

The Priestly Covenant and the Millennial Kingdom - Part 2 (Jeremiah 33:14-22)^a

© 2015 Tony Garland^b

Sharing from God's Word for two Wednesdays

1. **Last week - set the stage for a better understanding of what is perhaps the most neglected covenant in the Bible: the *priestly covenant***
2. **Tonight - look in greater detail at this neglected covenant and its relation to the temple in the millennial kingdom**

Principles from last week

1. **How is God's Word is attacked**
 - A. **Low view: external/internal attacks**
 - B. **High view: meaning/interpretation questioned**
2. **The importance of interpreting rightly**
 - A. **The OT is not inferior to the NT and must be able to stand on its own**
 - B. **The meaning of OT passages cannot depend on information which only became available hundreds of years later**
 - C. **Progressive revelation cannot deny or substantially change the meaning of what God has already said**
 - D. **Once stated in the OT, God doesn't have to repeat things in the NT for them to remain true**
 - E. **God highlights certain promises by way of covenants**
 - I. **Everything God says is 100% reliable**
 - II. **Covenants are his way of formalizing promises and underlining them for us**
3. **Why important?**
 - A. **Spiritualization of OT passages which remain unfulfilled**
 - B. **Denial of future geopolitical kingdom with Jesus on throne in Jerusalem: the millennial kingdom**
 - C. **Denial of literal millennial temple**

- D. **If God *does* intend to literally reign from Jerusalem, complete with a literal temple, how else could He have said it?**

4. Relation to the priestly covenant

- A. **Taking the covenant at face value leads us to passages concerning the millennial temple**
- B. **Understanding the priestly covenant provides yet more evidence that the descriptions of the millennium and its temple must be understood literally, not figuratively or spiritually**

The Priestly Covenant (again)

1. Jeremiah 33:14-22

[14] 'Behold, the days are coming,' says the LORD, 'that I will perform that good thing which I have promised to the house of Israel and to the house of Judah: [15] 'In those days and at that time I will cause to grow up to David A Branch of righteousness; He shall execute judgment and righteousness in the earth. [16] In those days Judah will be saved, And Jerusalem will dwell safely. And this is the name by which she will be called: THE LORD OUR RIGHTEOUSNESS' [17] "For thus says the LORD: 'David shall never lack a man to sit on the throne of the house of Israel; [18] nor shall the priests, the Levites, lack a man to offer burnt offerings before Me, to kindle grain offerings, and to sacrifice continually.' " [19] And the word of the LORD came to Jeremiah, saying, [20] "Thus says the LORD: 'If you can break My covenant with the day and My covenant with the night, so that there will not be day and night in their season, [21] then My covenant may also be broken with David My servant, so that he shall not have a son to reign on his throne, and with the Levites, the priests, My ministers. [22] As the host of heaven cannot be numbered, nor the sand of the sea measured, so will I multiply the descendants of David My servant and the Levites who minister to Me.' " (Jeremiah 33:14–22)¹

2. Who fulfills the king part?

3. Who fulfills the priest part? Jesus? Why or why not?

- A. **Nelson Study Bible: "The Levitical priesthood would likewise be heirs to a divine succession in overseeing the sacrificial system in the Jerusalem temple. Jesus, as Priest and King, fulfills both offices in the New Covenant."**
- B. **Concerning the role of Jesus as an eternal priest in the order of Melchizedek, the writer of Hebrews tells us**
- I. **Heb. 7:11-14 - Therefore, if perfection were through the Levitical priesthood (for under it the people received the law), what further need was there that another priest should rise according to the order of Melchizedek, and not be called according to the order of Aaron? For the priesthood being changed, of necessity there is also a change of the law. For He of whom these things are spoken belongs to another tribe, from which no man has officiated at the altar. For it is evident that our Lord arose from Judah, of which tribe Moses**

spoke nothing concerning priesthood.

- C. If Jesus had to be a *physical descendant* in the line of Judah to qualify as Messiah, how can it be said he doesn't have to be a *physical descendant* in the line of Levi to fulfill the similar promise to Levi?
- D. If Jesus can fulfill the promise of an ongoing Levitical priesthood in this passage without being a descendant of Levi, then what stops someone else from claiming to qualify as Messiah without being a physical descendant of David?
- E. It is just at passages such as this that our rules of sound interpretation **MUST** guide us
 - I. It simply won't do to "spiritualize" the meaning away
 - a. **Albert Barnes: *This promise also has been not literally, but spiritually fulfilled, for in this sense only have the seed of David and the Levites been multiplied.***

4. The problem: Jeremiah clearly states something which

- A. Has never been fulfilled in history past
- B. Predicts something many Christians cannot (will not?) accept: a future Levitical priesthood in a future literal temple

5. The interpretive solution is two-fold

- A. Follow plain meaning, especially where covenant promises are involved
- B. Look for other passages of Scripture to confirm what is said and shed further light
- C. The Bible is the best interpreter of the Bible!
- D. This is where the priestly covenant comes in to help

6. Millennial clues

- A. In those days and at that time . . .
 - I. He shall execute judgment and righteousness in the earth (Jer. **33:15**)
 - II. Judah shall be saved and Jerusalem will dwell safely (Jer. **33:16**)
 - III. Jerusalem called *YHWH tsidkenu*, "the Lord, the righteousness of us" (Jer. **33:16**)
- B. Interestingly, the priestly covenant also leads us to the millennium

7. A priestly “line of promise”

- A. (Two primary ways to study Scripture: verse-by-verse and topically, using cross-references.)
- B. Levi
- I. Num. **8:14-16** - . . . *you shall separate the Levites from among the children of Israel, and the Levites shall be Mine. After that the Levites shall go in to service the tabernacle of meeting. So you shall cleanse them and offer them like a wave offering. For they are wholly given to Me from among the children of Israel; I have taken them for Myself instead of all who open the womb, the firstborn of all the children of Israel.*
 - II. Basis for special treatment of Levi: their zeal for God (Ex. **32:26-28**)
 - III. Mal. **2:4** - *“Then you shall know that I have sent this commandment to you [the priests], That My covenant with Levi may continue,” Says the LORD of hosts. “My covenant was with him, one of life and peace, And I gave them to him that he might fear Me; So he feared Me And was reverent before My name.”*
- C. Aaron given eternal priesthood
- I. Ex. **18:8,19** - *And the Lord spoke to Aaron . . . All the heave offerings of the holy things, which the children of Israel offer to the LORD, I have given to you and your sons and daughters with you as an ordinance forever; it is a covenant of salt forever before the LORD with you and your descendants with you.*
 - II. Ex. **29:9** - *And you shall gird them with sashes, Aaron and his sons, and put the hats on them. The priesthood shall be theirs for a perpetual statute. So you shall consecrate Aaron and his sons.*
- D. Promise to grandson Phinehas (Num. **25:6-13**)
- I. Num. **25:6-8** - *And indeed, one of the children of Israel came and presented to his brethren a Midianite woman in the sight of Moses and in the sight of all the congregation of the children of Israel, who were weeping at the door of the tabernacle of meeting. Now when Phinehas the son of Eleazar, the son of Aaron the priest, saw it, he rose from among the congregation and took a javelin in his hand; and he went after the man of Israel into the tent and thrust both of them through, the man of Israel, and the woman through her body. So the plague was stopped among the children of Israel.*
 - II. Num. **25:11-13** - *Phinehas the son of Eleazar, the son of Aaron the priest, has turned back My wrath from the children of Israel, because he was zealous with My zeal among them, so that I did not consume the children of Israel in My zeal. Therefore say, 'Behold, I give to him My covenant of peace; and it*

shall be to him and his descendants after him a covenant of an everlasting priesthood, because he was zealous for his God, and made atonement for the children of Israel.'

- a. (Note about zeal)
- b. (Our ministry is vastly different today)

E. Promise as good as David's (Jer. [33:18-21](#))

F. Now for a curve ball: the infidelity of Levites

- I. Ne. [13:28-29](#) - ***And one of the sons of Joiada, the son of Eliashib the high priest, was a son-in-law of Sanballat the Horonite; therefore I drove him from me. Remember them, O my God, because they have defiled the priesthood and the covenant of the priesthood and the Levites.***
- II. Mal. [2:7-9](#) - ***“For the lips of a priest should keep knowledge, And people should seek the law from his mouth; For he is the messenger of the LORD of hosts. But you have departed from the way; You have caused many to stumble at the law. You have corrupted the covenant of Levi.” Says the LORD of hosts. “Therefore I also have made you contemptible and base Before all the people, Because you have not kept My ways But have shown partiality in the law.”***
- III. Eze. [44:10-13](#) - ***“And the Levites who went far from Me, when Israel went astray, who strayed away from Me after their idols, they shall bear their iniquity. Yet they shall be ministers in My sanctuary, as gatekeepers of the house and ministers of the house; they shall slay the burnt offering and the sacrifice for the people, and they shall stand before them to minister to them. Because they ministered to them before their idols and caused the house of Israel to fall into iniquity, therefore I have raised My hand in an oath against them,” says the Lord GOD, “that they shall bear their iniquity. And they shall not come near Me to minister to Me as priest, nor come near any of My holy things, nor into the Most Holy Place; but they shall bear their shame and their abominations which they have committed.”***
- IV. Uh-oh, has the priestly covenant has been annulled by the infidelity of the Levites?

G. Faithfulness of Zadok

- I. Zadok was a priest of the house of Eleazar, the son of Aaron (1Chr. [24:3](#))
- II. He joined David at Hebron after Saul's death (1Chr. [12:28](#))
- III. Faithful to David when Absalom, David's son, arose against David (2S. [19:11](#))
- IV. Faithful to Solomon when Adonijah, another of David's sons, attempted to

take the kingdom instead of Solomon (1K. 1:34)

- V. Solomon awarded his faithfulness by appointing him as priest in place of Abiathor (1K. 2:27,35)
- VI. Line of descent: from Levites (1Chr. 6:1-8)
 - a. LEVI → Kohath → Amram → Moses (not a priest) → AARON → Eleazar → PHINEHAS → Abishua → Bukki → Uzzi → Zerariah → Meraioth → Amariah → Ahitub → ZADOK

H. Millennial priests are in line of Zadok

- I. Eze. 40:46 - *"The chamber which faces north is for the priests who have charge of the altar; these are the sons of Zadok, from the sons of Levi, who come near the LORD to minister to Him.*
- II. Eze. 43:19 - *'You shall give a young bull for a sin offering to the priests, the Levites, who are of the seed of Zadok, who approach Me to minister to Me,' says the Lord GOD.*
- III. Eze. 44:15 - *"But the priests, the Levites, the sons of Zadok, who kept charge of My sanctuary when the children of Israel went astray from Me, they shall come near Me to minister to Me; and they shall stand before Me to offer to Me the fat and the blood," says the Lord GOD.*
- IV. Eze. 48:11 - *"It shall be for the priests of the sons of Zadok, who are sanctified, who have kept My charge, who did not go astray when the children of Israel went astray, as the Levites went astray.*

8. The promise in Jeremiah 33 regarding the line of Levi is for real

- A. It finds its fulfillment in the descendants of Levi's great-great-great-great (12 times!) grandson Zadok
 - I. Substantial evidence: the millennial kingdom is a future geopolitical reality
 - II. The millennial temple will also be a real temple with a real priesthood offering real sacrifices
 - III. (Just like the animal sacrifices in the OT, the millennial sacrifices neither contribute to nor take away from the work of Christ.)
- B. More than that: we can always take God at His Word
- C. Struggling to understand difficult passages yields a higher view of God and a richer understanding of His Word
 - I. We gain a deeper appreciation of the interwoven, carefully-crafted nature of

the Bible—written by over 40 human authors over a period of hundreds of years, but superintended by one Divine Author: the Holy Spirit

- D. Spiritualizing and allegorizing what God has plainly said inhibits our understanding of God and our Christian growth**
- I. When we take the “easy answer” and ignore the details, we robbed ourselves of a true understanding of what God has said**
 - II. We unwittingly side with Satan by questioning what God has said: “Has God indeed said?” (Gen. 3:1)**

Personal Lessons

1. **God responds to zeal and dedication.**
2. **We can influence our own heritage and that of our offspring by our zeal and dedication.**
3. **Zeal isn’t good enough: *faithfulness* is also required.**
 - A. **Levi had zeal, but in the long run, his descendants lacked faithfulness.**
4. **You can’t expect to get near to God unless you have zeal, dedication *and* faithfulness.**
5. **Obedience to God and great respect for God are prerequisites for those who seek to approach Him (Lev. 10:3).**

Thu Jun 18 09:40:23 2015



SpiritAndTruth.org Scan Code[©]

Endnotes:

1. **NKJV**, (Jeremiah 33:14-22)

Sources:

NKJV Unless indicated otherwise, all Scripture references are from the *New King James Version*, copyright © 1982 by Thomas Nelson, Inc. Used by permission. All rights reserved.

Links Mentioned Above

a - See

http://www.spiritandtruth.org/teaching/topics_by_tony_garland/18_The_Priestly_Covenant_and_the_Millennial_Kingdom/index.htm.

b - See <http://www.spiritandtruth.org/id/tg.htm>.

c - See <http://www.spiritandtruth.org>.