worth noting that the priestly work of Cain, Abel, Noah, Melchizedek, Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Moses, and also that of Elijah and David and his sons cannot be explained by recourse to the Levitical order. (There are no indications that Elijah was of Levitical descent and he is not identified as a Levite or a priest, "cohen." The Gentile prophet Balaam in Numbers 22-24 is also an intriguing candidate for this priestly order. It is noteworthy that according to Numbers 22:8-13, 19-21 Balaam's interactions with God seem to wait to occur until nightfall and his sacrifice is offered around daybreak in Numbers 22:41. The numerical parallel between the seven animals offered by Balaam, the seven-branched candlestick in the Temple, and the seven eyes of God mentioned in Zechariah and Revelation, is also noteworthy.) All these cases demonstrate the existence of intercessors that were not Levites yet acted as priestly mediators between God and their fellow man.

In Genesis 4 the priestly offering and intercessory work of Cain and Abel is closely connected with Seth who is a replacement for Abel. In connection with this, Genesis introduces the phrase "calling on the name of the Lord." This particular phrase is associated with priestly activities including prayer, intercession, and even offerings and sacrifices. The next occurrences of the phrase after Genesis 4 all reference such activities.

All of the above observations serve simply to inform us of the reality that the bible recognizes a legitimate non-Levitical and non-Israelite priestly order. This order both preceded (as exhibited through figures such as Melchizedek) and succeeded (as seen chiefly through Christ) the Levitical order. The existence of this order, the fact that it succeeds the Levitical order, and that this order and its function are established as an inherent part of the New Covenant invite further inquiry. Christ's service and function in the New Covenant as a priest in the non-Levitical priesthood is well established and discussed in detail in the New Testament, especially in the Book of Hebrews. However, we must ask to what extent participants in the New Covenant (whether Jew or Gentile) are also considered to be part of this order and what types of priestly service may be expected from them. In order to investigate those questions we must continue to review additional material from other studies and biblical passages which may provide insight into the nature of the role of both Levitical and especially non-Levitical priests. Though evidence provides indication that the non-Levitical priesthood predates Melchizedek we will refer to the non-Levitical order of priests as the Melchizedekian priesthood using the concept implied by Psalm 110:4, Hebrews 5:6, 10, 6:20, 7:11, 17, and 21.

The Role of Priests: the Name of the Lord and Calling on the Name of the Lord

We have just discussed passages in the Old Testament wherein patriarchal figures and Israelites “called on the name of the Lord.” This concept deserves further attention as it relates to priestly activities. In this portion of our study we will focus on the phrase “the name of the Lord” as a potential biblical means of identifying or referring at times to the Holy Spirit.

The following two points will be established through an examination of linguistic and historical parallels in both the Old and New Testaments:

1. The Holy Spirit is also known as: the Lord of hosts, the name of the Lord, the angel of the presence in whom is the name of God and who is sent in God’s name.
2. The Holy Spirit is the person of God who is often concerned with the Temple, Temple service, prayer, intercession, offerings, and petitioning (see also Rev. 8:3-4, Rom. 8:26-27.)

In order to establish these points, let us first recount what we already have seen regarding “calling on the name of the Lord.” We have already discussed that the phrase “call upon the name of the Lord” invokes prayer and priestly intercession before God. First, we discussed how Genesis 4:26 indicates that men first began to “call upon the name (08034) of the Lord (03068)” at the time Seth has a son (Enos). Likewise, Genesis 3 and 4 present information that may be related to making intercession, prayer, and offerings before God on behalf of other men (even including living ancestors and other predecessors.) The phrase (“call upon the name of the Lord”) is used in similar ways wherever it occurs in Genesis. Genesis 12:8, 13:4, 21:33 and 26:25 all record instances of intercession, offering, and prayer. Other passages using the same phrasing and conveying the same idea include: 1 Kings 18:24 (Elijah with the prophets of Baal,) 1 Chron. 16:8 (David,) Psalm 99:6, 105:1, 116:13-17, Isaiah 12:4, Joel 2:32, Zephaniah 3:9, and Zechariah 13:9. See also Deuteronomy 18:5-7 where the concept of ministering to the name of the Lord is given as the task of the Levitical priests who stand before the Lord. (The same statement is applied also to the two candlesticks in Zechariah 4 and Revelation 11 which also involves work to rebuild the Temple. See also Deuteronomy 10:8, 2 Chron. 29:11, Jeremiah 15:19, and also 1 Kings 18:15 where Elijah is said to stand before the Lord.) There is then an early biblical association of the name of the Lord with these tasks as well as with the phrase “stand before the Lord.” We can see then that such scriptural attestations show a close association of “calling on the name of the Lord” with prayerful and priestly intercession.

Second, in the paragraphs below we will outline terminological and historical parallels that occur in both the Old and the New Testaments regarding the Holy Spirit as well as prayerful, priestly service.

In both testaments, the name of the Lord is associated with instructions regarding prayerful intercession and priestly work. Deuteronomy 12:5, 11, 21, 14:23-24,

16:2, 6, 11, and 26:2 as well as and 1 Kings 18:20, 2 Chron. 6:10, Is. 18:, Jer. 3:17, 7:12-14, Josh. 18:1 repeatedly assert that when the Jews entered into the Promised Land God would select one place to put his name and that this location alone would be where the Jews could worship God. Tabernacle and Temple worship are closely connected to priestly prayer and intercession. Likewise, the first commandment may be especially related to this in its prohibition against taking the name of the Lord in vain (Ex. 20:7, Deut. 5:11, Lev. 18:21, 19:12, 22:2, 32, 24:16, etc.) This commandment should be associated with the angelic figure spoken of in Exodus 23 who has the name of the Lord and is said not to forgive rebellion. (See further discussion of Ex. 23 below.) Here remarks about this angel may parallel statements in Ex., Deut., and Lev. that the Lord will not hold him guiltless who takes his name in vain. Similarly, in the New Testament, Jesus states that blasphemy against the Holy Spirit will not be forgiven (Matt. 12:31.) Even the prayer model given by Jesus seems to allude to these biblical issues where it speaks of petitioning God with a recognition of his holy name: “Our Father who art in heaven hallowed be thy name” (Matt. 6:9 and Luke 11:2.) These passages provide some indication of an association of “the name of the Lord” with prayerful, priestly intercession as well as with a particular person of Yhwh God.

Later David and Solomon built the Temple at the location where the Lord placed his name, which was within the city of Jerusalem. 2 Chronicles 6 records the prayer of Solomon upon dedicating the Temple. The passage records that this was the place God had chosen and where God would hear the prayers of his people (see specifically verses 20-26) and where his eyes would watch. These same eyes are mentioned in relation to the Temple’s rebuilding in Zechariah 3:9 and 4:10. And they are presented in Revelation 4 and 5:6 as well. At the end of Solomon’s prayer fire comes down from heaven (2 Chron. 7:1-4) and offerings commence. Likewise, in 2 Chron. 7:11-15, God tells Solomon that he will do as Solomon had asked. The fire coming down from heaven to consume the sacrifice is paralleled by Elijah in 1 Kings 18:24, 29, 36-39, a figure already noted for his intercessory role outside the Levitical order. It is also noteworthy that Elijah not only “calls upon the name of the Lord” but waits to petition God until the time of the evening sacrifice according to verse 29.

The Book of Nehemiah (chapter 1) records a prayer after the Jews have returned from exile. The prayer is offered with an appeal in reference to Solomon’s prayer in 2 Chronicles 6. Psalm 74 also mentions the place where God has put his name as well as the defilement of the sanctuary there. Isaiah 18:7 and Ezekiel 43:7 speak similarly of the Temple as the place of God’s name. (See also Jeremiah 3:17.) Jeremiah 7:12-14 refers to Shiloh as the first place where God’s name was set before from the time of Joshua (Joshua 18:1, 8-10, 19:51, 22:12, Judges 21:12, 19, 1 Sam. 1:3, 3:21, 4:3-4) until the time of Eli (1 Sam. 4-7:1.) Later David moved the ark to Jerusalem (2 Sam. 6) and Solomon built the Temple there. Malachi 1:11 (through 2:2) speaks of God’s name being great among the Gentiles and incense being offered to God in every place in his name as a pure offering.

Having become familiar with the biblical relationship between priestly intercession (Temple service) and prayer and calling on the Name of the Lord, we will now turn our attention toward the particular meaning of the phrase “the Name of the Lord” itself to establish the biblical use of this phrase as a means to refer to the Holy Spirit.

In his book *The Bodies of God and the World of Ancient Israel*, Dr. Benjamin Sommer explains that in Semitic culture, language, and writing during the biblical period, the word and concept of the “name” of God were used to speak of a divine person who was in some sense distinct from and yet at the same time identical with the God whose name they bore.

God’s name and God’s Glory in the Hebrew Bible – Priestly and deuteronomic traditions make distinctive use of two **terms that refer to divine presence in various parts of the Hebrew Bible:** (*kabod*, usually translated as “Glory”) appears often in the former, and (*shem*, or “name”) in the latter. **To understand how these traditions take up these terms, it is necessary to review how other biblical texts use them.** Outside the priestly and deuteronomic traditions **these terms can refer to some type of divine manifestation or some attribute closely aligned with God’s self, but the exact nature of the connection between God and these manifestations or attributes is difficult to characterize. The term “name” in ancient Near Eastern cultures can refer to the essence of any thing and hence can be a cipher for the thing itself. Examples of the identity of God and God’s name in biblical literature abound. The synonymous parallelism of God and God’s name in many poetic texts attest to this identity...(Micah 5.3...Psalm 7.18...Psalm 145.21) Similarly, in Jeremiah 14.9 the presence of God in the people’s midst is equated with God’s *shem*...Yet *shem* or Name can also refer to a hypostasis, a quality or attribute of a particular being that becomes distinct from that being but never entirely independent of it. 6 In many texts, God’s *shem* embodies but does not exhaust God’s self, and it also maintains some degree of separate identity. Texts that use the term this way give witness to the fluidity of the divine selfhood so common in the ancient Near East. We noted in the previous chapter that Exodus 23.20-2 portrays God as sending an angel (*mal’akh*) to accompany the Israelites to their land. God tells Moses to obey the *mal’akh*, because “My *shem* is in it.” This *mal’akh* is the sort I discussed in the previous chapter – not quite a separate being but a small-scale manifestation of God. At times, the divine *shem* is sufficiently material to be the subject of its own verbs of motion. In Isaiah 30.27 it moves on its own: “The *shem* of Yhwh comes from afar, burning in anger, with a weighty load.” It is difficult to say whether “the Name of Yhwh” here means “the LORD Himself” or whether the poem distances God slightly from this angry theophany, implying that only part of God’s self will become manifest. 8 Significantly, God’s *shem* can manifest itself at more than one location. According to Exodus 20.24, the Israelites are to construct altars “in all the locations where I cause My *shem* to be mentioned.” Thus the notion of *shem* reflects the possibility of a fragmented divine self and its physical manifestation in multiple bodies. In short, *shem* functions outside deuteronomic and priestly texts both as a synonym for God and as a hypostasis**

or emanation of God that is not quite a separate deity. – Benjamin D. Sommer, *The Bodies of God and the World of Ancient Israel*, p. 58-59

We find this concept exhibited in Exodus. For instance, as we have said Exodus 23 and 33 introduce a figure identified as the Angel of the Presence who has the name of Yhwh in him. This figure is going to be with the Israelites in the Promised Land as they conquer the Canaanites. As the Israelites begin to enter the Promised Land, Joshua 5 promptly records Joshua's encounter with a figure identified as "the captain of the Lord's hosts" whom Joshua worships and who is actively involved in the conquest of Jericho, the beginning of the conquest of Canaan Land. Likewise, the phrase "the Lord of hosts" or "the Lord God of hosts" begins to be used with particular frequency after the Pentateuch (that is beginning after this encounter in Joshua 5). There is reason to suspect that perhaps the personified "Name of the Lord" is simply an alternate designation for the "angel of the presence in whom is the divine name." Both figures are clearly associated with the entrance of the Israelites into the Promised Land in Exodus and Joshua.

Furthermore, in fulfillment of Ex. 23 and 33, the phrase "Lord of hosts" ("Lord of the Sabaoth") is first introduced in Joshua 5 as a reference to a divine figure who is present with the Israelites as they enter into the Promised Land and begin their conquest of the Canaanite peoples. The phrase "the spirit of the Lord" seems to be associated with this divine figure identified as the angel of the presence who had the name of the Lord, who was also called the Lord of hosts, and who is encountered and worshipped by Joshua in Joshua 5. Correspondingly, the phrase "the spirit of the Lord" begins to be used with great frequency after the Israelites enter the Promised Land and struggle to conquer the Canaanites. (Judges 6 provides an insightful look at related issues.) These texts indicate a biblical understanding that the period beginning with the conquest of Canaan Land contains a particular involvement of the Holy Spirit who is alternatively referred to as "the Lord of Hosts," "the Name of the Lord," or "the Angel of the Presence who has the Name of Yhwh in him."

Furthermore, "the Lord of hosts" is identified as the figure who has chosen Jerusalem (Zechariah 1:12-17, 8:3-4, 22) and who dwells in Jerusalem and is concerned about the Temple (Isaiah 3:1, 24:23, 31:5, 37:32, Jer. 26:18, 27:18-21, 29:4.) This corresponds to God's name being placed in Jerusalem. In Jeremiah 27:18 making intercession to the Lord of hosts is spoken of in a way that is reminiscent of the idea of ministering to the name of the Lord and calling upon the name of the Lord. These statements also correspond to statements that the Lord would put his name in Jerusalem where the Temple was later built and where the Lord of hosts dwells. All of these terms and phrases can biblically be traced to the Holy Spirit and his particular role of presiding over the priestly and prayerful service of God's people.

Additionally, the Lord of hosts is featured in Zechariah as the speaker of prophecies pertaining to the rebuilding of the Temple. Zechariah 1 also depicts the Lord of hosts as jealous for Jerusalem. In the Pentateuch it is said that the name of the Lord is jealous (Ex. 34:14) and in Zechariah that the Lord of hosts is

jealous for Jerusalem. We again see the interchangeable nature of these terms (“the name of the Lord” and “the Lord of hosts”). Such descriptions fit well with New Testament passages wherein the saints are the Temple of the Holy Spirit and statements about the Lord being jealous. Similarly, there is interplay between the terms “spirit of the Lord” and “the Lord of hosts” in 1 Sam. 16:13 and 2 Samuel 5:10 which seem to speak of the same figure. The repeated association of the Holy Spirit (through these various manners of reference) with Temple activity works to establish the connection between the Holy Spirit and prayerful, priestly service. The fact that this same connection is presented in both testaments also confirms its veracity.

A similar patterning exists in both Testaments regarding the role of the Word of God. In the Old Testament it is the Word of Yhwh who brought the Israelites out of bondage in Egypt, who was with Moses and the Israelites as they dwelled in tabernacles in the wilderness, who visited them in the tabernacle, who established the Covenant of Moses, and who sent the Angel of his presence with them. In the New Testament, it is the Word incarnate (Jesus) who tabernacles among his people Israel (John 1:14), who provides the means to redeem us from bondage to sin, and who makes a New Covenant with Israel. The historical patterning can therefore be seen in both the Old and New Testaments. The Word of Yhwh comes and liberates his people from bondage and establishes a covenant and laws. Then the Word sends the Spirit of Yhwh in his name to accompany his people in the establishment of those laws in their society.

Further corroboration of the identification of the Holy Spirit with the Old Testament phrase “the Name of the Lord” comes from New Testament passages which relate that carrying out actions by the power of the Holy Spirit was equivalent to doing it in the name of the Lord. (See Matt. 7:22 with Matt. 12:24-31 as well as Matt. 28:19-20, John 10:25, Acts 3:6, 16, 4:7. See also Mark 9:39 and 16:17-20.) In conjunction, after discussing the coming of the Holy Spirit the New Testament instructs us to pray in the name of Jesus (John 14:13-14, 15:16, 16:23-26). Likewise, the Holy Spirit is sent in the name of the Lord (John 5:43 and 14:26) which again parallels Exodus 23’s angel who has the name of the Lord. And, in contrast to the Old Testament’s insistence on the Israelites worshipping God only in Jerusalem, the New Testament (along with Mal. 1) iterates that this will change (at least for a time) in the New Covenant (John 4:21, Mathew 18:20 along with Acts 2:1-4 and 1 Cor. 3:16, 19) and God’s people will be able to engage in prayerful service outside of Jerusalem.

In addition, the New Testament teaches that it is the Holy Spirit who seals (2 Cor. 1:22, Eph. 1:13, 4:30, and Rev. 7:3-8 where this occurs in the forehead) while Rev. 14:1 and 22:4 indicate that the name of God is written on our foreheads. Similarly, in the New Testament Jesus promises to send the Holy Spirit (in his name) to accompany his followers after he ascends, telling them that he will be with them always (that is, presumably through the presence of the Holy Spirit – Matt. 28:20.) This again, parallels Exodus 23 where YHWH speaks of the angel of his presence who has his name in him who will accompany them into the Promised Land.

In the New Testament, the Israelites journey in the wilderness after the Exodus and their subsequent entrance into the Promised Land are said to parallel the period between Jesus' ascension and his return. New Testament passages such as 1 Corinthians 10 describe baptism into Christ in terms of the Exodus while books depict entrance into the promised inheritance with the millennial reign of Christ (Rev. 8:6-11:15, Hebrews 3:11-4:11, Rev. 11:18, Rev. 12:14.) The implication is that between these two book ends lies the period in the wilderness. The idea of Jesus sending out 12 apostles at the onset of the New Covenant and the conclusion of the age ending with 2 witnesses may parallel Moses sending out 12 spies into the Promised Land only to have 2 come back with a good report or testimony (Numbers 14.)

In summary, these scriptural details and parallels provide strong support for the following conclusions:

1. The Holy Spirit is also known as: the Lord of hosts, the name of the Lord, the angel of the presence in whom is the name of God and who is sent in God's name.
2. The Holy Spirit is the person of God who is often concerned with the Temple, Temple service, prayer, intercession, offerings, and petitioning (see also Rev. 8:3-4, Rom. 8:26-27.)

Relevant to our larger study is the fact that in the New Testament Jesus removes restrictions requiring worship and prayer to God to be made only at the Temple in Jerusalem and allows that prayer can be made in his name anywhere two or more are gathered in his name (Matt. 18:20, John 4:21-24.) This can be contrasted with the Law of Moses which only allowed intercession and priestly prayer in the specific location designated for the tabernacle and Temple in Jerusalem where the name of YHWH dwelled. It is reasonable to consider that Jesus' teaching on prayer (especially as recorded in Matt. 18) is connected to and may perhaps be the origin of New Testament passages which describe the church as the Temple of God (1 Cor. 3:16-17, 6:19, 2 Cor. 6:16, and Eph. 2:21). If the church was to pray at morning and evening in accordance with the "tamiyd" offerings made at the Temple where God had placed his name and Jesus' authorized this to take place wherever his church was gathered rather than solely at the Temple in Jerusalem, then the concept that the church gathered together and praying in Jesus' name at morning and evening conveys that a sufficient "Temple" is present whenever Jesus' followers perform these tasks.

The Role of Priests: Standing Before the Lord

Besides "calling on the name of the Lord," there is another phrase that is commonly used in the Old Testament in association with many of the same pre-Levitical and Israelite figures and their priestly work. The phrase is something equivalent to "standing before the LORD of the whole earth." Genesis 18-19 provides the earliest instance of this phrase where we find it associated with

Abraham's intercession before God in which Abraham intercedes for any righteous persons who may have lived in Sodom and Gomorrah. Since Abraham is himself a pre-Levitical (and even pre-Israelite figure given that he is the progenitor of both Levi and Jacob/Israel), Abraham serves as an example of a non-Levite who "stood before the Lord."

Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, and Deuteronomy, likewise employ the phrase "stood" or "standing before the Lord" repeatedly in regard to priestly and intercessory work performed by Moses and the Levites. Note that though Moses was a Levite, he served in a priestly and intercessory capacity before the establishment of the Levitical order and the inauguration of the Mosaic Covenant at Sinai. Likewise, Moses is not a descendant of Aaron for whom the priesthood was reserved in Mosaic Law. Moses is then an example of someone who "stood before the Lord" who was not a Levitical priest.

After this we find the phrase uniquely used of Elijah who likewise served in an intercessory (Rom. 11:2) and priestly capacity in regard to his making sacrifices to God and trying to win the people of Israel over to God. Since Elijah is not identified as a Levitical priest, like Abraham, he serves as an example of someone who is said to "stand before the Lord" who is not a Levitical priest.

Jeremiah and Ezekiel also use the phrase ("standing before the Lord") in association with priestly and prophetic work.

Zechariah (Zechariah 3:1, 9; 4:9-14) in particular associates the phrase with Joshua the high priest who is before the Lord as satan accused him. He also uses it in reference to the two olive trees (Joshua and Zerubbabel) who led the Israel after their return from exile and who also led in the reconstruction of the Temple. (Zerubbabel was not a Levite or a priest. His inclusion as one of the two olive trees of Zechariah 4 would provide another instance of a non-Levitical priest acting in this capacity.)

Revelation 11 and 12 draw heavily from these references in Zechariah applying the title the two olive trees and the phrase standing before the God of the earth to the two witnesses. Revelation 11 and 12 then credit these men with the miraculous power exhibited famously by Elijah to withheld rain and by Moses who wielded the power of the plagues. These two witnesses in Revelation are closely involved in the rebuilding of the Temple. Furthermore, a survey of New Testament language provides good support for the conclusion that the two witnesses will be given the authority of excommunication and communion as well as authority to number and designate who may serve in the newly constructed Temple. There is also good reason to believe that Revelation 12 refers to the two witnesses as simply those who have the testimony of Jesus, thus inferring satan's opposition to their work by drawing a parallel to Zechariah's depiction of satan's opposition to Joshua and Zerubbabel. There is also reason to suspect that the two witnesses may be Gentiles and not of Jewish descent. If this is the case then they are another example of non-Levitical priests who "stand before the Lord." (For

More Information, See Article: Stand Before the Lord, Two Witnesses and Excommunication, Two Witnesses Gentiles)

The biblical usage of the phrase “stood by the Lord” in regards to Levitical priests, Old Testament prophets, and circumstances such as Abraham’s intercession in Genesis 18-19 provides good evidence that this phrase is referential to priestly and intercessory work. The fact that non-Levitical and pre-Levitical figures are associated with this phrase simply confirms the non-controversial biblical fact that non-Levites served in a priestly and intercessory roles in the bible, even in the Old Testament period. The association of this phrase with the two witnesses in Revelation provides evidence that priestly and intercessory work may be performed by these two New Testament (New Covenant) figures.

Priestly Service in the End Times

Both the Old Testament and New Testament record the eventual reconstruction of the Temple in Jerusalem, particularly in the books of Daniel and Revelation. The New Testament shows that while Christ established a New Covenant, he continued many aspects of the Mosaic Law. Sacrificial, dietary, sabbatical, and festival laws along with circumcision (to name a few items) were no longer required under the New Covenant. However, these things were by no means prohibited. Jews (and Gentiles) could and, in some cases, did continue to keep these Mosaic practices while simply acknowledging that they were not required for salvation. The Book of Revelation clearly states that the pre-millennial Temple will only include the Temple building itself and will not include any of the courts outside the building (Rev. 11:1-3). The brazen altar which was used for animal sacrifices was located in the courts outside the Temple building which Revelation states will not be part of the pre-millennial reconstruction. However, Revelation 11 does clearly state that the golden altar of incense will be in use at that time. This earthly altar parallels a similar golden altar in the heavenly temple which it modeled. The heavenly incense altar is depicted prominently in Revelation 8 as being active and representing the prayers of the saints ascending before God’s throne. (For more information, see our Premillennial Temple Study)

In our Trinity study and Angels as a Network study we establish that the Word and the Spirit of YHWH voluntarily do not operate with divine omniscience as they interact with mankind over the course of human history. Rather, the Father operates as the seat of full divine omniscience, while the Word and Spirit rely upon the Father and more normative modes of inquiry and the acquisition of knowledge and information. Among the normative modes of acquiring knowledge is the use of a network of angels who serve to gather and pass along information from the world of mankind to God and from God to man. The books of Daniel and Job present clear depictions of this function of angels. Luke 1 likewise provides an excellent example of Gabriel operating in this role. Other Old Testament and New Testament passages also display these facts.

Throughout the Book of Revelation, seven angels are prominently featured as providing this kind of information network with the churches of the first century, with John as he receives the vision(s), as well as working in close contact with the two witnesses especially in their distribution of the plagues. Revelation 8:3-5 connect the work of these angels both to the prayers of the saints and the incense altar in heaven. Furthermore, 2 Chronicles, Zechariah, and Revelation all identify these seven angels as being charged with surveying the earth for faithful men. 2 Chronicles relates their work in this regard especially to the Temple and intercessory prayer done at the Temple. 1 Peter 3:12 refers to these passages stating that “the eyes of the Lord are over the righteous and his ears are open to their prayers.” (For more information, see our articles entitled: Trinity Study and Angels and a Network.)

These facts and observations invite further inquiry into several related lines of thought concerning prayer and priestly service in the New Covenant as well as the work of the two witnesses in regard to both. Biblical connections are available for investigation.

The books of Daniel and Revelation provide a specific duration for eschatological events. According to Daniel 9:27 there will be seven years which begin with God confirming his covenant with his people. In Old Testament language which is carried over in New Testament passages which discuss this subject, this confirmation includes the rebuilding of the Temple and the restoration of prayerful and intercessory activities connected to the incense altar. In the Old Testament period, priestly intercession and the existence of a Temple were two closely intertwined and essential mechanisms related to God’s actions against angelic and human enemies who sought to oppose God’s people, God’s work, and those who carried out God’s work. Daniel 9-12 and 2 Chronicles provide excellent examples of these relationships which the Book of Revelation clearly shows to be in operation during the final years of this age.

We have already seen that Revelation 8 and 11 clearly depict the use of the incense altar in accompaniment of the prayers of the saints during the final years before Christ’s return. New Testament references to the Temple and the altar of incense in relation to priestly intercession and prayer provides support for the idea that, in the New Covenant, persons besides Christ offer some form of priestly service. As we investigate the eschatological occurrence of things related to priesthood, prayer, and intercessory work in the New Testament and especially in the end times, it is first important to become familiar with the Old Testament presentation of such things. Once we are familiar with the Old Testament discussion of this subject we will be better prepared to understand New Testament references to these same issues.

Different Kinds of Priestly Service (Sacrifices and Offerings) in the Law of Moses

There are different kinds of offerings and sacrifices in the Law of Moses. Some were for atoning for sins (expiatory.) Others were for consecrating people and vessels for service in the Temple. There were also offerings that were simply for fellowship, gifts to God showing devotion, and thanks. The point is that not all offerings dealt with sin or consecration.

Smith's Bible Dictionary provides a concise summary and explanation of the sacrifices and offerings of the Law of Moses:

Sacrifice – The Sacrifices of the Mosaic Period – The law of Leviticus now unfold distinctly the various forms of sacrifice: (a) The burnt offering: Self-dedicatory. (b) The meat offering: (unbloody): Eucharistic. (c) The sin offering; the trespass offering: Expiatory. (d) The incense offered after the sacrifice in the holy place, and (on the Day of Atonement) in the holy of holies, the symbol of the intercession of the priest (as a type of the great High Priest), accompanying and making efficacious prayer of the people. In the consecration of Aaron and his sons, Lev. 8, we find these offered in what became ever afterward their appointed order. **First came the sin offering, to prepare access to God; next the burnt offering, to mark their dedication to his services; and third the meat offering of thanksgiving.** Hence the sacrificial system was fixed in all its part until he should come whom it typified... **The regular sacrifices in the temple service were – (a) Burnt Offerings. 1, the daily burnt offerings, Ex. 29:38-42; 2, the double burnt offerings on the Sabbath, Num. 28:9, 10; 3, the burnt offerings at the great festivals; Num. 28:11-29: 39. (b) Meat offerings. 1, the daily meat offerings accompanying the daily burnt offerings, Ex. 29:40, 41; 2, the showbread, renewed every Sabbath, Lev. 24:5, 6; 3, the special meat offerings at the Sabbath and the great festivals, Num. 28, 29; 4, the first-fruits, at the Passover, Lev. 23:10-14, at Pentecost, Lev. 23:17-20, the first-fruits of the dough and threshing-floor at the harvest time, Num. 15:20, 21; Deut. 26:1-11. (c) Sin offerings. 1, sin offering at each new moon, Num. 28:22, 30; 29:5, 16, 19, 22, 25, 28, 31, 34, 38; 3, the offering of the two goats for the people and of the bullock for the priest himself on the Great Day of Atonement. Lev. 16. (d) Incense. 1. The morning and evening incense, Ex. 30:7, 8; 2, the incense on the Great Day of Atonement. Lev. 16:12.** Besides these public sacrifices, there were offerings of the people for themselves individually... **The typical sense of the meat offering or peace offering is less connected with the sacrifice of Christ himself than with those sacrifices of praise, thanksgiving, charity, and devotion which we, as Christians, offer to God, and “with which he is well pleased,” Hebrews 13:15, 16, as with an “odor of sweet smell, a sacrifice acceptable to God.” Philip. 4:18.** – Smith's Bible Dictionary

The New Testament clearly indicates that Christ alone performed and fulfilled the purpose of sacrifices and offerings that dealt with atonement for sin. (See 1 Cor. 5:7, Eph. 5:2, Rom. 5:10-11, 2 Cor. 5:18-19 and especially Hebrews 7:27 with 9:26, 10:5, 8, and 12.) The New Testament also clearly establishes that Christ together with the Holy Spirit consecrates (sanctifies, 37 “hagiazō”) us for priestly service. (See Acts 26:18, Romans 15:16, 1 Cor. 1:2, 6:11, Eph. 5:26, Hebrews 2:11, Hebrews 9:13-14, 19, 21, 10:10, 14, 29, 13:12, and Jude 1:1 together with

Rev. 1:6, 5:10, and 20:6.) Also, Hebrews 9:13, 19, and 21 specifically discuss the idea of sanctification (37) (or setting apart for priestly service) which occurred in the Mosaic Law through the sprinkling (4472) of blood. In Hebrews 10:22, Paul states that through Christ's work, our hearts have been sprinkled (4472) and our bodies washed with pure water invoking both consecration unto priestly service (Ex. 28:41, 39:36) and the washing which was performed in the consecration of priests and offering of sacrifices that were offered to God in the Law of Moses (Ex. 29:4, 17, 30:18-20, 40:30, Lev. 1:9, 13, 6:27, 9:14.)

Hebrews 13:10-13 even mentions Christ's work in relation to the altar which was located to the east outside of the Temple where burnt offerings were burned and their ashes deposited (Lev. 4:12 and 6:11-13.) (For more information see the summary from Ernest L. Martin's book "Secrets of Golgatha" entitled "Secrets_Golgatha_review.")

It is incontestable that Christ fulfills and ends the ongoing sacrifices and offerings for sin and provides the sacrificial offering by which we can be consecrated to serve God as priests. However, it is also clear that the New Testament connects other forms of sacrifice and offerings to Christian service. For instance, the meat offering which is a type of thanksgiving is described in Lev. 2:1-3, 9, 12 and Lev. 6:14-23. In these passages we see that the meat offering is salted and made by fire to the Lord as a memorial and sweet savor and that it is made twice daily each morning (01242) and evening (06153) (Lev. 6:20). We find these ideas and phrases in the New Testament applied to Christians and not exclusively to Christ alone (see also Mark 9:49-50, Matt. 5:13, Luke 14:34, 2 Cor. 2:14-16, Philippians 4:18, Romans 12:1).

The existence of Old Testament priestly sacrifices and offerings which did not deal with atoning for sin along with New Testament language connecting Mosaic sacrifices with Christians in general invites us to inquire more specifically about the nature of Christian priestly service in the New Testament. As we do it will continue to be useful to familiarize ourselves with and review aspects of Levitical priestly service especially where they are cited in the New Testament. The daily offerings (particularly the incense offerings) are a good place to continue our examination.

Daily (Continual) Priestly Service (Intercession and Prayer) in the Old Testament and the End Times

Daniel 8 provides an account of the succession of political powers in Daniel's day and in the end times. It features the first depiction of an eschatological figure who stops the daily sacrifice. Later in Daniel 9 and 12 more information is given on these same events. The New Testament also discusses them in Jesus' Olivet Discourse, 2 Thessalonians, and Revelation. Here in Daniel 8:11, 12, 13, 11:31, and 12:11 the Hebrew word for "sacrifice" does not appear in the text. What does appear is the Hebrew word "tamiyd" (08548) meaning continual or perpetual,

which is the Old Testament means of referring to a particular kind of priestly and temple activity.

The word "tamiyd" is first used in Exodus where it refers to objects and actions which were to take place each day in the outer room of the tabernacle (and later the Temple building). Exodus 38:29-30 uses "tamiyd" to refer to Aaron's priestly duty of interceding for Israel before the Lord. Exodus 29:38-39 explains that two lambs were to be offered each day on the bronze altar, one in the morning and one in the evening. (Numbers 28 and 29 also use the term "tamiyd" to refer to the daily animal sacrifices at morning and evening.) Revelation 11 explains that this altar will not be in operation in the pre-millennial Temple. However, the golden altar of incense will be.

In Exodus 27:20-21, Moses instructs the children of Israel regarding the seven-branched lamp stand with seven candles or lamps (known as the menorah) which was to be placed in the outer room of the tabernacle (and later Temple) and which was to be continually ("tamiyd") burning before the Lord. Aaron and his sons were to attend to this lamp twice a day, at morning and at evening. As they did they were to burn incense on the golden incense altar which was in the outer room of the Temple (Ex. 30:8-9.) This offering of incense at morning and evening is referred to in Exodus 30:8 as the "tamiyd."

After Exodus 30:8, the next references to the "tamiyd" occur in Leviticus and Numbers. All of them refer to the daily placing of the holy bread, the maintaining of the candles, and especially the incense offering (Lev. 6:13, 20, 24:2, 3, 4, 8, Numbers 4:7, 16). Numbers also speaks of a "tamiyd" "burnt" (05930 "olah") offering of two lambs to accompany the "tamiyd" of incense at morning and evening (Numbers 28:3-10, 15, 23, 29:11, 16, 19, 22, 25, 28, 31, 34, and 38) along with a drink offering (05262). The same word "olah" ("burnt offering") is used to refer to pre-Levitical/Mosaic offerings including: Noah's offering in Genesis 8:20, Abraham's offering of Isaac in Genesis 22:2-13, and Jethro in Ex. 18:12. Revelation explains that the seven-branched lampstand represents and is closely associated with the seven angels which other books like 2 Chronicles, Zechariah, and 1 Peter indicate seek out and work with faithful saints and especially the two witnesses. Using the information presented in Daniel and Revelation we can see that it is this daily incense offering that is stopped in the middle of the final week of years.

It is important to note that Daniel 8 clearly has in view the evening and morning priestly activities. This is exhibited both by its reference to the "tamiyd" and by the fact that the length of the period covered in the vision is given in terms of evenings and mornings using the Hebrew words "boqer" (01242) and "ereb" (06153), which respectively mean morning and evening. This is contrasted to Daniel 9's use of "weeks" in relation to the sabbatical and jubilee cycles of years as well as Daniel 12's use of time, times, and half a time to refer to 3 1/2 years (half a week of years, 7 years) along with the designation of a half the week as 1290 days using the Hebrew word "yowm" (03117.)

Daniel 8 is pointing us towards the idea of the evening and morning activities at the Temple which will be stopped by the Antichrist. Given that Daniel and Revelation feature the Temple activities related to the evening and morning incense offering associated with prayer, intercessory activity, and priestly duty, it is incumbent on us to investigate more fully the idea of these subjects (prayer, intercessory activity, and priestly service) in the New Covenant established by Christ as they are discussed in the New Testament texts. As we do we must maintain awareness for the Old Testament contexts and related subjects we have been discussing above including: pre-Levitical and non-Levitical priesthood, prayer, intercessor work, and the morning and evening (“tamiyd”) Temple activities. Keeping in mind this Old Testament context will help ensure that we do not gloss over New Testament comments that may have been intended by their first-century Jewish authors to be connected with these Old Testament activities and concepts.

NT Priesthood and Priestly Service for Persons other than Christ

The New Testament establishes the existence of a post-Levitical priesthood and priestly service occupied and performed by Christ. The existence of the Temple and biblical concepts connected to the incense offering also show that in the end times some aspects of priestly service (especially intercessory prayer) will be performed by Christians in the years before Christ’s return. (See especially Matthew 11:17, where Jesus refers to the Temple saying, “My house shall be called of all nations the house of prayer.” Additional discussion of service in the premillennial Temple is provided in the first section of our Premillennial Temple Study.) These facts help establish that in the New Testament persons besides Christ are also expected to perform priestly service. These observations deserve further inquiry regarding the nature of the priestly role of Christians. A look through the New Testament provides insight into these questions.

First, the New Testament identifies Christians as priests. 1 Peter 2:5 and 9 state plainly that we are a holy priesthood (v. 5,) even a royal priesthood (v. 9) using the Greek word “hierateuma” (2406) which is used to refer to an office or order of priesthood. It is worth noting that in the second instance Peter identifies us as royal priests. According to Genesis 14:18 and Hebrews 7:1 and 2, Melchizedek was both priest and king. So too is Christ. And likewise, King David and his sons are allowed to perform priestly services and are called “cohen” (Hebrew for priest) in the Old Testament. (See section three above.) Like Peter, the Book of Revelation also references the royal nature of New Testament priesthood (Rev. 1:6, 5:10, and 20:6). In these verses saints living from the time of the New Testament to the end times are included among those who will serve as priests (20:6) and “kings and priests” (1:6 and 5:10) using the Greek noun “hierus” (2409.)

Peter and Revelation’s identification of us as both priests and kings indicate a connection to the Melchizedekian order (“taxis” 5010, Hebrews 5:6, 6:20, 7:11,

17, and 21). As Hebrews 7:11, 12, and 14 explains, after Christ the law which restricted priestly service to Levites was changed back to parameters allowing the priesthood (“hierosune” 2420) to be occupied by Jews from tribes besides Levi and even by non-Jews (as in the case of Melchizedek, Abel, and Gentile saints as mentioned by Peter and in Revelation.)

(We might also keep in mind that in the Old Testament one of the functions of the Israelite priesthood was to serve as intercessors to the nations before God. It is thought that it is in this respect that the 70 sacrifices were made during the 7-day feast of tabernacles, Numbers 29:12-38. Within this concept of intercession for the nations, each of the 70 animal sacrifices is made for one of the 70 Gentile nations listed in Genesis 10. If this was one of the aspects of the priesthood of Israel which is carried over to New Covenant believers then it implies also that New Covenant believers will continue in this intercessory role.)

Closely related to Peter’s use of “hierateuma” is the Greek noun “hierateia” (2405), which is used in Hebrews 7:5 to refer to the Levitical priesthood when comparing it to the order of Melchizedek. Both words (2405 and 2406) are derived from the same verb “hierateuo” (2407) which refers to carrying out the priestly office, duties, and services. This verb (2407) comes from a prolonged form of the Greek noun “hierus” (2409) which simply means priest. In its first 15 appearances in the NT, “hierus” (2409) is used to refer to Levitical priests (Matt. 8:4, 12:4, Mark 12:5, etc.). However, Hebrews 5:6, 7:1, 3, 11, 15, 17, and 21 use it to refer to the pre- and post-Levitical priestly order occupied by both Melchizedek and Christ. The same chapters use “hierus” (2409) to also refer to the Levitical priests (Hebrews 7:21, 23, 8:4, 9:6, and 10:11).

We can see then that the New Testament includes Jewish and Gentile followers of Christ as priests in the same non-Levitical, royal order of priests typified by Melchizedek. What specific expectations and instructions does the New Testament provide then concerning our priestly service?

In Romans 12:1 Paul refers to our priestly service of presenting our bodies (4983, soma) as a living sacrifice holy and acceptable to God. The word for sacrifice is “thusia” (2378). Likewise the word for “service” is “latreia” (2999) which refers to priestly service as carried out by the Levitical priests in the Old Testament. Several other statements of Paul’s in Romans also relate to the idea of presenting our bodies as the sacrifices of slain animals. Romans 6:6 states that our old man is crucified with Christ that the body (“soma” 4983) of sin might be destroyed. (Romans 6:12 echoes this same thought. Likewise, Romans 7:14 states that we are dead to the law.) Romans 8:10 states that if Christ is in us then the body (4983) is dead. And finally, Romans 8:13 instructs us to put to death (2289, “thanatoo”) the deeds of the flesh (4561, “sarx.”) These verses seem related to Paul’s concept of presenting our bodies (4983) before God as a sacrifice. Through faith in Christ we put to death the old man and the sinful desires of the flesh. In this way, our bodies (dead to carnal desires) parallel the slain animals presented before God. Similar ideas are present in Paul’s remarks in Galatians 5:24, 2 Cor. 4:10, Col. 2:11, and perhaps 1 Peter 3:18 (with 1 Peter 4:2 and 6). 2 Corinthians 4:10 speaks of our

bodies bearing the death of the Lord Jesus. Colossians 2:11 speaks of putting off the body (4983) of sins of the flesh (4561) and being buried with Christ.

The root word “latreia” (2999) is derived from the verb “latreuo” (3000.) Hebrews 9:9 and 10:2 use “latreuo” (3000) to refer to those who engaged in these priestly services under the Law of Moses. In this context, Hebrews 9:14 states that the blood of Christ has purged our conscience from dead works so that we may serve (“latreuo” 3000) the living God. Similarly, Acts 26:7 uses “latreuo” (3000) to refer to Israel’s service to God day (2250) and night (3571) in what is likely a reference to their daily “tamiyd” offerings at evening and morning. We can see that “latreuo” (3000) speaks of priestly service toward God and that Hebrews 9:14 applies this term to those of us who are New Covenant believers.

It is important then that the same word (“latreuo”) is used Revelation 7:15 to speak of those who serve God day (2250) and night (3571) in his temple (3485, naos) during the millennium. From this we see that like Romans 12:1, Revelation 7 provides support that Christians have some act of priestly service to perform. Revelation 7 discusses priestly service in the millennium. But in Romans 12:1, Paul discusses Christian priestly service in the pre-millennial era.

Furthermore, Hebrews 12:28 indicates that we should serve God “acceptably” using the Greek adverb “euarestos” (2102) which appears only once in the NT, but which comes from the adjective “euarestos” (2101). The adjective form is the same word Paul uses in Romans 12:1 to refer to our bodies being presented to God as “acceptable.” In a moment we will mention other uses of this adjective (2101) and its likely meaning in the context of priestly service. For now we can see that Paul is invoking the idea that in the New Covenant we present ourselves before God as a pleasing sacrifice in the same way that sacrifices were made before God in the old covenant. According to Paul’s usage, the animal sacrifice is replaced by our presentation of ourselves before God.

In Philippians 2:17 and 2 Timothy 4:6 Paul uses the Greek word “spendo” (4689) to refer to being offered as a drink offering. In Philippians he refers to being poured out upon the sacrifice and service of the faith of the Philippians. There he uses the same word for sacrifice along with the Greek word “leitourgia” (3009) which is used to refer to priestly service in the bible. Here, Paul seems to relate drink offerings to the idea of dying after a life of faithful service to Christ. While Paul’s application of drink offerings to himself doesn’t necessarily provide specifics for how Christians can perform priestly service during their daily lives, it does provide some indication that aspects of Levitical service and offerings were transferred to Christians in the New Testament.

The word “leitourgia” (3009) which Paul uses in Phil. 2:17 is also used in Luke 1:23 to refer to John the Baptist’s father Zacharias’ performing the “tamiyd” offering in the Temple. (See Luke 1:5-23.) In that passage Zacharias is called priest using the Greek word “hierus” (2409). The text stipulates that Zacharias was of the course of Abia (7) which refers to the 24 classes of priests who took rotational turns serving in the Temple. 1 Chronicles 23:8, 1 Chron. 24, 1

Chronicles 9:22, 2 Chronicles 5:11 and 1 Kings 11:5 explain that King David divided the priests into these 24 segments. Likewise, Ezra 2:36-39 explains how they were reinstated after the Jews returned from exile in Babylon and rebuilt the Temple. The Book of Revelation indicates that there is a heavenly parallel of 24 elders who serve before God in heaven and who likewise offer incense (2368, *thumiama*) which are the prayers (4335, *proseuche*) of the saints (Rev. 4:4, 10, 5:14, 11:16, 19:4 and esp. 5:8).

The word translated as “course” in Luke 1:5 is “ephemera” (2183.) It occurs only twice in the New Testament (Luke 1:5 and 1:8). It comes from the Greek adjective “ephemeros” (2184) which is a compound word formed from the Greek preposition “epi” (1909) and the Greek word for “day” (2250, *hemera*). This adjective (2184) appears only once in the New Testament (James 2:15) where (as its root words indicate) it means “daily.” The use of this word in Luke 1:5 and 8 makes sense because the “courses” David appointed were established to assign the order in which groups of priests would perform the daily “tamiyd” offerings in the Temple.

It is worth noting that Luke 1:8 describes Zacharias as executing the priest’s office before God. The Greek word for “executing the priest’s office” is “hierateuo” (2407). Luke 1:8-9 is, therefore, specifically identifying this “executing of the priest’s office” as burning incense in the Temple. The Greek word for “burning incense” is “thumiao” (2370) which appears only once in the New Testament.

The next verse, Luke 1:10, states that at the time of the “tamiyd” incense offering the people prayed to God. The word incense is translated from “thumiama” (2368) which comes from “thumia” (2370). According to Luke 1:11 as Zacharias offered the daily “tamiyd” incense, the angel Gabriel (v.19) appeared beside the altar of incense. The word translated as altar is “thusiasterion” (2379) and again the word translated as incense is “thumiama” (2368). In verse 13, Gabriel explains that Zacharias’ prayers have been heard. The word translated as prayers is “deesis” (1162) it can refer to requests in general to men or to God typically of a more personal nature. It is contrasted somewhat to “proseuche” (4335) which is used to refer to prayers to God only and requests of a more sacred character. The lexical entry for comparing synonymous Greek words for prayer states the following regarding 4335 and 1162, which are the most common words for prayer (and supplication) used in the New Testament. (The first word, 1162, is used 19 times. Its verbal root 1189 appears 22 times. On the other hand, 4335 is used 37 times. Its verbal root 4336, 87 times. Other words for prayer, praying, intercession, thanking, and asking total at around 37 uses in regards to prayerful activities.)

(For reference, here is the lexical information regarding Greek synonyms for prayer. From entry 5883: προσευχη and δεησις are often used together. προσευχη is restricted to prayer to God, while δεησις has no such restriction. δεησις also refers chiefly to prayer for particular benefits, while προσευχη is more general. From entry 5828: 1162 is petitionary, 4335 is a word of sacred character, being

limited to prayer to God, whereas 1162 may also be used of a request addressed to man. 1783 expresses confiding access to God, 1162 gives prominence to the expression of personal need, 4335 to the element of devotion, and 1783 to that of childlike confidence, by representing prayer as the heart's conversion with God.)

As we continue, we note that the altar (2379) of incense (2368) mentioned in Luke 1 (and which was inside the Temple) is also mentioned in Rev. 8:3-5. Revelation 8:3-5 refer to the incense altar in the heavenly temple and the offering up of the incense with the prayers (4335) of the saints. This passage also mentions a golden censer which parallels the one used in the Mosaic covenant to offer incense before the Lord as Aaron entered the holy of holies on the Day of Atonement each year (Hebrews 9:4). Likewise, Revelation 11:1-2 describe the incense altar within the Temple building itself (3485, "naos") in the premillennial, earthly Temple. Therefore, we can see further information that, in the end times, Christians will be involved in prayerful intercession at the Temple in correspondence with the daily incense offering (just as Revelation and Daniel describe).

Further information on New Testament priestly service comes from 2 Corinthians 9:12 which refers to financial support given by the Corinthians church to other Christians using the same Greek word "leitourgia" (3009) that is used in Luke 1:23 to refer to John the Baptist's father Zacharias' performing the "tamiyd" offering in the Temple. In this way, we can see that Christians sharing with one another may parallel the gift offerings or other types of offerings from the Law of Moses in which the priests were allowed to take a portion from the offerings at the altar.

Likewise, Hebrews 8:6 uses "leitourgia" (3009) to refer to Jesus minister as a priest in the New Covenant. Hebrews 9:21 uses it to refer to all the various instruments that were used for service in the tabernacle at the time of the Exodus. We can see then that "leitouria" (3009) is used to refer to Levitical priestly service. But it is also used in the New Testament to refer to Christian acts of priestly service. An example of this is found in Philippians 2:17 where Paul uses this same Greek word "leitourgia" (3009) to speak of offering himself upon the sacrifice and service of the Philippians' faith.

"Leitourgia" (3009) comes from the verb "leitourgeo" (3008) which is used in Acts 13:2 to refer to Paul, Barnabas, and others ministering (3008) to the Lord and fasting. This verb (3008) is used in Hebrews 10:11 to refer to the daily ministering (3008) performed by the priests under the Law of Moses. Again, "daily" is translated from the Greek words "kata" (2596) and "hemera" (2250) meaning that which is done each day. The lexicon explains that when these two Greek words are joined together they mean "daily." In 2 Cor. 11:28, Paul speaks of how he daily (2596 and 2250) worked to care for all the churches.

Similar to 2 Corinthians 9:12, Philippians 4:18 refers to the material support received from another church. In this case the Philippians were providing support to Paul. In verse 18, Paul refers to their support as a sweet smell and sacrifice

again using the Greek word for sacrifice (2378, “thusia”) that he uses in Romans 12:1. Here in Philippians 4:18 we see Paul again using the word “eaurestos” (2101) to refer to priestly service of New Testament saints.

The reference to “acceptable” and “well-pleasing” offerings to God reflects requirements in the Law of Moses. Specifically, in Philippians 4:18, Paul refers to the “sacrifices” given by the Philippians as “sweet smelling” (“euodia” 2175). He uses this same word in 2 Cor. 2:15 to say that those of us who are in Christ are a “sweet savour” (2175) unto God. Likewise, in Eph. 5:2, Paul refers to Christ himself as a sweet-smelling offering and sacrifice. These references to sweet-smelling sacrifices and offerings invoke Mosaic instructions about sacrifices and offerings including Ex. 29:38-41 which speak of the “tamiyd” “burnt” offerings of the two lambs at evening and morning as sweet smelling savor made by fire to the Lord. (For references to non-“tamiyd” offerings which were a sweet savor to the Lord see Ex. 29:18, 25, Lev. 1:9, 13, 2:9, etc.) Likewise, the “tamiyd” incense offering was a sweet smelling savor (Ex. 25:6, 30:7, 31:11, 35:8, 15, 28, 29, 40:27, Lev. 4:7, 16:12, and Numbers 4:16). These references also call to mind the events of Aaron’s sons Nadab and Abihu who were killed for offering strange fire before the Lord (Lev. 10:1, Numbers 3:4, 26:61) in violation of God’s requirements for the “tamiyd” incense offering (Ex. 30:7-9) that the priests were to make each morning and evening. Similarly, in Romans 15:16, Paul speaks of his endeavor that the offering of the Gentiles might be acceptable.

We can see that in these passages Paul is invoking the idea of priestly sacrifices and offerings that were made under the Law of Moses and applying them in some way to Christians in the New Testament. Further evidence of this connection is seen by the use of these same words to refer to both Levitical and non-Levitical priestly service in the Old Testament and New Testament.

For instance, the same word for sacrifice (“thusia” 2378) is used in Hebrews 11:4 to refer to Abel’s offering by which Abel witnessed (3140) that he was righteous and God also testified (3140) of Abel’s gifts (1435, doron). The word translated as offering is “phosphero” (4374), which is used Hebrews 11:4 to refer to gifts brought to the altar (Matt. 5:23-24) and the requirement for healed lepers in the Law of Moses (Matt. 8:4, Mark 1:44, Luke 5:14).

refers to the sacrifices (2378) and slain beasts (4968) which Israel offered (4374) to God during the forty years in the wilderness. Acts 21:26 and 24:17 refer to the offerings (4376, phosphora, a noun derived from the related Greek verb 4374). Here, Paul and his associates made offerings at the temple. Hebrews 5:1, 8:3-4, 9:7, 9, 10:2, 8, refer to the gifts (doron, 1435) and sacrifices (2378) offered (4374) by the high priest in his priestly service (3000, latreuo) according to the law (8:4). Hebrews 5:3 refers to offerings (4374) the high priest made for his own sins. Hebrews 5:5-7 explains that Christ offered up (4374) prayers (1162) and supplications (2428). (The Greek word 1162, “deesis” conveys the idea of entreating and requesting God for needs. Likewise, “hiketeria,” 2428, is used only once in the New Testament.) Hebrews 8:3, 9:14, 9:25, 28, and 10:10 likewise speak of Christ’s offering (4374) his own body (10:10, soma, 4983) and blood to God which he brought into the heavenly temple. (In Hebrews 10:10 the word for

offering is the Greek noun “phosphora,” 4376.) Hebrews 10:5 and 8 refer to Christ’s body in contrast to the sacrifices (2378) and offerings (4376) of the Law of Moses. Hebrews 10:11-12 refers to work which the Old Testament priests ministered (3008, leitourgeo) and sacrifices (4374) they offered (4374) each day (“kata hemera” 2596 and 2250) and contrasts this with Christ who only one time offered (4374) a sacrifice for sins.

Hebrews 10:14 speaks similarly of Christ’s work as one offering (4376) which has perfected them that are sanctified by it. The idea here seems reminiscent of Old Testament burnt offerings by which a priest became consecrated and set apart for priestly service which is what the Greek word “hagiazō” (37 translated as “sanctified”) typically refers to. (Hebrews 10:18 states that where there is remission, there is no more offering (4376) for sin. Hebrews 11:17 and James 2:21 speak of Abraham’s offering up (4374) of Isaac upon the altar (2379, thusiasterion, James 2:21). Hebrews 13:15 instructs us to offer (399, anaphero) a sacrifice (2378) of praise (133, ainesis, used only one time in the New Testament). The Greek word “anaphero” (“offer”) is also used in Hebrews 7:27 to refer to the sacrifices (2378) offered up by the high priests for their own sins and that of the people. 1 Peter 2:5, likewise, instructs us to offer up (399) spiritual sacrifices (2378) to God by Jesus Christ. The same word for altar (“thusiasterion, 2379) which we see in many of these references to the incense and sacrificial altars of the tabernacle and Temple is also used in Hebrews 13:10 to speak of the altar that Christians can eat at which the Levitical priests had no right to (by virtue of their appointment by the Law of Moses only).

Compared to Hebrews 11:4’s mention of Abel it is worth noting that Revelation 6:9 places the souls of those who have been slain (4969, sphazo) for the testimony (3141) which they held. The word for slain is used to refer to Abel being slain by Cain in 1 John 3:12 and to speak of Jesus’ sacrificial death in Rev. 5:6, 9, 12 and 13:8. It is used again in Rev. 18:24 to refer to the prophets and saints and all slain on the earth. (The derived word “sphagion” 4968 is used in Acts 7:42 to refer to animals slain by Israel before God in the wilderness. So is the related word “sphage” 4967 which is used in Acts 8:32 to speak of Christ being led as a sheep to the slaughter (4967.) A parallel use also occurs in Romans 8:36.)

From these comparisons we see that animal sacrifices are in view when these related words are used. As with Paul’s reference to drink offerings the use of these words in these New Testament conveys the idea that a Christian’s death is related somehow to non-expiatory offerings (offerings and sacrifices that don’t relate to atoning for sins). Additionally, the blood of the righteous who are slain cries out to God for vengeance (Genesis 4:10, Hebrews 11:4, 12:24) and in Jesus’ case also provides redemption. This metaphor is reflected in Revelation 6:9-10 in which the saints who have been slain cry out for vengeance as well as Revelation 18:18:20, 19:2 where vengeance is taken on those who are responsible for shedding the blood of the saint and those slain on the earth. (For more information on the application of terms related to animal sacrifices in the New Testament see our paper entitled “Slain and Killed.”)

As we can see the New Testament clearly and repeatedly applies words associated with Levitical priestly service to Christians in the New Testament. This shows that in the New Covenant Christians did service, at least metaphorically, in ways that parallel Levitical priestly service. More specific applications of priestly service are also made in the New Testament, chief among them is the idea of daily prayer and intercession. We will turn to this subject as we continue in this section of our study.

The New Testament Establishment of the Daily (“Tamiyd”) Offering of Prayer at Morning and Evening

Several additional and insightful observations are generated from the details of the description of the saints in Rev. 6:9, which relate to the central question of our study. That question is: what specific priestly acts does the New Testament expect of Christians?

First, the location of these saints by the altar in heaven coupled with their having been slain (as Christ and Abel) indicates a relation to the New Testament application of priestly work and offerings. Second, and perhaps more significantly, these saints cry out to God for vengeance.

Revelation 8:1-5 speak of the seven angels which stand before God. These angels are also near that heavenly altar. Likewise, these verses also mention another angel by that altar who offers incense up with the prayers of the saints before God’s throne. The angel fills the censer with fire from the altar and casts it to the earth. The saints crying out (2896, krazo) for vengeance (1556, ekdikeo) in Rev. 6:9-11 connects to both Rev. 8:3-5 and 18:24’s remarks about the judgment of the harlot for the blood of the saints and those slain on the earth. And it parallels Jesus’ parable of the woman who cried out to the judge for vengeance (1556, ekdikeo) (Luke 18:1-8).

Of significant interest to our study is that Luke 18:1 explicitly states that Jesus’ purpose here is to instruct his followers that they ought always (3842) pray (4336) and that they are not to give up when they pray. Jesus concludes by explaining that God will avenge (1557, ekdikesis) his elect when they cry (994, “boao”) day (2250) and night (3571) unto him.

The Greek verbs “krazo” (2896) and “boao” (994) are listed as synonyms of one another by Greek lexicons (5823). Since Jesus’ parable is directly tied to Rev. 6:9-11 both conceptually and linguistically, there is little reason to doubt that the two were intended to be connected to one another.

We must also note the interplay between Luke 18:1’s statement about praying always (3842) and verse 7’s reference to crying out day and night. Here we see the interchangeability of prayer and crying out which also occurs in Rev. 6:9-11 and 8:3-5. More importantly, we also see reflections of the “tamiyd” incense

offerings which are also featured in Rev. 11:2-3 (and 8:3-5.) As we recall, “tamiyd” means “continual” or “perpetual” and refers to offerings made in the morning and evening. This perfectly parallels Jesus’ discussion of praying “always” and crying out day and night. (We should also note that like Rev. 8:3-5’s relation of the incense offering to the prayers of the saints, Rev. 5:8 also connects the odors offered up before the Lamb by the heavenly elders with the prayers of the saints. Therefore, we again see that the incense offering is featured in Revelation, 5:8, 6:9-11 together with Luke 18:1-8 and Rev. 8:2-5.)

The significance of Luke 18 is paramount to our study of priestly service in the New Testament. Here Jesus is instructing his followers about prayer. He invokes two references to the “tamiyd” offerings of the Law of Moses. First, he makes reference to “always” or “perpetual” which is the meaning of “tamiyd.” Second, we have the interchangeability of “praying always” to praying “day and night” which is when the “tamiyd” offerings were made each day. In the context of first-century Judaism, Jesus is establishing the connection between prayer and the “tamiyd” offering (which we will later see in more explicit detail in Revelation). More specifically, he is instructing his followers to pray every day at morning and evening in accordance with the priestly practice of the “tamiyd” offering.

As we study the New Testament teaching on prayer we find confirmation of the conclusions derived from our study of Luke 18 and passages from the Book of Revelation.

Luke 18: 1 uses the Greek verb “proseuchomai” (4336) to refer to prayer. The Greek noun for prayer is “proseuche” (4335) comes from the verb form (4336). The noun (“proseuche” 4335) is used 37 times in the New Testament and seems to be particularly associated with Temple activities (Matt. 21:13, Mark 11:17, Luke 19:46, Rev. 5:8, 8:3, 8:5).

“Proseuche” is also used to refer to Jesus’ prayers to God (Luke 6:12, 22:45) and to refer to fasting and prayer which are useful for exercising demons (Matt. 17:21, Mark 9:29.) It is used in Acts 1:14, 2:42, Acts 3:1, Acts 6:4 to refer to the apostles’ prayers and in Acts 10:31 to refer to Cornelius’ prayer.

We must also note that there are around 20 passages in the New Testament which speak of praying daily, unceasing, or constant prayer. (See Luke 2:37, 18:1, 21:37, Acts 1:14, 2:42, 10:2, 12:5, Rom. 1:9, 12:12, Eph. 1:16, 6:18, Col. 1:3, 4:2, 12, 1 Thess. 1:2, 3:10, 5:17, 2 Thess. 1:11, 1 Tim. 5:5, Phil. 1:4, and Phm. 1:4.) Given that the “tamiyd” offerings were daily offerings made at evening and at morning which were identified as “continual” or “daily” and that the New Testament connects the “tamiyd” incense offering to prayer, we are led to conclude that New Testament references to praying daily, continually, or always are invocations of Jesus’ institution of praying daily at morning and evening in Luke 18.

It is in accordance with this conclusion that Acts 2:42 and 46 declares that the church daily was in prayer and at the temple. Also connected to this is Acts 3:1’s

report that Peter and John went to the Temple at the time of the evening prayer (which was the ninth hour.) In Acts 6:4, the apostles declare that they will give themselves continually to prayer.

Moreover, earlier we saw the coupling of the Greek words “kata” (2596) and “hemera” (2250) to mean “daily.” Acts 2:46 indicates that the early church continued daily (2596 and 2250) in the temple and in breaking bread. (“Breaking bread” is a reference to the communal meal which paralleled the Passover sacrifice.)

As such, Acts 2:46 may well refer to daily intercessory prayers in accordance with the “tamiyd” offerings of the priests at morning and evening (which Hebrews 10:11 refers to also using “kata” plus “hemera”). Notice also that Acts 2:46 pairs continuing daily in the Temple with the communion meal. Both activities seem to involve priestly rituals from the Law of Moses which Jesus enjoined on his followers: the communal meal modeled after Passover and the daily “tamiyd” offering at the Temple.

Additionally, Jesus’ instructions for “agreement” in regard to asking and receiving in Matt. 18:19-20 seem to relate to these descriptions early in Acts. Matt. 18:1-22 is connected to several other passages in the New Testament in which Jesus discusses prayer (asking and receiving). In both Matt. 18 and John 15, Jesus discusses asking and receiving after discussing cutting off parts of the body (or branches from a vine) that sin. John 16:24 speaks of asking in Jesus’ name and receiving the Holy Spirit. In Matt. 7:7-11 and Luke 11:9-13 Jesus also instructs his followers about asking and receiving in relation to receiving the Holy Spirit.

In Matt. 18:19’s account of Jesus providing instructions on prayer (asking and receiving), Jesus requires that his disciples’ prayers (asking) are based on agreement between them regarding what they ask for. The word translated as “agree” is “sumphoneo” (4856). It is formed from the Greek preposition “sum” (4862) coupled with the Greek word “phone” (5456) meaning “sound” or “voice.” The meaning of “sumphoneo” (4856) in Matt. 18:19, therefore, is with “one voice.” As we consider that the New Testament church understood these verses on prayer to relate to one another and to institute a daily prayer at evening and morning, we should be aware of connections between this passage and other New Testament statements.

In accordance with Jesus instructions in Matt. 18, Acts 1:14 records that immediately after Jesus’ ascension, the apostles and disciples “continue with one accord in prayer and supplication.” Here we have the two most common Greek words for prayer (4335 “proseuche” and “deesis” 1162) connected with the concept of continuousness (“proskartereo” 4342) and being “with one accord.” The word translated as being “with one accord” is “homothumadon” (3661). It means “to have the same mind.” So, in Matt. 18:19 we see Jesus telling his disciples to ask (or pray) in agreement with one another and here in Acts 1:14 the disciples are praying in one accord.

Other passages where Jesus instructs his disciples to pray, also invoke the idea of praying continually or always and doing so at evening and morning. As we continue into the Book of Acts we can see the phrase “with one accord” (using the same Greek word used in Acts 1:14) is also used in Acts 2:1 regarding events on the Day of Pentecost. Though Acts 2:1 does not state that the disciples were praying at this time, it is possible that the proximity of this verse to Acts 1:14 implies that we are to connect their praying in one accord in Acts 1:14 with their being in one accord in Acts 2:1. The conclusion such a connection implies is that like in Acts 1, the disciples were gathered together in one place (compare to Matt. 18:20) and praying continually. It is important to note that, according to Acts 2:15, this must have begun fairly early in the day since the outpouring of the Holy Spirit occurred at around the third hour of the day (which is around 9 am in the morning).

With this in mind it is possible to consider that the disciples were praying at the time of the morning “tamiyd” offering just as Jesus seems to have instructed them and that it was in this manner that they received the Holy Spirit just as Jesus had indicated in passages like Matt. 7:7-11, Luke 11:9-13, and John 16:24.

This same phrase “with one accord” (3661) occurs again at the end of Acts 2 in verse 46 where we are told that the disciples “continued daily with one accord in the Temple” and “breaking bread from house to house.” Acts 2:46 is directly parallel to Acts 2:42 where we are told that the disciples “continued stedfastly in the apostles’ doctrine and fellowship and in breaking bread and in prayers.” Notice that here we have the breaking of bread mentioned alongside of prayers whereas in verse 46 we have the breaking of bread alongside “continuing daily with one accord in the Temple.” Here the phrase “with one accord” may very well be used by Luke to convey praying together. If this is the case, then it seems that being continually in the Temple in one accord is equivalent to being continually in prayer.

Both concepts are conjoined linguistically by Luke and conceptually by Luke and the other gospel authors in relation to Jesus’ teaching on prayer. The result is that alongside the communion meal which was modeled on the Passover we have paired a daily morning and evening prayer offering being made at the Temple (and also in houses, such as occurred in Acts 1 and 2). Acts 4:24 confirms these observations by stating that the disciples were gathered together (v. 31 in conformity to Matt. 18:20) lifted up their voice (note the single voice, 5456 “phone,” which relates to Matt. 18:19’s “sumphoneo”) with one accord (3661) in prayer (v. 31) to God. As in Acts 1:14, the result is the outpouring of the Holy Spirit (v. 31). Likewise, Acts 5:12 indicates that the disciples were “with one accord” (3661) in the portion of the Temple known as Solomon’s porch again at least implying that they customarily prayed at the Temple at regular times in conformity to Jesus’ teaching on prayer. (See Romans 15:5-7 for an example of Paul making similar connections to Acts and Jesus’ teachings on these subjects.)

Such references leave little room to doubt that the apostles understood daily prayer in accordance with the morning and evening Temple offerings to be part of the New Covenant as it was established by Jesus.

In relation to this we can see the connected statements in Acts 10:1-2 which report that Cornelius prayed (1189, “deomai”) to God always. Like the apostles (and Daniel in Daniel 9 and Zacharias in Luke 1), Acts 10:3 and 30 report that at the time of the evening prayers (the ninth hour), an angel came to Cornelius in a vision saying his prayers had “come up” (305 “anabaino”) before (1799, “enopion”) God as a memorial (3422, “mnemosunon”).

This phrasing parallels Rev. 8:3-5 very closely where the prayers of the saints ascend up (305) before (1799) God as the angel offers incense from the golden incense altar. This in turn connects with Rev. 6:9-11 where the saints cry out to God for vengeance on those who persecuted and killed them. Likewise, the same parallels are present in Rev. 18:5 where God remembers (3421) the iniquities of the Babylonian harlot who is responsible for the blood of the saints (18:24). The word remembered in Rev. 18:5 is “mnemoneuo” (3421) from which we get the word “mnemosunon” (3422) which is used in Acts 10:3 to speak of Cornelius’ prayers being remembered by God and answered. “Mnemoneuo” (3421) is traced through the noun “mneme” (3420) which comes from the verb “mimnesko” (3404). This verb (3404) comes from the verb “mnaomai” (3415) which is used in Acts 10:31 to again refer to Cornelius’ prayers (4335) being in remembrance (3415) before (1799) God. And it is used Rev. 16:19 to refer to the sins of the Babylonian harlot coming up before (1799) God. Rev. 18:20-21 together with these related verses in Rev. 6:9-11 as well as 18:24 indicate that the Babylonian harlot is destroyed in response to the saints’ prayers for vengeance.

From Cornelius in the first century to the saints and martyrs of the end times, we can see that God is responsive even to Gentiles who pray in accordance with this “continual” evening and morning offering. Further connections regarding God’s responsiveness to priestly service (even when offered by faithful Gentiles) are visible through the New Testament’s references to Elijah and the role of prayer as exhibited in various Old Testament patriarchs and prophets acting in priestly roles.

We should also consider the Septuagint’s use of these important Greek words that are used in the New Testament texts we’ve been examining regarding prayer. The Greek verb for praying (“proseuchomai,” 4336) first appears in the Septuagint in the first instance of prayer in the Old Testament (Genesis 20:7, 17). This passage records God speaking of Abraham as a prophet and God referring to Abraham’s prayers. The Hebrew word for prayer “palal” (06419) is commonly translated by “proseuchomai” (4336) in the Septuagint. Other illustrative uses of these Hebrew and Greek verbs for “praying” occur in reference to Moses’ prayers to God as well as those of Samuel, especially when these men they pray for their people. 1 Sam. 12:23 even refers to the idea of Samuel praying continually. 2 Sam. 7:27, 1 Kings 8:29-30, 33, 35, 42, 44, 48, 54, 1 Chron. 17:25, 2 Chron. 6:19, 20, 21, 24, 26 (etc.) and 2 Chron. 7:1 (and throughout the chapter) use these same Greek

(Septuagint) and Hebrew words to refer to the Temple as a house of prayer (just as Matt. 21:13, Mark 11:17, Luke 19:46). 1 Kings 8:35 even mentions praying so that there would be rain when rain is withheld because of the sin of the people. All of these texts exhibit the clear relationship between prayer and priestly service. This brings us to the case of Elijah.

In James 5:17, the apostle James refers to Elijah's prayers (4335) that shut up the rain. As we have seen, Rev. 5:8, 8:3, 8:4 to refer to the prayers of the saints that go up before God's throne in heaven. (These two Greek words for prayer are used to translate the Hebrew when referring to Elijah's prayers in 2 Kings 6:18. They are also used of Nehemiah's prayers in Neh. 1:4, 6, 2:4, 4:9.)

It is also worth noting that the Septuagint's first uses the noun (433, "proseuche") in 2 Chron. 6:29 and 7:15 to refer to prayer from the Temple which God will hear. Related to this is 2 Chron. 30:27 where "proseuche" is used to refer to the prayer of the priests from the Temple which God heard in heaven. Jonah 2:7 uses the Greek noun similarly to refer to prayer in the Temple. It is also used in Daniel 9:21 (with the Hebrew verb 06419 and Greek verb 4336 also appearing in 9:4 and 20) and to speak of Manasseh's prayer which God heard (2 Chron. 33:18).

It is within this context that we must view the activities of the two witnesses who are involved in the building of the temple and its incense altar as well as shutting up the heavens (Rev. 11:1-6) after the manner of Elijah who James states as praying fervently. The implication is that the two witnesses like Elijah are involved in prayerful intercession.

Romans 11:2 likewise speaks of Elijah making intercession (1793, "entugchano") using the same word for intercession as is used of the Holy Spirit and Christ's intercessory work as high priest before God (Romans 8:27, 34, Hebrews 7:25). Both Elijah and the two witnesses are said to "stand by the Lord" a phrase which we have seen originates in the Old Testament in reference to priestly service and intercession. In addition, 1 Tim. 2:1 uses the related noun "enteuxis" (1783, which comes from 1793) to instruct Timothy to make supplications (1162), prayers (4335), intercessions (1783), and thanksgiving (2169, "eucharistia" meaning giving thanks) for all men.

Clearly, these passages inform us that first-century Christians (like Peter, John, Timothy, and Cornelius) and end-times Christians (like the two witnesses) will be involved in prayerful and priestly intercession related to the morning and evening "tamiyd" offerings of incense at the Temple.

Intercessory Prayer as a "Daily" (Morning and Evening) Offering Made By New Testament Priests

As priests consecrated to service by Christ we must ask what specifically the New Testament indicates that our priestly service entails. The material we have

covered so far demonstrates that our priestly service involves our regular participation in the adaptation of Passover in the communal meal. Beyond that, but in some cases paired with it, we have seen a repeated emphasis on the New Testament practice and command to pray continually or always. Within the historical and biblical context of first century Israel reference to “continually” cannot simply be taken to mean whenever and often. Rather, the required daily offerings of Israel which were offered at morning and evening were called the “tamiyd” or continual offerings.

New Testament instructions and accounts of Christians praying daily must not be divorced from this concept especially considering that such references are connected to and interchangeable with prayer in the morning and evening (day and night). We have seen such references in Acts 2:42, 46, 3:1, 10:1-3, 31, Luke 2:37, Luke 18:7 with Rev. 6:9-11, 1 Thess. 3:10, 1 Timothy 5:5, 2 Tim. 1:3, Rev. 4:8 with 5:8 and 7:15. (Note also that it is very possible that Jesus’ own routine involved praying at morning and evening. See Mark 1:35 and Matt. 14:23.)

Likewise, we know that in the final years before Christ’s return the Temple building itself with its incense altar will be rebuilt, but the court of the priests and the altar for the burnt offerings will not be rebuilt. Revelation and Daniel both emphasize the “tamiyd” offerings and incense in the last years before Christ’s return. Language surrounding the two witnesses in relation to Elijah, to Joshua and Zerubbabel, to the martyred saints under the altar in Rev. 6:9-11 (Luke 18:7) who cry for vengeance day and night, to Zacharias in Luke 1, to Cornelius (in Acts 10 along with Rev. 8:3-5) indicate that there will be daily incense offerings accompanying intercessory prayer in the final years of this age. We should also note that the language and parallels between Revelation 6:9-11 and Revelation 11 (including being put death for the testimony) provide good reason to understand that the two witnesses (Revelation 11) are the final members of the group of martyrs discussed in Revelation 6.

We have then ample evidence that the first century, New Testament church and the end-times church engage in daily prayer and intercessory activities as a part of their priestly duties in the New Covenant in the morning and the evening. There is little reason to doubt that Christians in the period in between the first century and the end times are instructed and intended to maintain this priestly service. And we have seen that while the incense altar associated with our prayers is actively featured in passages in Revelation, the altar of animal sacrifice is specifically not rebuilt or active in the premillennial Temple. This indicates that in contrast to priestly prayer, the sacrifice of animals is not included in our priestly service prior to Christ’s return. With these issues addressed, the only major remaining question is the nature of our priestly prayers and intercessions.

In the New Testament we have several passages which provide descriptions of what our prayers should be like. In the context of the biblical practice of priestly service, it becomes clear that these New Testament instructions focus more on intercessory rather than personal prayer. Of course, personal prayer (at any time of day) is a part of our Christian life and relationship with God. But, we cannot

leave out the importance of daily intercessory prayer in the mornings and evenings.

1 Timothy 2:1-2 provides a great example of New Testament instruction for intercessory rather than personal prayer. Notice that 1 Tim. 2:1 instructs Christians to do the same things Hebrews 5:7 states Jesus did. Note also that Hebrews 5:7 refers to Jesus praying with “crying” using the Greek noun “krauge” (2906) which comes from the Greek verb “krazo” (2896). This is the same word that is used in Rev. 6:10 to refer to the prayers offered by the saints under the altar and in Rev. 10:3 to refer to the angel who speaks to the seven thunders.

1 Timothy 2:1 I exhort therefore, that, first of all, supplications (1162), prayers (4335), intercessions (1783), and giving of thanks (2169), be made for all men; 2 For kings, and for all that are in authority; that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and honesty.

Hebrews 5:7 Who in the days of his flesh, when he had offered up prayers (1162) and supplications with strong crying (2906) and tears unto him that was able to save him from death, and was heard in that he feared;

Other passages instructing us to engage in intercessory rather than personal prayer include: Daniel 9, Jesus’ prayer in John 17, Matt. 5:44, James 4:2-3, 5:6, 14, Eph. 1:16, Eph. 6:18, Acts 12:5, Romans 1:9, Romans 10:1, 2 Cor. 1:11, 2 Cor. 9:14, Matt. 17:21, Mark 9:29, Romans 15:30, Col. 1:3, 9, 4:2-3, 12, 1 Thess. 1:2, 5:25, 2 Thess. 1:11, 3:1, 1 Tim. 2:1, 2 Tim. 1:3, Hebrews 5:7, 13:18, Philippians 1:4, 9, 19, and Philemon 1:4. (This list was compiled by searching for the Greek words 4335, 1162, and 4336.) By contrast, prayers offered for personal interests are only mentioned in a few places (Luke 1:13, possibly Acts 10:4 and 31). While such prayers are certainly part of our relationship with God, we are not instructed to offer personal prayers. But we are instructed to offer intercessory prayer for others in accordance with language related to the “continual” (“tamiyd”) morning and evening offerings.

(Additional noteworthy passages concerning prayer in the evening and morning include Daniel 9 and Genesis 32:24-30. In Daniel 9:21, the angel Gabriel comes to Daniel at the time of the evening offering as he is praying in exile, which is very similar to John the Baptist’s father Zechariah who prays at the Temple. The timeframe of morning and evening also potentially explains why the Angel of YHWH explains to Jacob (as he wrestled with him) that he had to leave at daybreak. Perhaps this was the time for prayers to ascend and his departure was related to the relaying of prayers before the Father. For more on angelic involvement in transmitting prayer before God please see our study entitled “Angels as a Network.”)

New Testament teaching on prayer includes instruction on who and what things to pray for. (For more information on prayer and instructions on prayer in the bible please see “A Study of All Biblical Prayers.”)

In summary, we have seen that there is a good basis for concluding that the New Testament church offered intercessory prayer in the mornings and evenings as a part of their priestly service to God. With this fact in mind we can follow Hebrews 10:19-22's encouraging instructions to enter with boldness into the presence of God to offer prayer as priests of the New Covenant.

A final note of interest is Jesus' discussion of prayer in relation to authority, the end times, and the struggle between God's people and our satanic and earthly opposition. We will turn to a discussion of this topic in our next segment below.

Priestly Prayer, the End Times, and Our Satanic Adversary

In our Unity and Excommunication study we examine how statements about asking and receiving in prayer relate to an authority to excommunicate and reinstitute or maintain fellowship. In our study on the charismatic gifts we examine questions involved in the cessation of the gifts and we relate New Testament statements about asking and receiving to the reception of the Holy Spirit. Here we will discuss these same passages in relation to the subject of priestly intercessory prayer especially as it pertains to the end times.

Below are the main passages we will discuss in this section. Each listing includes a description of the content mentioned in the passage. Different types of content are highlighted so that we can easily see where different passages have the same subjects in mind. Below this list follows a discussion of the relevance of these passages to the subject of priestly prayer and intercession in the end times.

Matt. 18:1-22 – those who offend children as millstone cast into the sea, plucking out parts of body that entice to sin, excommunication/rebuking brothers, binding/loosing in heaven/earth, forgiving sins, asking in Jesus' name and it being done.

John 15:1-16 – vine and branches cut off and cast away, abiding in Christ's words and bearing much fruit, asking and it being done, the HS.

John 16:24 – asking in Jesus' name and receiving, the HS.

James 4:3 – asking and receiving not because we are interested in the wrong things.

1 John 3:22 – asking and receiving as we keep Christ's commandments and remaining in the HS.

Matt. 7:7-11 – asking and receiving, receiving the HS.

Matt. 21:18-22 – fig tree, casting mountain into the sea, asking and receiving.

Mark 11 – fig tree, casting mountain into the sea, asking and receiving, forgiveness of sins.

Luke 11:9-13 – asking and receiving, the HS.

Mark 9:42-50 – those who offend children as millstone cast into sea, cut off parts of the body that entice to sin, salt.

Luke 17:1-6 – those who offend children as a millstone cast into the sea, rebuking brothers, forgiving sins, tree plucked up by the roots and cast into the sea with faith.

Rev. 8:8 – mountain cast into the sea

Rev. 18:21– millstone cast into the sea

In Matt. 18, excommunication and forgiveness (restoration to fellowship) are discussed alongside asking and receiving in prayer. There is also the description of those who cause others to go astray (offend) as having a millstone tied around their necks and being cast into the sea.

In first-century Israel, the elders and priests had the right to excommunicate and reinstate fellowship (John 9:22, 12:42). The fact that Jesus here conveys that authority to the apostles also compares them to the priests and rulers of Israel. This comparison is not shocking given that Jesus elsewhere proclaims that the apostles will sit on thrones judging the twelve tribes of Israel (Matt. 19:28, Luke 22:30). Of note to our study is that these subjects are at least somewhat related to priestly authority. After all, it's because of his own authority as High Priest that Jesus can bestow this authority on the apostles (which they later transferred to the elders). (For more on this subject see our studies entitled "Church Leadership and Authority Conditional" and "Unity and Excommunication".)

John 15 parallels Matthew 18's record of Jesus' instructions on casting away parts of the body that trespass God's commands and lead into sin. Paralleling Matthew's language of body parts being cut off and cast into hell, John speaks of branches being cast off and burned. Both Matt. 18 and John 15 include similar language regarding asking and receiving in Jesus' name. John 16 repeats the same idea. So do Matt. 7, Luke 11, James 4, and 1 John 3. Likewise, Matt. 11 and Luke 11 also discuss asking and receiving in faith with the peculiar idea casting of a mountain into the sea.

Of particular interest in light of our study of priestly intercession are the connections these passages have to prayer. Clearly, asking and receiving are about prayer since these verses themselves speak of prayer as they discuss asking and receiving.

When we turn to the Book of Revelation we see the recurrence of Jesus' peculiar references to mountains and millstones cast into the sea. In Rev. 8:8, it is the

satanic kingdom which is cast into the sea (see our Revelation Symbols and Chronology studies). In Rev. 18:21-22, it is the satanic angels (and their earthly followers, which are also discussed by Paul in 2 Thess. 2) who deceive the whole world and who are cast into the sea.

There are several interesting factors worth considering on these points.

First, these passages in Revelation and the gospels are the only occurrences of these peculiar descriptions of mountains and millstones and casting into the sea. Second, they employ the same Greek terms. And third, they, in fact, are discussing the same subjects.

Jesus' discussions of the millstones and being cast into the sea are about those who tempt others into sinning and turning away from God. This is clearly the role played by the satanic angels and their earthly political and religious counterparts during the final 7 years of this age. Revelation 18:21 is simply borrowing Jesus' teaching and explaining that the satanic angels who deceive the whole world will be cast down as a millstone cast into the sea (or as someone who has a millstone tied to their neck and is cast into the sea).

Similarly, Revelation 8's reference to the satanic angelic kingdom being cast down as a mountain is connected to Zechariah 3:1-2 and 4:7. In Zechariah 3-4, those who oppose the two men who lead in the rebuilding of the temple are said to be a "mountain that becomes a plain" (Zechariah 4:7). In that passages, these two godly men (Joshua and Zerubbabel) are identified with as the two olive trees who stand beside the Lord of the earth. Similarly, Zechariah 3 describes a scene in which Satan stands to oppose Joshua the high priest (one of the two olive trees).

Both passages of Zechariah are paralleled directly in Revelation. In Rev. 11 we have the two witnesses described as the two olive trees standing before the God of the earth. Like the two olive trees in Zechariah these two end-times figures are involved in the reconstruction of the Temple. And like Joshua in Zechariah 3, these two witnesses (those who have the testimony) are opposed by the satanic angels (Rev. 12:10) who accuse them before God. As with Joshua and Zerubbabel these end times figures (the two witnesses) struggle against the opposition orchestrated by the satanic angels as they seek to reinstitute worship of God at a rebuilt Temple in Jerusalem. As with Joshua and Zerubbabel, the seven eyes (angels) of the Lord (2 Chronicles 16:19, 2 Chronicles 6:19-21, 40, 2 Chronicles 7:15, 1 Kings 8:29-30, Zechariah 4:10, Revelation 4:5 and 5:6) watch them and cooperate with them in their work. Furthermore, the mountain which opposes them and seeks to deceive the world is cast down. In addition, the need for Satan to initiate direct action to deceive the whole world in the last days may indicate the relative success of the two witnesses' ministry. Other indications of this may come from Peter and Daniel. Daniel 11:34 indicates that many will cleave to those who know God, do exploits, and have understanding in the last days. Peter's discussion of the people of Noah's day may also convey the idea of the success of the two witnesses' early ministry. In his epistles, Peter indicates that Noah had some success preaching to his contemporaries and that many repented of their sin

only to be put to death by others. Peter's comments are all the more relevant since Jesus himself compares the end times to Noah's day. (For more information see our study on "The Days of Noah".)

When all of these related passages are considered together, Jesus' comments in the gospels tell us that the casting down of the satanic angels from heaven is the result of the prayers and prayerful intercession headed by the two witnesses as priestly intercession and "tamiyd" offerings are reinstated particularly at a rebuilt temple. When the satanic angels oppose this godly work (as depicted in Rev. 6:9-11, Rev. 8:3-5) the righteous angels in heaven are authorized to make war with and cast down the satanic angels from heaven paralleling the discussion of the angelic princes as described in Daniel 10:12-13, 20-21 and Daniel 12:1.

By connecting all of these observations we can see that in the gospels Jesus is instructing his disciples regarding their authority and priestly service involving interceding and praying for the satanic opposition to be cast from their heavenly positions. (Paul's comments in Eph. 6:12 seem reminiscent of this as he discusses our struggle against angelic powers in heaven. So do his remarks in 2 Cor. 10 where he discusses casting down every high thing that exalts itself against the knowledge of God.)

Other connections are visible in Matt. 16:19 and 18:18-19's references to authority, binding and loosing, and the keys to the kingdom of heaven coupled with Matt. 16:18's statement that the gates of hell will not prevail against his church. Jesus himself took the keys and authority of the two satanic angels identified as death and hell (Rev. 1:18). (For more information see our study on Angels in the End Times in the eschatology section of the website.) The relationships and proximity between these passages and subjects informs us that Jesus was instructing his apostles about an authority which would include prayerfully petitioning God for the satanic angels to be cast down in events which the New Testament understood would not be exercised or fulfilled until the end times and the coming of the two witnesses and their work.

Section Four Conclusions

The conclusions that seem to be warranted are that, in addition to the communal meal, the practice of morning and evening intercessory prayer by Christians is a part of our priestly service in the New Covenant. (Discussion of the role of almsgiving as an aspect of priestly service in the New Covenant will be provided as an addendum to this study.)

It is not tenable to object that priestly service in the New Covenant would involve work associated with atonement and thereby infringe on the sufficiency of Christ's work. On the contrary, the New Testament relates our priestly service to the aspects of Levitical service that were not related to atonement. Therefore, the

necessity and exclusivity of Christ's service in this regard is not in any way threatened.

Likewise, we have seen that the New Testament applies animal sacrifice to New Covenant priesthood as an analogy for putting to death our sinful desires. Furthermore, Revelation 11:1-3 indicates that the altar of animal sacrifice is not to be included in the premillennial temple. This provides a further demonstration that animal sacrifices are not a part of New Testament priestly service. Instead, the New Testament presentation of priestly service reveals an emphasis on such things as thanksgiving, acts of dedication, and especially prayerful intercession before God on behalf of others.

Furthermore, in accordance with this, the two witnesses will:

1. Faithfully perform the Old Testament and New Testament priestly service of morning and evening intercessory prayer.
2. Rebuild the temple (where that prayer will be offered at the incense altar).
3. Be opposed by satanic angelic powers who will respond by taking drastic action to deceive the whole world.
4. Petition God concerning the satanic angels who stop the daily "tamiyd" prayers at the rebuilt temple so that these angels are cast down from heaven by God and the angelic army under Michael.

Other Notes of Potential Interest

1. Of potential interest is the fact that Numbers 9:15-18 explains that the presence of God was always at the tabernacle using the word "tamiyd" for "always" as it discusses the appearance of the cloud from morning (01242, boqer) until evening (06153, ereb) and then the appearance changing to fire at evening. Perhaps this may relate to Rev. 8 and the fire which is cast down to earth from God's temple in heaven.

2. The New Testament discussion of sacrifices indicates a potential usage of the following elements: sacrifice, salt, and fire. Romans 12:1-2 along with other New Testament passages discussed above relate to the idea of believers living sinlessly and in obedience to Christ so that "our flesh" has been put to death in a way that parallels the bodies of the deceased animals on the altar. Likewise, sacrifices were salted. The New Testament relates the concept of salt to the idea of sound teaching (Matt. 5:13, Luke 14:34, see also Mark 9:49-50 and Col. 4:6). And fire is at times coupled with the idea of character being built through trials in this world. The full picture is of being obedient to Christ in sound teaching and maturing through the trials of our faith that occur in this life.

3. For more information on the authority of the two witnesses see our study entitled "The Two Witnesses and Apostolic Authority."