

AUGUST 18th
GOD'S PRIESTS

“Then bring near to you Aaron your brother, and his sons with him, from among the people of Israel, to serve me as priests—Aaron and Aaron’s sons, Nadab and Abihu, Eleazar and Ithamar. And you shall make holy garments for Aaron your brother, for glory and for beauty. You shall speak to all the skillful, whom I have filled with a spirit of skill, that they make Aaron’s garments to consecrate him for my priesthood.” **EXODUS 28:1-3**

Full-service gas stations versus self-serve gas stations. Oddly enough (or maybe not odd for you), the only State to still require full-service gas stations is New Jersey. However, it didn’t use to be that way. All gas stations were full-service and gave not just gas but performed basic car maintenance like checking tire pressure and filling up the window washer fluid. As pressure built to lower costs for doing business, this service has been largely made extinct. Now we pump our own gas, check our tire pressure, and add washer fluid. We don’t need someone to do it for us anymore. We can do it ourselves. Well, here in Exodus 28 and 29, we see that we need someone to act as our representative before God. Even as we can see a visible representation for God at the Tent of Meeting, we cannot come close to God’s presence. We need a mediator. It’s here that God appoints priests to serve. What does God teach us here?

It’s important to point out at this place that priests did not take this “mantle” upon themselves. Aaron didn’t wake up one day and say, “Hey, I think I’m going to represent the people and go minister in God’s presence.” It was a calling given by God, a special calling at that. Aaron has already been chosen by God to be Moses’ assistant when Moses spoke before Pharaoh. God gives him a special calling and gives it to his sons also. This makes a parallel to God’s men that are called as elders in the local church. They don’t just raise their hand and claim this role. It is placed upon them by God, especially those who are set apart as the main teachers of the Bible. Make no mistake about it, the main teaching elder isn’t an employee like you think of any other calling. Instead, teachers of the Bible are “ordained” just like Aaron and his sons and are held to a stricter account than others because they teach the Bible (Hebrews 13:17, James 3:1). Men, please pray for the elders in your local church that they remain faithful to God’s calling.

Here we begin thinking about the clothing of the priest. God uses everything here to teach us something about the role of the priest. While the ephod does contain mystery, what we do know can be helpful to us. First, notice what the ephod (robe of the priest) is carrying on top of it: “...The breastpiece shall not come loose from the ephod. So Aaron shall bear the names of the sons of Israel in the breastpiece of judgment on his heart, when he goes into the Holy Place, to bring them to regular remembrance before the Lord.” As the priest prepares to offer sacrifices on behalf of the people, he bears the names of all the tribes of Israel. This is a key truth...he acts as the mediator between the people and God. The stones on the breastpiece have all the names of the tribes on them. The people can find confidence that they are forgiven because a sacrifice is given for them by a mediator.

There’s one major problem with the priest. Can you guess what it is? The priest stands guilty before God just like the rest of the people. That’s why Exodus 29 unpacks how the priest has a sacrifice made for them also. This truth shouts even more for a Substitute Priest that is pure and spotless. Hebrews 4 unpacks this truth about Jesus: “Since then we have a great high priest who has passed through the heavens, Jesus, the Son of God, let us hold fast our confession. ¹⁵ For we do not have a high priest who is unable to sympathize with our weaknesses, but one who in every respect has been tempted as we are, yet without sin.” Yet without sin! He was 100% God and 100% man. The only one who remained sinless...so He can present Himself as a sacrifice and the sacrifice is accepted. The consecration of the priests points forward to Jesus as the sacrifice that paves the way for our

forgiveness. He is a supreme High Priest that offers the sacrifice once for all! What an amazing priest that we have!

Spend some time thinking about Jesus position as High Priest, Prophet, and King. He is the only one that fulfills all three offices that the Father requires. Ask Him to give you an attitude of gratitude for His complete work for you.

For Further Reading: Hebrews 4:11-5:10