

# *A Reflection of* **JESUS**

## Lesson 6

### Priests of God

Exodus 28:1-3; Numbers 16:5; 18:1-7

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**G**od is holy, just, and good. He will not dwell in the presence of sin. The effects of sin present mankind as anything but holy, just, and good before God.

Because God is merciful and loving, He has provided a way for us to find favor and fellowship with Him. This was accomplished by providing a Mediator.

#### Between Me and You

A mediator is someone who intercedes, as a go-between, and may be called the “middleman.” Sometimes when there is a conflict between people, a mediator will be assigned to help the individuals sort things out. They help resolve conflicts.

A modern-day mediator might be someone who helps employees who go on strike against their employer come to a compromise, and resolve the dispute. The key to mediation is resolution.

At the time of the Tabernacle and during the writing of the Old Testament, the mediators were called “priests.” God, in His wisdom, chose to have priest-mediators as an example of how Jesus Christ would serve as a mediator for us today.

#### Three Kinds of Priests

In the Old Testament, the priest was the link between a holy God and a sinful people. There are three kinds of priests

described in the book of Numbers. The first is the high priest. Aaron was the first high priest.

He was from the tribe of Levi. The descendants of Aaron were all priests, but only the oldest male descendant of Eleazar, Aaron’s son, could be the high priest.

The high priest wore beautiful robes. Like the other priests, he would offer sacrifices in the Tabernacle and later in the Temple. However, his most important job came once a year on the Day of Atonement.

On this day, the high priest would not wear his beautiful robes. He wore only white linen. He would enter the Holy of Holies to sprinkle blood on the Mercy Seat of the Ark of the Covenant. This ceremony would atone for not only his sins but the sins of the Israelites, too.

The regular priests were all Levites and were descendants of Aaron. They were divided into twenty-four groups and would take turns taking care of the Tabernacle in the wilderness and later the Temple.

They wore white linen robes. Only these priests could offer sacrifices that the people brought to God. There were priests who taught the law of Moses and who acted as judges.

There were many responsibilities that the priests. They are described in the book of Numbers.

### The Levites

The Levites were the descendants of Levi. The Levites were given the job to help the priests take care of the Tabernacle and later the Temple.

Some of the Levites would care for the furnishings, others for the curtains, and others for putting up the Tabernacle or taking it down. When the Temple was built, some Levites were singers, musicians, gatekeepers, and assistants to the priests in offering sacrifices.

### The Priests Clothing

#### The Robe—Exodus 28:31-35

The priest wore a blue robe, and over the robe was an ephod. The robe was one piece of cloth with no seams. At the bottom edge of the robe hung pomegranates and bells. When the priest moved, the bells would tinkle. Since the people could not see into the Tabernacle, when they heard the sound of the bells they knew the priest was busy at work.

#### The Ephod and Breastplate— Exodus 28:6-29

The ephod was a colorful garment of gold, blue, purple, scarlet, and fine linen. The ephod was worn *over* the blue robe. It fit snugly and hung from the shoulders to just below the knees. The ephod was held together by an onyx stone on each shoulder.

On each stone six of the names of the tribes of Israel were carved. This showed that the priests represented all the people of Israel to God. These stones were also a

reminder that the burden of being a priest was to intercede for Israel's tribes. Today, Christ carries the burden to intercede for us (Matthew 11:28). He is our Intercessor.

Over the ephod the breastplate was worn. The breastplate was the most expensive and most beautiful piece of all the clothing. There were four rows of precious stones set in gold. East stone was engraved with the name of one of Israel's twelve tribes. Today, Christ has the burden to bear our names on His heart before God.

#### The Miter—Exodus 28:36-38

The crown was given to signify that the priest held the place of a spiritual head of the priesthood. The crown was a cap with a turban over it.

On the front was a gold diadem with the words "Holiness to the Lord" engraved upon it. In verse 38, we are told that it was because of this that Aaron was able to put away the sin of the people. In this manner the gifts of the people would then be acceptable to the Lord.

Today, Jesus is able to put away our sins before God. Because of Jesus' holiness we become holy.

### None but Jesus

Today we do not have a Tabernacle or a human high priest, for we are to be a tabernacle and Christ is our High Priest. No human being stands between us and God. What a comfort.

During the time of Israel and the Old Testament, the Tabernacle and the high priest were examples that POINTED to the Savior,



