

CHAPTER 9

A ROYAL PRIESTHOOD

The spiritual attributes of God's Bride is foreshadowed by the priesthood in the Old Testament. Therefore, God's Bride has the same attributes as the Old Testament priests. What were the requirements of the priests in the Old Testament and how were these principles of God's Kingdom communicated by God to the nation of Israel and to all believers today?

1. God desired for the nation of Israel and ALL believers to become a KINGDOM of priests (*Exodus 19:5-6, 1 Peter 2:5,9, Revelation 5:10*)
2. God desires for the nation of Israel and ALL believers to be a holy and sanctified people (*Exodus 28:1, 35-36, Leviticus 19:2, 20:7-8, Ephesians 5:26-27, 1 Peter 1:15-16*)
3. The clothing of the priests in the Old Testament is the same clothing as God's Bride (*Exodus 28, Psalm 45:8-15, Isaiah 61:1-3, 6,10, Revelation 19:7-8, 21:9-21*)
4. The primary duty of the priesthood and the Bride of Christ is to teach God's Torah to His people (*Leviticus 10:8,10-11, Deuteronomy 17:8-11, Jeremiah 18:18, Ezekiel 44:15, 23-24, Malachi 2:7, Matthew 5:17-19, John 1:38, 3:2; Hebrews 4:14-16*)
5. Those who reject God's Torah will NOT be priests before God and will NOT be the Bride of Christ (*Hosea 4:6, 8:12, Matthew 7:23, 24:12*)
6. While it is God's perfect Will for ALL believers to be a kingdom of priests and to be the Bride of Christ, those believers who mix paganism and the ways of the world with the worship of the God of Israel, will be disqualified from being the Bride of Christ (*Exodus 32:1, 4-6, 1Kings 12:25- 33, 1 Corinthians 1:2, 11:2, 1 Thessalonians 4:1-7, 2 Timothy 2:19-22*)
7. As priests before God, the eternal destiny of the Bride of Christ is to teach the Torah to all nations and to dwell in the heavenly Jerusalem with God for all eternity (*Isaiah 2:2-3, Matthew 28:17-19, Revelation 21:9-10, 24-26*)

GOD DESIRES FOR ALL BELIEVERS TO BE A KINGDOM OF PRIESTS

God desired for the nation of Israel and ALL believers to become a KINGDOM of priests. This was the perfect Will of God for the nation of Israel and this is the perfect Will of God for all believers. While it was the perfect Will of God for the nation of Israel and for all believers who accept Jesus as their personal Lord and Savior to be a kingdom of priests before God, this promise of God is conditional. God's people being a kingdom of priests is conditional upon God's people loving Him with all their heart, mind, soul and strength and being obedient to God and following His commandments. These truths can be seen in *Exodus 19:5-6* as it is written:

"Now therefore, if you will OBEY MY VOICE indeed and KEEP MY COVENANT, then you shall be a peculiar treasure unto me above all people: for all the earth is mine: And you shall be unto me a kingdom of priests, and a holy nation ... "

God desires for all believers in Jesus as Messiah to be a kingdom of priests. In *1 Peter 2:5, 9* it is written:

"Ye also, as lively stones, are built up a SPIRITUAL HOUSE, A HOLY PRIESTHOOD, to offer up SPIRITUAL SACRIFICES, acceptable to God by Jesus Christ ... But ye are a chosen generation, a ROYAL PRIESTHOOD, a holy nation, a peculiar people; that you should show forth the praises of him who has called you out of darkness into marvelous light."

BEING GOD'S PRIESTS IS CONDITIONAL UPON OBEDIENCE

In order to be a royal priesthood before God and become the Bride of Christ, it is dependent upon loving God with all our heart, mind, soul and strength and keeping His commandments. In *Deuteronomy 10:12-13* it is written:

"And now, Israel, what does the Lord thy God require of thee, but to fear the Lord thy God, to walk in all his ways, and to love him, and to serve the Lord thy God with all thy heart and with all thy soul, to keep the commandments of the Lord, and his statutes, which I commad thee this day for thy good?"

These are the same requirements that Jesus gave for believers today. Jesus commanded His followers to love God with all their heart, mind, soul and strength and to keep His commandments. In *Mark 12:28-30* it is written:

"And one of the scribes came, and having heard them reasoning together, and perceiving that he had answered them well, asked him, Which is the first commandment of all? And Jesus answered him, This first of all the commands is, Hear, O Israel; The Lord our God is one Lord; And you shall love the Lord thy God with all your heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind, and with all thy strength: this is the first commandment."

Jesus commanded His followers to keep the commandments (Torah) of God. In *Matthew 5:18-19* it is written:

"For verily I say unto you, Till heaven and earth pass, one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass from the law, till all be fulfilled. Whosoever therefore shall BREAK one of these least commandments, and shall TEACH MEN so, he shall be called the LEAST in the kingdom of heaven: but whosoever SHALL DO AND TEACH them, the same shall be called GREAT in the kingdom of heaven."

Jesus measures our love toward Him based upon whether we keep His commandments. In *John 14:15* it is written: *"If you love me, keep my commandments."*

If we love God with all our heart, mind, soul and strength and keep His commandments, we will be kings and priests before God. In *Revelation 5:10* it is written:

"And hast made us unto our God kings and priests: and we shall reign on the earth."

The reward for all believers in Jesus as Messiah who love God and keep His commandments is to eat of the tree of life. In *Revelation 22:12-14* it is written:

"And, behold, I come quickly; and my reward is with me, to give every man according as his work shall be. I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end, the first and the last. BLESSED are they that DO HIS COMMANDMENTS, that they may have RIGHT to THE TREE OF LIFE, and may enter in through the gates into the city."

GOD DESIRES FOR THE BRIDE OF CHRIST TO BE HOLY AND SANCTIFIED

The Bride of Christ will be holy and sanctified. In *Ephesians 5:26-27* it is written:

"That he might SANCTIFY and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word, That he might present it to himself a glorious church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing: but that it should be HOLY and without blemish."

The Hebrew word for sanctify is "*Kadash*". It is the Strong's word 6942. The Hebrew word for holy is "*Kodesh*". It is the Strong's word 6944. Both the Hebrew word, "*Kadash*" and the Hebrew word, "*Kodesh*" means "to be set apart." The spiritual meaning is that God wants His people to be set apart (holy) from the world and to be sanctified unto Him.

God made these same requirements for the priests in the Old Testament. In *Exodus 28:1, 35-36* it is written:

"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 ... And it shall be upon Aaron to minister: and his sound shall be heard when he goes in unto the holy place before the Lord, and when he comes out, that he die not. And thou shalt make a plate of pure gold, and grave upon it, like the engravings of a signet, HOLINESS TO THE LORD."

God desired the entire nation of Israel to be holy unto Him. In *Leviticus 19:1-2* it is written:

"And the Lord spake unto Moses saying, Speak unto all the congregation of the children of Israel, and say unto them, Ye shall be holy: for I the Lord your God am holy."

God not only commands His people to be holy, but He also commands His people to be sanctified and to keep His commandments. In *Leviticus 20:7-8* it is written:

"SANCTIFY YOURSELVES therefore, and BE YE HOLY: for I am the Lord your God. And ye shall KEEP MY STATUTES AND DO THEM I am the Lord which sanctify you."

God desires for all believers in Jesus as Messiah to be holy and sanctified. In *1 Peter 1:14-16* it is written:

"As obedient children, not fashioning yourselves according to the former lusts in your ignorance: But as he which has called you is holy, so BE YE HOLY IN ALL MANNER OF CONVERSATION (behavior/lifestyle). Because it is written, BE YE HOLY; FOR I AM HOLY. "

THE PRIESTS CLOTHES ARE A SPIRITUAL PICTURE OF THE BRIDE'S CLOTHING

The dress of the priests in the Old Testament is a spiritual picture of the Bride's clothing. *Exodus 28* describes the priest clothing. In this section, we see the following characteristics:

1. The Holy garments of the priests were for glory and beauty (*Exodus 28:2*)
2. They had the spirit of wisdom (*Exodus 28:3*)
3. They are sanctified/consecrated before God so that they can minister to Him (*Exodus 28:3*)
4. A breastplate and a robe (*Exodus 28:4, Isaiah 61:10*)
5. The priests' garments were made of fine twined linen (*Exodus 28:6, 8*)
6. They had the stones of the twelve tribes of Israel engraved upon the breastplate of the high priest (*Exodus 28:15-21*)
7. They wore the Urim and Thummim to know God's Will (*Exodus 28:30*)
8. He wore a crown of holiness on his head (*Exodus 28:35-36*)
9. The priests were anointed, consecrated and sanctified for the Lord's service (*Exodus 28:41*)

A ROYAL WEDDING PSALM

Psalm 45 is a royal wedding Psalm. In *Psalm 45:8-15* it is written:

"All thy garments smelt of myrrh, and aloes, and cassia, out of the ivory palaces, whereby they have made thee glad. King's daughters were among thy honorable women: upon thy right hand did stand the queen in gold of Ophir. Hearken, O daughter, and consider, and incline thine ear; forget also thine own people, and thy father's house. So shall the king greatly desire thy beauty: for he is the Lord; and worship thou him. And the daughter of Tyre shall be there

with a gift; even the rich among the people shall entreat thy favor. The king's daughter is all glorious within: her clothing is of wrought gold. She shall be brought unto the king in raiment of needlework; the virgins her companions that follow her shall be brought unto thee. With gladness and rejoicing shall they be brought: they shall enter into the king's palace."

In these verses, we see the following characteristics:

- 1. She is anointed with the oil of gladness (*Psalm 45:7*)**
- 2. All her garments are myrrh, and aloes, and cassia (*Psalm 45:8, Song of Solomon 1:3*)**
- 3. The king's daughter is all glorious within (*Psalm 45:13*)**
- 4. She is brought to the king in raiment of needlework (*Psalm 45:14*)**

In *Isaiah 61*, we see more characteristics of God's Bride. Because the Bride of Christ is spiritually one with Jesus, the Bridegroom, she will exemplify the same characteristics as Jesus when He ministered on the earth. In *Isaiah 61:1-3, 6, 10* it is written:

"The Spirit of the Lord God is upon me; because the Lord has anointed me to preach good tidings unto the meek; he has sent me to bind up the brokenhearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison to them that are bound. To proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord, and the day of vengeance of our God; to comfort all that mourn; To appoint unto them that mourn in Zion, to give unto them beauty for ashes, the oil of joy for mourning, the garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness; that they might be called trees of righteousness, the planting of the Lord; that he might be glorified ... But ye shall be named the PRIESTS OF THE LORD men shall call you the Ministers of our God: ye shall eat the riches of the Gentiles, and in their glory shall ye boast yourselves ... I will greatly rejoice in the Lord, my soul shall be joyful in my God; for he hath clothed me with the garments of salvation, he hath covered me with the robe of righteousness, as a bridegroom decketh himself with ornaments, and as a bride adorneth herself with her jewels."

In these verses we see the following characteristics of the Bride of Christ.

- 1. The Priests of the Lord are being clothed as a Bride (*Isaiah 61:6,10*)**
- 2. The trees of righteousness are the believers who are like the cedars of Lebanon (*Isaiah 61:3, Psalm 92:12*)**
- 3. God's people are called Zion and she is mourning (*Isaiah 51:16, 61:3, Matthew 5:4*)**
- 4. She receives the anointing of God to minister the Gospel (*Isaiah 61:1*)**
- 5. She receives the oil of joy for mourning and the garment of praise for heaviness (*Isaiah 61:3*)**

In *Revelation 19:7-8*, the Bride of Christ has made herself ready by being dressed in fine linen as it is written:

"Let us be glad and rejoice, and give honor to him, for the marriage of the Lamb is come, and his wife has made herself ready. And to her was granted that she should be arrayed in fine linen clean and white: for the fine linen is the righteousness of saints."

The priests of God are described as being dressed in fine linen (*Exodus 28:6-8*). This is also how God's Bride is dressed (*Psalms 45:13-14, Revelation 19:8*).

Finally, the stones of the breastplate of the high priest are representative of the spiritual characteristics of God's Bride (*Exodus 28:15-21, Revelation 21:14-21*).

GOD'S BRIDE WILL BE PRIESTS AND TEACH THE TORAH OF GOD

The primary duty of the priesthood and the Bride of Christ is to teach God's Torah to His people. The priests of God were required to teach the Torah of God. In *Leviticus 10:8, 10-11*, it is written:

"And the Lord spake unto Aaron, saying ... And that ye may put difference between holy and unholy, and between unclean and clean. And that you may teach the children of Israel all the statutes which the Lord hath spoken unto them by the hand of Moses."

In *Deuteronomy 17:8-11*, God commanded that the priests make judgment according to the Torah of God as it is written:

"IF THERE ARISE A MATTER TOO HARD FOR THEE IN JUDGMENT between blood and blood, between plea and plea, and between stroke and stroke, being matters of controversy within thy gates: then shalt thou arise, and get thee up into the place which the Lord thy God shall choose. And THOU SHALT COME UNTO THE PRIESTS THE LEVITES, and unto the judge that shall be in those days, and inquire; and they shall show thee the sentence of judgment: And THOU SHALT DO ACCORDING TO THE SENTENCE; which they of that place which the Lord shall choose shall show thee; and thou shalt observe to do according to all that they inform thee: ACCORDING TO THE SENTENCE OF THE LAW (Torah) which they shall TEACH THEE, and

according to the judgment which they shall tell thee, thou shalt do: thou shalt not decline from the sentence which they shall show thee, to the right hand, nor to the left."

From this passage, we can see that GOD gave His power and authority to the priests to teach His people the Torah and to make rulings concerning it. Let's examine several more scriptures which tell us the same thing. In *Jeremiah 18:18* it is written:

"... for the law (Torah) shall not perish from the priest ... "

This truth can also be seen in *Malachi 2:1, 6-7* as it is written:

"And now, O priests, this commandment is for you ... the law (Torah) of truth was in his mouth, and iniquity was not found in his lips: he walked with me in peace and equity, and did turn away from iniquity. For the priest's lips should keep knowledge, and they should seek the law (Torah) at his mouth: for he is the messenger of the Lord of hosts."

When Jesus returns at His second coming and rules for 1,000 years from Jerusalem, God will choose priests (the Bride of Christ) to rule and reign with Him. This can be seen in *Ezekiel 44:15, 23-24* as it is written:

"But the priests, the Levites, the sons of Zadok, that kept the charge of my sanctuary when the children of Israel went astray from me, they shall come near to me to minister unto me, and they shall stand before me to offer unto me the fat and the blood, saith the Lord God ... And they shall teach my people the difference between the holy and profane, and cause them to discern between the unclean and the clean. And in controversy they shall stand in judgment; and they shall judge it according to my judgments: and they shall keep my laws (Torah) and my statutes in all mine assemblies; and they shall hallow my Sabbaths."

In *Revelation 20:6* it tells us that the priests of God (the Bride of Christ) will rule and reign with Christ for 1,000 years as it is written:

"Blessed and holy is he that has part in the first resurrection: on such the second death has no power, but they shall be PRIESTS OF GOD AND OF CHRIST, AND SHALL REIGN WITH HIM A THOUSAND YEARS."

JESUS IS OUR HIGH PRIEST AND CHIEF RABBI

The duty of the priests in the Old Testament was to teach God's people the Torah. Spiritually, this is a prophetic picture of the role of God's Bride during the 1,000-year millennium and for all eternity. The priest in the Old Testament who had the greatest authority before God was the High Priest. Jesus is our great High Priest. Therefore, He will be the final authority for all Torah teachings and judgments during the Messianic Age and for all eternity. In *Hebrews 4:14-16* it is written:

"Seeing then that we have a GREAT HIGH PRIEST, that is passed into the heavens, JESUS THE SON OF GOD, let us hold fast our profession. For we have not an high priest which cannot be touched with the feelings of our infirmities; but was in all points tempted like as we are yet without sin."

Because Jesus is our great High Priest, He is also called in the Gospels, Rabbi. In *John 1:38* it is written:

"Then, Jesus turned, and saw them following, and saith unto them, What seek ye? They said unto him, Rabbi, (which is to say, being interpreted, Master,) where dwellest thou?"

Jesus is also called Rabbi in *John 3:2* as it is written:

"The same (Nicodemus) came to Jesus by night, and said unto him, Rabbi, we know that you are a teacher come from God: for no man can do these miracles that thou doest, except God be with him."

THOSE WHO REJECT GOD'S TORAH WILL NOT BE THE BRIDE OF CHRIST

Because it was the duty of the priests in the Old Testament to teach the Torah of God to God's people and because ALL believers are called priests of God in the New Testament, God desires that ALL believers be priests before Him. Those who reject God's Torah, God has proclaimed will NOT be priests unto Him and therefore will NOT be God's Bride. In *Hosea 4:6* it is written:

"MY PEOPLE are destroyed for lack of knowledge: because THOU HAS REJECTED KNOWLEDGE, I will also reject thee, that THOU SHALL BE NO PRIEST TO ME: seeing thou hast FORGOTTEN THE LAW (Torah) of thy God, I will also forget thy children."

In this scripture passage, God is talking to HIS PEOPLE. God calls THE TORAH KNOWLEDGE. By rejecting the Torah (knowledge), God has declared

that we will not be priests before Him. God calls His Torah GREAT. In *Hosea 8:12* it is written:

"I have written to him THE GREAT THINGS OF MY LAW (Torah), but they were counted as a strange thing."

This passage indicates that there seems to be a perception problem from the way God sees His Torah and the way Christianity sees God's Torah. God calls His Torah GREAT but Christianity calls it a STRANGE THING.

The truth that God views His Torah as GREAT will allow us to understand the meaning of God's judgment upon His people as found in *Matthew 7:21-23* as it is written:

"Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven. Many will say to me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name? And in thy name have cast out devils? And in thy name done many wonderful works? And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you: depart from me, ye that work iniquity."

Many in Christendom have interpreted this passage to mean that those who are operating in the charismatic gifts of God are being condemned by Jesus. This explanation is derived from the conclusion of Jesus' statement following describing those who are operating in charismatic gifts when he uses the words *"Depart from me, ye that work iniquity."* However, the two key words in these verses are KNEW and INIQUITY, not that God's people are operating in Holy Spirit charismatic gifts. As we studied earlier in the book, the word, *"knew"* means *"to know intimately and have a deep personal relationship with God."* It does not mean salvation alone but knowing God involves being saved.

The second key word in these verses is the word, *"iniquity."* The word *"iniquity"* in *Matthew 7:23* is the Greek word, *"Anomia"*. It is the Strong's word 458 in the Greek dictionary. The Greek word *"noma"* comes from the Greek word, *"nomos"*. When the Septuagint (LXX) was written (the translation of the Hebrew scriptures into Greek), the word law (Torah) was translated as the Greek word, *"nomos"*. *Anomia* consists of two Greek words, the prefix *"a"* which means *"without"* and *"noma"* which means *"law"*. So Jesus is rebuking those who did mighty works in His name but were doing it without the knowledge of the Torah (*"anomia"*) which is translated in *Matthew 7:23* as *"iniquity."* Therefore, Jesus was rebuking that His people were operating in charismatic gifts while not keeping the Torah. Jesus was not rebuking His people for operating in Charismatic Holy Spirit manifestations because the manifestations come from the Spirit of God!

In *Matthew 24:12*, Jesus said one of the signs of His second coming is that people would no longer be living their lives according to the Torah as it is written:

"And because iniquity shall abound, the love of many shall wax cold."

Once again, the word, 'iniquity' in *Matthew 24:12* is the Greek word, "anomia." So, Jesus is stating that when He returns at His second coming, the people of the earth will not be living by the Torah of God.

MIXING PAGANISM WITH THE WORSHIP OF GOD

While it is God's perfect Will for ALL believers to be a kingdom of priests and to be the Bride of Christ, God gave us a pattern in the Old Testament that those who mix the worship of God with paganism and the ways of the world with the worship of the God of Israel, will be disqualified from being the Bride of Christ. In *1 Corinthians 10:11*, God tells us that those things which happened historically to the nation of Israel are a pattern of things to come concerning prophetic events in the Kingdom of God as it is written:

"Now all these things happened unto them (historical Israel) for examples: and they are written for our admonition upon whom the ends of the world are come."

Therefore, those things which happened to historical Israel are an example of FUTURE things to the believers in Christ as it is stated, "*the ends of the world are come.*" By understanding this truth, why didn't the NATION of Israel and ALL twelve tribes become priests before God even though this was God's Will? (*Exodus 19:5-6*). The answer is that the children of the God of Israel mixed the worship of the God of Israel with paganism and called it the worship of the God of Israel. This is the spiritual significance of the sin of the golden calf. In *Exodus 32:1*, it is written:

"And when the people saw that Moses delayed to come down out of the mount the people gathered themselves together unto Aaron, and said unto him; Up, make us gods, which shall go before us; for as for this Moses, the man that brought us up out of the land of Egypt, we wot not what is become of him."

In this passage, Moses is a type of Jesus. Following the resurrection of Jesus, the early church was expecting that He would return at His second coming within the next generation. When Jesus failed to return within a generation, the church leaders (a type of Aaron) led the people away from the faith of the first-century church and the teachings of Jesus and His disciples to keep the Sabbath, the Biblical Festivals

and the Torah. Several hundred years later, Christianity became separated from the original Jewish church which believed in Jesus as Messiah, kept the Sabbath, observed the Biblical Festivals and followed the Torah. In doing so, the Christian church began to mix the worship of God with the pagan religions around them.

For a greater understanding of the beliefs and practices of the early church in the days of Jesus, I recommend Dr. Ron Moseley's book, *"Yeshua: A Guide to the Real Jesus and the Original Church"*. Dr. Moseley is the president and founder of the Arkansas Institute of Holy Land Studies. The [Arkansas Institute of Holy Land Studies](#) is a four year college that studies the Jewish roots of Christianity and offers a bachelor's degree in Middle Eastern History. This book can be obtained at your local Christian bookstore or by contacting Serenity Books. In addition, I would recommend the book, *"Our Father Abraham,"* by Marvin Wilson, and the book, *"Jesus the Jewish Theologian"* by Dr. Brad Young.

The predominant religion in the Roman Empire during the time of Jesus and following his resurrection was Mithraism. The early church leaders began to mix Mithraism with the worship of God and adopted beliefs and practices which became known as Christianity under the leadership of the Roman Catholic Church.

Mithraism gave emphasis to the worship of the sun god. For example, the birthday of the sun god in Mithraism was December 25. The day of worship to the sun god in Mithraism was Sunday (sun day). When the Roman Empire no longer practiced Mithraism, the practices and beliefs of Mithraism were adapted into Christianity through the Roman Catholic Church. Consequently, during this time, the worship of the true God of Israel and Jesus as Messiah became mingled with the beliefs and practices of Mithraism. In doing so, Christianity committed the same sins as the children of Israel when Moses delayed to come down from Mount Sinai and encouraged Aaron to help them build a golden calf.

Therefore, what happened to Moses, Aaron and the children of Israel in *Exodus 32:1* was a foreshadowing of future Christianity. What happened when the people saw that Moses didn't come down from the mountain in the time frame that they expected? In *Exodus 32:4-6* it is written:

"And he received them at their hand, and fashioned it with a graving tool, after he had made it a molten calf and they said, These be thy gods, O Israel, which brought thee up out of the land of Egypt. And when Aaron saw it, he built an altar before it; and Aaron made proclamation and said, Tomorrow is a feast to the Lord. And they rose up early on the morrow, and offered burnt offerings, and brought peace offerings; and the people sat down to eat and to drink, and rose up to play."

In these verses, we can see that the golden calf that the people made was NOT to worship any god in Egypt. Instead, the golden calf is called the worship of the God of Israel. Aaron and the children of Israel built the golden calf and proclaimed

that they would make a "feast to the Lord" and offer "burnt offerings and peace offerings." A "feast to the Lord, burnt offerings and peace offerings" is how the God of Israel requested that His people worship Him. Therefore, the sin of the people was mixing the worship of the God of Israel with the ways of the world and paganism and calling this system of worship, the worship of the God of Israel. Historical Christianity has made this same mistake.

THE NORTHERN KINGDOM'S GOLDEN CALF WORSHIP OF GOD

The sin of the golden calf which involves mixing the worship of the God of Israel with the ways of the world and paganism was repeated by Jeroboam and the Northern Kingdom of Israel in *I Kings 12:25-33* as it is written:

"Then Jeroboam built Shechem in mount Ephraim, and dwelt therein; and went out from thence, and built Penuel. And Jeroboam said in his heart, Now shall the kingdom return to the house of David: If this people go up to do sacrifice in the house of the Lord at Jerusalem, then shall the heart of this people turn again unto their Lord, even unto Rehoboam king of Judah, and they shalt kill me, and go again to Rehoboam king of Judah. Whereupon the king took counsel, and made two calves of gold, and said unto them, It is too much for you to go up to Jerusalem: behold thy gods, O Israel, which brought thee up out of the land of Egypt. And he set the one in Bethel and the other put he in Dan. And this thing became a sin: for the people went to worship before the one, even unto Dan. And he made a house of high places, and made priests of the lowest of the people, which were not of the sons of Levi. And Jeroboam ordained a feast in the eighth month, on the fifteenth day of the month, like unto the feast that is in Judah, and he offered upon the altar. So did he in Bethel, sacrificing unto the calves that he had made: and he placed in Bethel the priests of the high places which he had made. So he offered upon the altar which he had made in Bethel the fifteenth day of the eighth month, even in the month which he had devised of his own heart; and ordained a feast unto the children of Israel: and he offered upon the altar, and burnt incense."

In *I Kings 12:25-33*, there are three vital aspects to the golden calf system of worship.

1. A substitute place of worship, Bethel and Dan, (*I Kings 12:28-29*) rather than Jerusalem which God had chosen (*Deuteronomy 16:16*)
2. A substitute priesthood, priests of the lowest of the people, which are not from the tribe of Levi (*I Kings 12:31*)

3. Substitute holidays, a feast of the Lord on the eighth month and the fifteenth day of the month (*I Kings 12:32*) rather than the seventh month and the fifteenth day as given by God in the Torah (*Leviticus 23:33-34*)

By departing from the Jewish roots of the faith that was practiced by Jesus, the disciples and the early church, historical Christianity has committed the same sins as the children of Israel who built the golden calf in the wilderness and the Northern Kingdom who went to worship God at Bethel and Dan. As a result, historical Christianity incorporated into their worship of God:

1. A substitute place of worship - the church rather than the synagogue
2. A substitute priesthood - pastors and priests who are not anointed and called by God to be in the ministry
3. Substitute holidays - Christmas and Easter rather than the Biblical Festivals given by God in Leviticus 23

Therefore, the cry of God's heart to His people today is to flee this golden calf and Babylonian system and celebrate the Sabbath, the Biblical Festivals and keep His Torah. This truth is communicated to us in *Revelation 18:4* as it is written:

"And I heard another voice from heaven, saying, come out of her (Babylon), my people, that ye be not partakers of her sins, and that you receive not of her plagues."

DAN AND BETHEL: GOD'S HOUSE OF JUDGMENT

Jeroboam had the people worship in two places, Bethel and Dan. These two places are prophetic. Bethel in Hebrew means, "*House of God*". Dan in Hebrew comes from the root word, "Din" which means "*judgment*". This was prophetic that the people called this worship, Bethel, "*The House of God*" but God called the place Dan, or "*Judgment*". Even so, in these last days, God will judge those in His church who do not come out of this Babylonian system of worship. Those who do will be persecuted from the church because of the church's bias against the Torah but the reward of God will be great. Those who refuse to leave this system will be judged by God through the rulers and powers of this world who will rob the church of its power and influence in the world.

THE LEVITES: STANDING FOR THE TORAH

In *Exodus 32*, the only tribe of the twelve tribes of Israel who stood for the Lord was the tribe of Levi. Therefore, the tribe of Levi became priests unto the Lord. In like manner, the faithful remnant in God's church today will be just like the tribe of Levi. They will understand that historical Christianity departed from the Jewish roots of its faith and will hear what the Spirit of God is saying to His church in these end times. When they understand, they will leave the golden calf system of worship instituted by historical Christianity and return to the Torah of God by keeping the Sabbath and the Biblical Festivals. By doing so, God will reward those who know and understand what the Spirit of God is saying to the churches by making them spiritual priests and Levites unto God in His Kingdom.

THE BRIDE IS A HOLY AND SANCTIFIED PEOPLE

Not only are we called by God to forsake a corporate golden calf system of worship but the Bride of Christ is commanded by God to leave the ways of the world and the desires of the flesh in living their personal lives. In doing so, God commanded for His people to live holy and sanctified lives. In *1 Corinthians 1:2* it is written:

"Unto the church of God which is at Corinth, to them that are sanctified in Christ Jesus, called to be saints, with all that in every place call upon the name of Jesus Christ our Lord, both theirs and ours"

In this verse, the apostle Paul is writing to believers in the church at Corinth and exhorting them to be a sanctified and holy people. The word, "saints" is the Greek word, "hagios" which means a "holy person." It is the Strong's word 40 in the Greek dictionary. Therefore, we see two characteristics of those who name the name of Christ. They are to be both holy and sanctified. The Bride of Christ will be both holy and sanctified (*Ephesians 5:26-27*).

It was the desire of the Apostle Paul that he present the believers whom God gave him rule over as a "chaste virgin." In 2 Corinthians 11:2 it is written:

"For I am jealous over you with godly jealousy: for I have espoused you to one husband, that I may present you as a chaste virgin to Christ."

In the verse, we can see that the Apostle Paul wanted to present the believers in Corinth as a "chaste" virgin to Christ. The word, "chaste" is the Greek word, "hagnos". It is the Strong's word 53 in the Greek dictionary. The Greek word, "hagnos" is related to the word "saint" or holy person which is the Greek word, "hagios." Therefore, once again, we can see that the Apostle Paul wanted to see the believers at Corinth grow to spiritual maturity and be a sanctified and holy people.

In 1 Thessalonians 4:1-7 we can see that God wants His people to be holy and sanctified and separated from the ways of the world and the desires of the flesh as it is written:

"Furthermore then we beseech you, brethren, and exhort you by the Lord Jesus, that as you have received of us how ye ought to walk and to please God, so ye would abound more and more. For ye know what commandments we gave you by the Lord Jesus. For this is the will of God even your sanctification, that ye should abstain from fornication: That every one of you should know how to possess his vessel in sanctification and honor. Not in the lust of concupiscence, even as the Gentiles which know not God: That no man go beyond and defraud his brother in any matter: because that the Lord is the avenger of all such, as we also have forewarned you and testified. For God hath not called us unto uncleanness, but unto holiness."

In these verses, we can see that the Apostle Paul is writing to the church at Thessalonica and exhorting the people to flee the ways of the world and the desires of the flesh and be a sanctified and holy people unto God. We can see this same truth in 2 Timothy 2:19-22 as it is written:

"Nevertheless the foundation of God standeth sure, having this seal, The Lord knoweth them that are his. And, Let every one that nameth the name of Christ depart from iniquity. But in a great house there are not only vessels of gold and silver, but also of wood and of earth; and some to honor, and some to dishonor. If a man therefore purge himself from these, he shall be a vessel unto honor, sanctified, and meet for the master's use, and prepared unto every good work. Flee also youthful lusts: but follow righteousness, faith, charity, peace, with them that call on the Lord out of a pure heart."

Therefore, once again, the exhortation is for God's people to flee sin and to serve God and to be a sanctified people unto Him so that they can be fit for the master's use. In like manner, the Bride of Christ is not only saved but she becomes sanctified through her righteous living by fleeing sin and the ways of the world. By doing this, she will have a deep and personal knowledge of God and keep His commandments.

THE BRIDE OF CHRIST WILL TEACH THE TORAH TO THE NATIONS

As priests before God, the eternal destiny of the Bride of Christ is to teach the Torah to all nations and to dwell in the heavenly Jerusalem with God for all eternity. Many in Christianity have misunderstood the great commission of Jesus. In *Matthew 28:1* it is written:

"And Jesus came and spoke unto them, saying, All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth. Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost. Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you ... "

Within Christianity, this scripture is most often interpreted to mean preach the salvation message to all peoples on the earth. While it is true and VERY necessary that the message of salvation be preached to ALL peoples on the earth, Jesus commanded His disciples in this passage to *"TEACH ALL NATIONS to observe all things"*.

A teacher in Hebrew is a Rabbi. Jesus was a Rabbi and his disciples were "students". The word disciple is the Hebrew word, "Talmidim" which means "a student". Therefore, the great commission of Jesus to His disciples was to make believers of all nations and make the believers of all nations students of God's Word. The *"observe all things"* would have been understood by the Torah-observant Jewish disciples of Jesus to teach the nations how to keep the Torah.

The call, destiny and commissioning of the Bride of Christ is to teach the Torah of God to all nations. This will be fulfilled during the 1,000-year Messianic Age and also throughout all eternity. In *Isaiah 2:2-3* it is written:

"And it shall come to pass in the last days, that the mountain of the Lord's house shall be established in the top of the mountains, and shall be exalted above the hills; and all nations shall flow unto it. And many people shall go and

say, Come ye, and let us go up to the mountain of the Lord, to the house of the God of Jacob; and he will teach us his ways, and we will walk in his paths: for out of Zion (God's Bride) shall go forth the Law (Torah), and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem."

Isaiah 2:2-3 is the scripture which refers to the great Messianic hope when the Messiah will rule from Jerusalem and the Torah will be taught to all nations. This will be fulfilled by the Bride of Christ during the Messianic Age when the Bride of Christ will rule and reign with the Messiah for 1,000 years (*Revelation 20:6*).

Not only will the Torah go forth from Jerusalem during the 1,000-year Messianic Age but the Torah will go forth from the heavenly Jerusalem, the city of the Bride, during all eternity after God creates a new heaven and a new earth. Those who dwell outside the heavenly city of Jerusalem during eternity will be saved and spend forever in heaven but will not dwell in the city of Jerusalem which is the city of the Bride. This can be seen in *Revelation 21:9-10, 24-26* as it is written:

"... Come hither, I will show thee the bride, the Lamb's wife. And he carried me away in the spirit to a great and high mountain, and showed me a great city, the holy Jerusalem, descending out of heaven from God ... And the nations which are saved (believers who are saved and will spend eternity in heaven) shall walk in the light of it (the glory of the bride and the city of Jerusalem) and the kings of the earth do bring their glory and honor into it. And the gates of it shall not be shut at all by day: for there shall be no night there. And they shall bring the glory and honor of the nations into it."

SUMMARY

In conclusion, in this chapter, we examined that the Bride of Christ is a Royal Priesthood. Just as God desired the entire nation of Israel to be priests before God, He desires that ALL believers be priests unto Him. However, because of the worship of the golden calf, only the tribe of Levi became God's priests. The golden calf represents the mixing of the ways of the world and paganism with the worship of the God of Israel and calling this worship, the true worship of the God of Israel. Historically, Christianity has committed the same sins as the children of Israel in the desert and the Northern Kingdom of Israel when they instituted a golden calf system of worship unto God.

It was the role of the priests in the Old Testament to teach God's Torah to His people. During the Messianic Age and then for all eternity, the Bride of Christ will teach God's Torah to all the nations on the earth. Those who reject God's Torah will not be the Bride of Christ because they have rejected the knowledge and understanding of God and His Kingdom (*Hosea 4:6*).

All Christians who accept Jesus Christ as their personal Lord and Savior and are forgiven of their sins will be in heaven. However, not all Christians who are saved will be the Bride of Christ. Only those believers who love God with all their heart, mind, soul and strength, who grow to full spiritual maturity and who do the perfect Will of God in their lives will be the royal priesthood of God and the Bride of Christ. The Bride of Christ is a royal priesthood. This is the high calling of God for every believer who accepts Jesus as Messiah. May we all be found worthy!