

Zechariah Lesson 30

11-12-2003

1. Last week I completed our introduction to the fourth of the eight night visions, and the Doctrine of The Priest Nation; when time expired we were exegeting Zec 3:1. In the process of that exegesis it became necessary to study the Doctrine of The High Priest.

2. I want to review some of that learned and then we will pick up with new material at point 4.2.7 and the Doctrine of High Priest.

KJV

Zec 3:1 And he shewed me Joshua the high priest standing before the angel of the LORD, and Satan standing at his right hand to resist him.

NIV

Zec 3:1 Then he showed me Joshua the high priest standing before the angel of the LORD, and Satan standing at his right side to accuse him.

Zec 3:1

Hebrew

Va Raah - And the interpreting angel was caused to see

Eth Yehoshua - Joshua

Ha Kohen - the Priest

Ha Gadol - the great

Amad - standing

Le Panah - before the face

Malakh Yehovah - of the Angel of The Lord

Va Ha Satan - and Satan

Amad - standing

Al Yaman Vo - at his right

Le Satan Vo - his adversary or Satan

Working Translation

Zec 3:1 And I saw Joshua the High Priest standing before Jehovah and Satan also stood at his right as his adversary.

Principles:

1. At a cursory glance this vision seems to relate only to Joshua as an individual.
2. Closer scrutiny however reveals that in the person of Joshua, the High Priest, the sinful state of Israel is exhibited in the nation's representative.
3. Now let's return to our analysis of the Doctrine of The High Priest.
4. All priests of Judaism came originally from the Tribe of Levi.

4.1 Aaron was the first High Priest who, along with his four sons: Nadab, Abihu, Eleazar and Ithamar performed the duties of High Priest.

4.1.1 God executed Nadab and Abihu for "abusing the Temple ritual."

4.2 Ultimately only those from the Tribe of Eleazar prevailed as High Priest.

4.2.1 Eleazar was the third son of Aaron and Elisheba (Exo 6:23; Num 3:2).

4.2.2 Eleazar was consecrated to the priesthood with his father and brothers at Sinai (Exo 28:1-4; Lev 8:2, 13).

4.2.3 After God executed the older brothers when they presented unlawful fire (Lev 10:1-7), Eleazar and Ithamar and later their descendents continued to exercise priestly functions with Aaron (Num 3:1-4).

4.2.4 We can only conjecture as to the meaning of "unauthorized fire" though subsequent passages might lead one to think the boys were "tipsy" in their service, perhaps a reason for their failure to follow the protocol plan of God. Lev 10:9-11

4.2.5 Eleazar was placed over all the Levites (Num 3:32) and assigned the care of the sanctuary and its vessels, etc. (Num 4:16; 16:37,39; 19:3-4). There were many highly specific functions performed in support of the High Priest by various Levite tribesmen.

4.2.6 Eleazar succeeded as high priest when his father Aaron died at Mount Hor (Num 20:25-28; Deu 10:6).

Now for new material and point 4.2.7:

4.2.7 Joshua was installed as Moses' successor in a ceremony conducted by Eleazar as High Priest. Eleazar was Joshua's official counselor; he would first inquire of the Lord and then advise Joshua (Num 27:18-22).

Num 27:22 Moses did as the LORD commanded him. He took Joshua and had him stand before Eleazar the priest and the whole assembly.

4.2.8 Eleazar took part in the military census at Shittim (Num 26:1,63).

4.2.9 He also took part in the division of the land to the eastern tribes (Num 32:2; 34:17) and later with Joshua to the western tribes (Jos 14:1; 17:4; and Jos 19:51; 21:1).

Num 32:2 So they came to Moses and Eleazar the priest and to the leaders of the community, and said,

Num 32:3 "Ataroth, Dibon, Jazer, Nimrah, Heshbon, Elealeh, Sebam, Nebo and Beon--
Num 32:4 the land the LORD subdued before the people of Israel--are suitable for livestock, and your servants have livestock.

Num 32:5 If we have found favor in your eyes," they said, "let this land be given to your servants as our possession. Do not make us cross the Jordan."

Num 34:12 Then the boundary will go down along the Jordan and end at the Salt Sea. "This will be your land, with its boundaries on every side."

Num 34:13 Moses commanded the Israelites: "Assign this land by lot as an inheritance. The LORD has ordered that it be given to the nine and a half tribes,

Jos 14:1 Now these are the areas the Israelites received as an inheritance in the land of Canaan, which Eleazar the priest, Joshua son of Nun and the heads of the tribal clans of Israel allotted to them.

Jos 14:2 Their inheritances were assigned by lot to the nine-and-a-half tribes, as the LORD had commanded through Moses.

Jos 14:3 Moses had granted the two-and-a-half tribes their inheritance east of the Jordan but had not granted the Levites an inheritance among the rest,

4.2.10 He married a daughter of Putiel and she bore him Phinehas (Exo 6:25). Eleazar was buried near the home of his son, Phinehas succeeded him as high priest (Jdg 20:28; Jos 24:33).

Exo 6:25 Eleazar son of Aaron married one of the daughters of Putiel, and she bore him Phinehas. These were the heads of the Levite families, clan by clan.

Exo 6:26 It was this same Aaron and Moses to whom the LORD said, "Bring the Israelites out of Egypt by their divisions."

Jdg 20:27 And the Israelites inquired of the LORD. (In those days the ark of the covenant of God was there,

Jdg 20:28 with Phinehas son of Eleazar, the son of Aaron, ministering before it.) They asked, "Shall we go up again to battle with Benjamin our brother, or not?" The LORD responded, "Go, for tomorrow I will give them into your hands."

Jdg 20:29 Then Israel set an ambush around Gibeah.

Jos 24:33 And Eleazar son of Aaron died and was buried at Gibeah, which had been allotted to his son Phinehas in the hill country of Ephraim.

4.2.11 Eleazar was the ancestor of the Zadokite priests, who in Solomon's time replaced Abiathar, a descendant of Ithamar, Eleazar's younger brother (1Ch 6:4-15; 1 Kings 2:26-27 and 35).

1Ch 6:3 The children of Amram: Aaron, Moses and Miriam. The sons of Aaron: Nadab, Abihu, Eleazar and Ithamar.

1Ch 6:4 Eleazar was the father of Phinehas, Phinehas the father of Abishua,

1Ki 2:26 To Abiathar the priest the Solomon said, "Go back to your fields in Anathoth. You deserve to die, but I will not put you to death now, because you carried the ark of the Sovereign LORD before my father David and shared all my father's hardships."

1Ki 2:27 So Solomon removed Abiathar from the priesthood of the LORD, fulfilling the word the LORD had spoken at Shiloh about the house of Eli.

4.2.12 Ithamar was the fourth and the youngest son of Aaron (Exo 6:23).

4.2.13 Treasurer of the offerings of the tabernacle (Exo 38:21), Ithamar was also superintendent of the work of the Gershonites (a work/military unit) and Merarites (artisans who worked in the Tabernacle) (Num 4:27-28,33).

Exo 38:21 These are the amounts of the materials used for the tabernacle, the tabernacle of the Testimony, which were recorded at Moses' command by the Levites under the direction of Ithamar son of Aaron, the priest.

Num 4:27 All their service, whether carrying or doing other work, is to be done under the direction of Aaron and his sons. You shall assign to them as their responsibility all they are to carry.

Num 4:28 This is the service of the Gershonite clans at the Tent of Meeting. Their duties are to be under the direction of Ithamar son of Aaron, the priest.

Num 4:29 "Count the Merarites by their clans and families.

Num 4:30 Count all the men from thirty to fifty years of age who come to serve in the work at the Tent of Meeting.

Num 4:31 This is their duty as they perform service at the Tent of Meeting: to carry the frames of the tabernacle, its crossbars, posts and bases,

Num 4:32 as well as the posts of the surrounding courtyard with their bases, tent pegs, ropes, all their equipment and everything related to their use. Assign to each man the specific things he is to carry.

Num 4:33 This is the service of the Merarite clans as they work at the Tent of Meeting under the direction of Ithamar son of Aaron, the priest."

5. Part of the Mosaic Law prescribed in great detail the service of the High Priest in the liturgical worship practices of first the Tabernacle and later the Temple.

6. Etymology:

6.1 In the OT the high priest is referred to as ha-kohen, "the priest" or the ha-mashiah, "the anointed priest." In the LXX reference is made to ha hierus, "the priest."

6.1.1 In the NT the high priest (in some manuscripts) is also called Ha Hierus, "the priest," e.g. in Acts 5:24 but elsewhere 56 times he is called archiereus, "the high priest."

Act 5:24 On hearing this report, the captain of the temple guard and the chief priests were puzzled, wondering what would come of this.

Act 5:25 Then someone came and said, "Look! The men you put in jail are standing in the temple courts teaching the people."

Act 5:26 At that, the captain went with his officers and brought the apostles. They did not use force, because they feared that the people would stone them.

Act 5:27 Having brought the apostles, they made them appear before the Sanhedrin to be questioned by the high priest (archiereus).

6.2 In Heb 10:21 we find **megas hiereus** used for the High Priest.

Heb 10:19 Having therefore, brethren, boldness to enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus,

Heb 10:20 By a new and living way, which he hath consecrated for us, through the veil, that is to say, his flesh;

Heb 10:21 And having an **high priest** over the house of God;

6.3 The high incidence of "high priest" in the NT in comparison to its infrequency in the OT indicates how important the "figure head" had become in NT times. So much for Etymology.

7. Now let's return to the early history of Priesthood; Moses, according to the Pentateuch, was directed of God to install his brother Aaron and Aaron's sons as priests.

7.1 Aaron is most often simply called the priest, as were his sons. In Leviticus he is four times referred to as the anointed priest (Lev 4:3, 5, 16; 6:22).

Lev 4:3 If the **anointed priests** do sin according to the sin of the people; then let him bring for his sin, which he hath sinned, a young bullock without blemish unto the LORD for a sin offering.

Lev 4:5 Then the **anointed priest** shall take some of the bull's blood and carry it into the Tent of Meeting.

Lev 4:16 Then the **anointed priest** is to take some of the bull's blood into the Tent of Meeting.

Lev 6:22 The son who is to succeed him as **anointed priest** shall prepare it. It is the LORD'S regular share and is to be burned completely.

7.2 The position of responsibility and the dress of his office, rather than the name of his office, most often distinguished Aaron as the high or superior priest.

7.3 As early as the call of Moses. Aaron was designated by God (somewhat by default) to be His spokesman (Exo 4:14-15).

Exo 4:14 And the anger of the LORD was kindled against Moses, and he said, Is not Aaron the Levite thy brother? I know that he can speak well. And also, behold, he cometh forth to meet thee: and when he seeth thee, he will be glad in his heart.

Exo 4:15 And thou shalt speak unto him, and put words in his mouth: and I will be with thy mouth, and with his mouth, and will teach you what ye shall do.

7.4 The first indication that Aaron should be the leading priest appeared when Moses asked Aaron to lay up the manna in a pot before the Lord (Exo 16:32-34).

Exo 16:32 And Moses said, This is the thing which the LORD commandeth, Fill an omer of it to be kept for your generations; that they may see the bread wherewith I have fed you in the wilderness, when I brought you forth from the land of Egypt.

Exo 16:33 And Moses **said unto Aaron, Take a pot, and put an omer full of manna therein, and lay it up before the LORD**, to be kept for your generations.

Exo 16:34 As the LORD commanded Moses, so Aaron laid it up before the Testimony, to be kept.

7.5 Another indication came when Aaron was accorded a special place with Moses to meet God (Exo 19:24).

Exo 19:23 And Moses said unto the LORD, **The people cannot come up** to mount Sinai: for thou chargest us, saying, Set bounds about the mount, and sanctify it.

Exo 19:24 And the LORD said unto him, Away, get thee down, and **thou shalt come up, thou, and Aaron** with thee: but let not the priests and the people break through to come up unto the LORD, lest he break forth upon them.

7.6 The first specific order making Aaron and his sons as priests to perform liturgical services was received by Moses on Mount Sinai after instructions for the building of the tabernacle. (Exo 27:21; 28:1; 29:9,44).

Exo 27:21 **In the tabernacle of the congregation without the vail, which is before the testimony, Aaron and his sons shall order it from evening to morning before the LORD**: it shall be a statute for ever unto their generations on the behalf of the children of Israel.

7.7 In the ordination service establishing the priesthood, the position of Aaron as high priest was clearly differentiated from the other priests by the ceremonies of consecration and the variations in garments (Exo 28:1, 29; Lev chapter 8).

Exo 28:1 **And take thou unto thee Aaron thy brother, and his sons** with him, from among the children of Israel, that he may minister unto me in the priest's office, even Aaron, Nadab and Abihu, Eleazar and Ithamar, Aaron's sons.

Exo 28:2 And **thou shalt make holy garments for Aaron** thy brother for glory and for beauty.

Exo 28:3 And thou shalt speak unto all that are wise hearted, whom I have filled with the spirit of wisdom, that they may make Aaron's garments to consecrate him, that he may minister unto me in the priest's office.

8. The consecration of Aaron's successors was to follow the same pattern (Exo 29:29-30).

Exo 29:29 **And the holy garments of Aaron shall be his sons' after him**, to be anointed therein, and to be consecrated in them.

Exo 29:30 And that son that is priest in his stead shall put them on seven days, when he cometh into the tabernacle of the congregation to minister in the holy place.

9. The pouring of the anointing oil upon Aaron's head and running down to the very edges of his robe became a symbol of unity and total dedication (Psa 133:2).

Psa 133:1 Behold, how good and how pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in unity!

Psa 133:2 It is like the precious ointment upon the head, that ran down upon the beard, even Aaron's beard: that went down to the skirts of his garments;

Psa 133:3 As the dew of Hermon, and as the dew that descended upon the mountains of Zion: for there the LORD commanded the blessing, even life for evermore.

Psa 134:1 Behold, bless ye the LORD, all ye servants of the LORD, which by night stand in the house of the LORD.

10. The dress of the High Priest was very distinctive in many respects. The most distinctive perhaps was the breastplate.

10.1 Placed in the breastplate were the Urim and Thummim, the nature of which no one knows with certainty. Best educated guess: "the two were a yes and no light respectively."

10.2 Regardless of the exact nature of the Urim and Thummim, their use is not simply magical but illuminative of God's judgment on a question brought to the priest.

10.2.1 Thus it was used of David in trying to decide whether to pursue the Amalekites at Ziklag after Abiathar brought the Ephod to him. In addition to what must have been a yes/no button, the Ephod also had 12 stones, each representing the twelve tribes.

10.3 On the annual Day of Atonement other garments of white linen are specified for the high priest.

10.3.1 These Day-of-Atonement garments were to be worn only during the ceremony of atonement.

10.3.2 They were to be put on before the high priest entered the Holy Place and taken off in the tabernacle of the congregation after the atonement had been made.

11. Duties of The High Priest

11.1 Though the high priest officiated in regular priestly tasks, certain unique responsibilities appertained to his office.

11.2 Only the high priest could enter the Holy Place and that only during the ceremony of the Day of Atonement once a year.

11.3 On other special days, such as new moons and great feasts, the high priest would serve as the officiating priest.

12. Persons with certain physical blemishes were excluded from the priesthood. Moses lists 12 specific blemishes which eliminated one from the priestly office: blindness, lameness, a flat nose or disfigured face, a deformed limb, a broken foot, a broken hand, a crooked or hunch back, dwarfed, an eye blemish, scurvy or eczema, scabs, and crushed testicles (Lev 21:17-20).

13. History

13.1 Being dependent upon the date of the Exodus, the length of the history of the high priesthood is not a matter of general agreement.

13.2 From the times of Moses until David seven high priests are named in the Scriptures: Aaron, Eleazar, Phinehas, Eli, Ahitub, Ahiah, and Ahimelech.

13.2.1 From the time the Philistines destroyed Shiloh where Eli had served as High Priest and the ark was taken by the Philistines, the high priests had a very limited service.

14. Two High Priest served simultaneously during David's reign. They were Zadok and Abiathar.

14.1 Following the removal of Abiathar by Solomon, the descendants of Zadok controlled the High Priesthood. Thus the line came through Eleazar and not Ithamar.

15. At the return after the Captivity in Babylon, Joshua (Jeshua), the son of Jozadak (1Ch 6:15, Jehozadak), who had been taken into captivity, was the first to resume the Zadokite line (Ezr 3:2 and Zec 3:1-3).

1Ch 6:15 Jehozadak was deported when the LORD sent Judah and Jerusalem into exile by the hand of Nebuchadnezzar.

Ezr 3:2 Then Jeshua son of Jozadak and his fellow priests and Zerubbabel son of Shealtiel and his associates began to build the altar of the God of Israel to sacrifice burnt offerings on it, in accordance with what is written in the Law of Moses the man of God.

Zec 3:1 Then he showed me Joshua the high priest standing before the angel of the LORD, and Satan standing at his right side to accuse him.

Zec 3:2 The LORD said to Satan, "The LORD rebuke you, Satan! The LORD, who has chosen Jerusalem, rebuke you! Is not this man a burning stick snatched from the fire?"

Zec 3:3 Now Joshua was dressed in filthy clothes as he stood before the angel.

16. The high priesthood during the inter testamental years increased in power and decreased in spiritual, moral, and ethical behavior.

17. Under the Maccabeans the kingship and the high priesthood were for a while combined (if the political leaders of the time could be called kings).

17.1 During the inter testamental period the high priesthood often became the pawn of ruling authorities.

17.2 As the highest ruling office among the Jews, the high priesthood was the subject of purchase and intrigue.

17.3 Gradually its life tenure was lost so that more than one high priest was alive at a given time though only one officiated as the highest officer.

17.4 In the NT three high priests are mentioned by name:

17.4.1 Caiaphas was ruler at the time of Jesus' trial and crucifixion;

Joh 11:49 And one of them, named **Caiaphas, being the high priest** that same year, said unto them, Ye know nothing at all,

Joh 11:50 Nor consider that it is expedient for us, that one man should die for the people, and that the whole nation perish not.

Joh 11:51 And this spake he not of himself: but being high priest that year, he prophesied that Jesus should die for that nation;

Joh 18:12 Then the band and the captain and officers of the Jews took Jesus, and bound him,

Joh 18:13 And led him away to **Annas** first; for he was father in law to **Caiaphas, which was the high priest** that same year.

17.4.2 Caiaphas as the High Priest at the time of Paul's/Saul's persecutions of Christians in Syria would have been the one to give the letter of authorization to pursue Christians in Damascus;

Act 4:6 And **Annas the high priest, and Caiaphas**, and John, and Alexander, and as many as were of the kindred of the high priest, were gathered together at Jerusalem.

Act 9:1 And Saul, yet breathing out threatenings and slaughter against the disciples of the Lord, went unto the **high priest**,

Act 9:2 And desired of him letters to Damascus to the synagogues, that if he found any of this way, whether they were men or women, he might bring them bound unto Jerusalem.

17.4.3 Annas, was high priest during the time of John the Baptist's ministry (Luk 3:2).

End Lesson Taught 11-12-2003