

# The Priesthood Covenant of Judah is Mankind's Only Hope



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## **The Priesthood Covenant of Judah is Mankind's Only Hope!**

It is something that we all have read - but it is also something that we (well most of us anyway) have also not read. How's that for a conundrum? Who would have thought that the Levitical priesthood would not produce the high priest figure for the royal priesthood of the order of King Melchizedec that would take mankind into Salvation? Surely we would have thought that the Levitical Covenant was forever and the Levitical priesthood would see their salvation and lead all others into belief along the way.

So, are we touching on some fringe ideology just for the humbug value of upsetting our Jewish cousins? And even that is another good question that might otherwise stoke up some red hot coals out of the blacksmith's forge. The reality of the title of this article sits very clearly in plain sight within our Hebrew and Greek scriptures and hence the conundrum in the opening sentence.

There is a story we can follow all the way from Genesis down to our current times. It typifies a truism - that solutions to today's issues are in essence rooted back in the Beginning's period when God chose to bring forth Adam and Eve into a world occupied by indigenous Hominin man, and in this case we have by no coincidence a new family of humans whom God chose to uniquely equip and nurture and who would become the most significant and important race above all other humans for the entirety of mankind's existence on planet Earth and the hereafter.

From their fledgling beginnings, the family of Adam and Eve (Adam and Chavvah) and their familial offspring would build upon the Earth a stone highway that would traverse down through the millenniums to facilitate the roll out of God's grand plan for the redemption of mankind. We can trace The Redemption Plan through the generations as each advancing step was rammed into its place with the impact of a celestial pile-driver with no retreat from its directed course. Though many have endeavoured to de-rail this plan, and many more in the future will bring to bear all of the combined forces of evil against it we also see into the future through the Word of God recorded in our Hebrew and Greek scripts and observe that the victory of God over Evil has already been won rendering Evil powerless to prevail against the redemption of God's children back to their father.

In the course of this journey through time we saw the Hebrew nation develop from its roots in the Garden of Eden; we saw how it successfully navigated passed the celestial assault upon mankind and animal-kind alike and surviving the global deluge in Noah's ark, and we saw the rise of Abraham, a prince in the land of the East, leading directly to the birth of Israel through Jacob. We also

saw the House of Israel sojourn down into Egypt and through four hundred years of hard rigour and slavery observed their extrication from Pharaoh by the hand of God through Moses; and what was a fledgling House of seventy souls entering Egypt, we saw a nation of over one million exit with skills and training in all aspects of civil, civic and domestic development, and finally we saw this nation take its place upon the world's stage as the apple of God's eye and the pre-eminent host for God's abiding will.

It was in the period immediately post the escape of the descendants of Jacob from Pharaoh's pursuing army by crossing the Red Sea and entering into the wilderness that the nation was divided along their patriarchal familial lines into twelve tribes out of which the Tribe of Levi was chosen to undertake the duties of tabernacle service and in particular the sanctification of Aaron, Moses' brother, for service as High Priest to God. This was not an unusual choice given that Moses and his siblings were of the House of Levi, being born to Amray through their grandfather, Kohath, and Levi, their great-grandfather.

Moses never knew his great-grand father who passed away nearly three hundred years before his birth, and this will explain why, in a few short generations from entering Egypt, that the House of Jacob lost the knowledge of God being the creator of all things and the life-giver to their forebears in the Garden of Eden.

We can read from the Hebrew scripts that when Moses came upon the burning bush and communed with God, that in the course of conversation he sought to know to whom he was speaking, and furthermore, sought the name of God so he could make explanation to the enslaved children of Israel locked up in Egypt. Clearly there had been a very strong pagan influence over the whole Hebrew family for them to have put God completely out of their consciousness.

The Hebrew scripts are very clear about the Tribe of Levi undertaking service to God:

*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.<sup>1</sup>*

*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*

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<sup>1</sup> Exodus 27:21

*office, even Aaron, Nadab and Abihu, Eleazar and Ithamar, Aaron's sons.<sup>2</sup>*

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*And this is the thing that thou shalt do unto them to hallow them, to minister unto me in the priest's office.<sup>3</sup>*

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*And it shall be Aaron's and his sons' by a statute for ever from the children of Israel: for it is an heave offering: and it shall be an heave offering from the children of Israel of the sacrifice of their peace offerings, even their heave offering unto the LORD.<sup>4</sup>*

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*And I will sanctify the tabernacle of the congregation, and the altar: I will sanctify also both Aaron and his sons, to minister to me in the priest's office.*

*And I will dwell among the children of Israel, and will be their God. And they shall know that I am the LORD their God, that brought them forth out of the land of Egypt, that I may dwell among them: I am the LORD their God.<sup>5</sup>*

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*And thou shalt anoint Aaron and his sons, and consecrate them, that they may minister unto me in the priest's office.<sup>6</sup>*

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*And thou shalt bring Aaron and his sons unto the door of the tabernacle of the congregation, and wash them with water.*

*And thou shalt put upon Aaron the holy garments, and anoint him, and sanctify him; that he may minister unto me in the priest's office.*

*And thou shalt bring his sons, and clothe them with coats:*

*And thou shalt anoint them, as thou didst anoint their father that they may minister unto me in the priest's office: for their anointing shall surely be an everlasting priesthood throughout their generations.<sup>7</sup>*

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<sup>2</sup> Exodus 28:1

<sup>3</sup> Exodus 29:1

<sup>4</sup> Exodus 29:28

<sup>5</sup> Exodus 29:44-46

<sup>6</sup> Exodus 30:30

<sup>7</sup> Exodus 40:12-15

*And, behold, one of the children of Israel came and brought unto his brethren a Midianitish woman in the sight of Moses, and in the sight of all the congregation of the children of Israel, who were weeping before the door of the tabernacle of the congregation.*

*And when Phinehas, the son of Eleazar, the son of Aaron the priest, saw it, he rose up 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.<sup>8</sup>*

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*Phinehas, the son of Eleazar, the son of Aaron the priest, hath turned my wrath away from the children of Israel, while he was zealous for my sake among them, that I consumed not the children of Israel in my jealousy.*

*Wherefore say, Behold, I give unto him my covenant of peace:*

*And he shall have it, and his seed after him, even the covenant of an everlasting priesthood; because he was zealous for his God, and made an atonement for the children of Israel.<sup>9</sup>*

And very clearly we see the separation of the Tribe of Levi under Aaron as High Priest to serve God in the Tabernacle. And because God had made an everlasting covenant with the Tribe of Levi, their holy service would extend long into the future, or as the scriptures read, “Everlasting”.

The behaviour of Phinehas is worthy of note that “*he was zealous for my sake among them*” and this attracted God’s attention in what was a very dicey situation with regard to the Children of Israel who had so quickly fallen into iniquity in plain sight, and it is Phinehas’ enthusiasm and commitment to God at that time that we shall contrast later in this article.

From these early days we do get the sense that the family of Levi were enthusiastic and committed to God, although we may raise an eye brow as to why in his earlier days Aaron made that golden beast for the transgressing members of the Hebrew tribes. Never-the-less the Levitical priesthood was consummated into service to God and through that familial lineage the office of High Priest whose higher duties in relation to all the services in the Temple on Yom Kippur could be carried out only by the High Priest. No one was allowed to enter the Holy of Holies at any time except the High Priest on this particular day when he entered to atone for his people.

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<sup>8</sup> Numbers 25:6-8

<sup>9</sup> Numbers 25:11-13

The High Priestly role came with much influence in a political sense; it served as a judge over many issues within the community and ruled over the other members of the priestly tribe. The High Priest wore special apparel and in particular carried within his breastplate the Urim and Thummim which today is not fully understood, however the Talmudic tradition is that it was not a separate object but represented the miraculous illumination of certain letters of the stones contained on the breastplate to convey God's will on any given matter. In a humanist perspective the High Priestly role would have been seen as a position to be desired for its inclusion of having much power and was, as we shall read, coveted by rulers of invading nations.

Now to say that the life and times of the twelve Tribes of Israel were blessed with the peace of God as they cruised down the generations in their habitation of a land filled with milk and honey is just the opposite of the reality. A reasonable assessment of the behaviour of the Children of Israel would be that they were resistant to having law imposed upon them and at almost every opportunity would kick against God's abiding will for them in a way that points to a very strong urge to not be obedient to the systemic codification of divine laws.

Now without going off topic here, we know of course that the Children of Israel were put through this period that rigidly held them under 613 laws for the specific purpose that they should understand – and more importantly that future generations of mankind would see, that it is the Law that identifies disobedience in us all. And of course that disobedience reflects the human submission to the power of sin. So we can say that the Hebrew nation was pressed into obeying God's divine law for the benefit of the whole human race into the future. Nothing has changed at all in this regard as we today still have a law to obey if we wish to be faithful to our Lord in Salvation. (This is a matter for deep reflection on one's approach to life.)

And kick back against these laws the Children of Israel certainly did. But don't be too hasty to criticise. We today in the world-over are, if anything, worse in our rejection of God and we need to look at their example of where their actions led them. Another matter for deep reflection!

It was the disobedience against the will of God's that lead directly to the period of judges being appointed to administer over Israel.

*And an angel of the LORD came up from Gilgal to Bochim, and said, I made you to go up out of Egypt, and have brought you unto the land which I sware unto your fathers; and I said, I will never break my covenant with you.*

*And ye shall make no league with the inhabitants of this land; ye shall throw down their altars: but ye have not obeyed my voice: why have ye done this?*

*Wherefore I also said, I will not drive them out from before you; but they shall be as thorns in your sides, and their gods shall be a snare unto you.*

*And it came to pass, when the angel of the LORD spake these words unto all the children of Israel, that the people lifted up their voice, and wept. And they called the name of that place Bochim: and they sacrificed there unto the LORD.*

*And when Joshua had let the people go, the children of Israel went every man unto his inheritance to possess the land.*

*And the people served the LORD all the days of Joshua, and all the days of the elders that outlived Joshua, who had seen all the great works of the LORD, that he did for Israel.*

*And Joshua the son of Nun, the servant of the LORD, died, being an hundred and ten years old.*

*And they buried him in the border of his inheritance in Timnathheres, in the mount of Ephraim, on the north side of the hill Gaash.*

*And also all that generation were gathered unto their fathers: and there arose another generation after them, which knew not the LORD, nor yet the works which he had done for Israel.*

*And the children of Israel did evil in the sight of the LORD, and served Baalim:*

*And they forsook the LORD God of their fathers, which brought them out of the land of Egypt, and followed other gods, of the gods of the people that were round about them, and bowed themselves unto them, and provoked the LORD to anger. And they forsook the LORD, and served Baal and Ashtaroth.*

*And the anger of the LORD was hot against Israel, and he delivered them into the hands of spoilers that spoiled them, and he sold them into the hands of their enemies round about, so that they could not any longer stand before their enemies.*

*Whithersoever they went out, the hand of the LORD was against them for evil, as the LORD had said, and as the LORD had sworn unto them: and they were greatly distressed.*

*Nevertheless the LORD raised up judges, which delivered them out of the hand of those that spoiled them. And yet they would not hearken unto their judges, but they went a whoring after other gods, and bowed themselves unto them: they turned quickly out of the way which their fathers walked in, obeying the commandments of the LORD; but they did not so.*

*And when the LORD raised them up judges, then the LORD was with the judge, and delivered them out of the hand of their enemies all the days of the judge: for it repented the LORD because of their groanings by reason of them that oppressed them and vexed them.*

*And it came to pass, when the judge was dead, that they returned, and corrupted themselves more than their fathers, in following other gods to serve them, and to bow down unto them; they ceased not from their own doings, nor from their stubborn way.*

*And the anger of the LORD was hot against Israel; and he said, because that this people hath transgressed my covenant which I commanded their fathers, and have not hearkened unto my voice; I also will not henceforth drive out any from before them of the nations which Joshua left when he died:*

*That through them I may prove Israel, whether they will keep the way of the LORD to walk therein as their fathers did keep it, or not.<sup>10</sup>*

This account typifies the early relationship between the Children of Israel and God. Even under the superintendency of Moses there were rebellions and discontent within the tribes. The transition of leadership from Moses to Joshua went well, however we can see in the text above that major issues arose when the tribes did not clear the pagan inhabitants from the lands of Canaan but went into league with them. It was the pagan practises of serving their gods and the associated wanton life-styles that became a snare for them right throughout their Temple era.

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<sup>10</sup> Judges 2:1-22

A further example of the need for judges comes also from the Book of Judges and shows us just what the roles of Judge and prophet were.

*And the children of Israel did evil in the sight of the LORD: and the LORD delivered them into the hand of Midian seven years.*

*And the hand of Midian prevailed against Israel: and because of the Midianites the children of Israel made them the dens which are in the mountains, and caves, and strong holds.*

*And so it was, when Israel had sown, that the Midianites came up, and the Amalekites, and the children of the east, even they came up against them;*

*And they encamped against them, and destroyed the increase of the earth, till thou come unto Gaza, and left no sustenance for Israel, neither sheep, nor ox, nor ass.*

*For they came up with their cattle and their tents, and they came as grasshoppers for multitude; for both they and their camels were without number: and they entered into the land to destroy it.*

*And Israel was greatly impoverished because of the Midianites; and the children of Israel cried unto the LORD.*

*And it came to pass, when the children of Israel cried unto the LORD because of the Midianites,*

*That the LORD sent a prophet unto the children of Israel, which said unto them, Thus saith the LORD God of Israel, I brought you up from Egypt, and brought you forth out of the house of bondage;*

*And I delivered you out of the hand of the Egyptians, and out of the hand of all that oppressed you, and drave them out from before you, and gave you their land;*

*And I said unto you, I am the LORD your God; fear not the gods of the Amorites, in whose land ye dwell: but ye have not obeyed my voice.<sup>11</sup>*

The role of the prophet was to bring the personal word of God to the leaders of Israel, whereas in Moses' life time he communed directly with God. This role of bringing God's word to Israel was utilised time and time over down the centuries in conjunction with the Judges and moreso at a later time during the period of the Kings.

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<sup>11</sup> Judges 6:1-10

*And there came an angel of the LORD, and sat under an oak which was in Ophrah, that pertained unto Joash the Abiezrite: and his son Gideon threshed wheat by the winepress, to hide it from the Midianites.*

*And the angel of the LORD appeared unto him, and said unto him, The LORD is with thee, thou mighty man of valour.*

*And Gideon said unto him, Oh my Lord, if the LORD be with us, why then is all this befallen us? and where be all his miracles which our fathers told us of, saying, Did not the LORD bring us up from Egypt? but now the LORD hath forsaken us, and delivered us into the hands of the Midianites.*

*And the LORD looked upon him, and said, Go in this thy might, and thou shalt save Israel from the hand of the Midianites: have not I sent thee?*

*And he said unto him, Oh my Lord, wherewith shall I save Israel? Behold, my family is poor in Manasseh, and I am the least in my father's house.*

*And the LORD said unto him, Surely I will be with thee, and thou shalt smite the Midianites as one man.<sup>12</sup>*

God appointed the Judges to redeem the Children of Israel from their oppressors, and recall that God used these oppressing nations to teach and encourage Israel to become obedient. It was a mammoth struggle: Israel becomes disobedient; God brings against them an oppressing foreign ruler. Israel repents and calls upon God; God appoints a Judge to redeem them. This is a repetitive cycle that continues throughout the history of Israel.

*And Gideon the son of Joash died in a good old age, and was buried in the sepulchre of Joash his father, in Ophrah of the Abiezrites.*

*And it came to pass, as soon as Gideon was dead, that the children of Israel turned again, and went a whoring after Baalim, and made Baalberith their god.*

*And the children of Israel remembered not the LORD their God, who had delivered them out of the hands of all their enemies on every side:<sup>13</sup>*

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<sup>12</sup> Judges 6:11-16

<sup>13</sup> Judges 8:32-34

The period of the Judges was approximately 350 years. There is some debate over Samuel's service where the popular thought is that he served as judge for ten years and not the fifty two years of his whole life. However, this brings us up to the time of Samuel's service.

*And Samuel called the people together unto the LORD to Mizpeh; And said unto the children of Israel, Thus saith the LORD God of Israel, I brought up Israel out of Egypt, and delivered you out of the hand of the Egyptians, and out of the hand of all kingdoms, and of them that oppressed you:*

*And ye have this day rejected your God, who himself saved you out of all your adversities and your tribulations; and ye have said unto him, Nay, but set a king over us.*

*Now therefore present yourselves before the LORD by your tribes, and by your thousands.<sup>14</sup>*

Why the Children of Israel chose to reject the Judges appointed over them is debatable. An obvious remark would be that they recognised the cycle of oppression and redemption, which perhaps in their mind was one and the same, ie oppression under a foreign power or oppression under God's law. But none-the-less God had Samuel appoint a King to rule over Israel and we can perhaps entertain the thought that the Children of Israel sought to service an earthly king as a better option to serving God on a direct one-to-one relationship administered through Judges.

*Then said Samuel to the people, Come, and let us go to Gilgal, and renew the kingdom there.*

*And all the people went to Gilgal; and there they made Saul king before the LORD in Gilgal; and there they sacrificed sacrifices of peace offerings before the LORD; and there Saul and all the men of Israel rejoiced greatly.<sup>15</sup>*

And indeed King Saul was anointed the first King over Israel; however they were not released from serving God – neither the people nor the King.

*If ye will fear the LORD, and serve him, and obey his voice, and not rebel against the commandment of the LORD, then shall both ye and also the king that reigneth over you continue following the LORD your God:*

<sup>14</sup> 1Samuel 10:17-19

<sup>15</sup> 1Samuel 11:14-15

*But if ye will not obey the voice of the LORD, but rebel against the commandment of the LORD, then shall the hand of the LORD be against you, as it was against your fathers.<sup>16</sup>*

*Only fear the LORD, and serve him in truth with all your heart: for consider how great things he hath done for you.  
But if ye shall still do wickedly, ye shall be consumed, both ye and your king.<sup>17</sup>*

But King Saul did not hearken to the words of the Lord.

*And Samuel said to Saul, Thou hast done foolishly: thou hast not kept the commandment of the LORD thy God, which he commanded thee: for now would the LORD have established thy kingdom upon Israel for ever.  
But now thy kingdom shall not continue: the LORD hath sought him a man after his own heart, and the LORD hath commanded him to be captain over his people, because thou hast not kept that which the LORD commanded thee.<sup>18</sup>*

King Saul had not obeyed God's word and also transgressed his law, and we read in the text, that had King Saul been faithful to God and his kingship over the tribes of Israel that God would have established from Saul an everlasting kingdom.

*And Samuel said unto Saul, I will not return with thee: for thou hast rejected the word of the LORD, and the LORD hath rejected thee from being king over Israel.  
And as Samuel turned about to go away, he laid hold upon the skirt of his mantle, and it rent.  
And Samuel said unto him, The LORD hath rent the kingdom of Israel from thee this day, and hath given it to a neighbour of thine, that is better than thou.<sup>19</sup>*

It is noteworthy that Saul, the son of Kish<sup>20</sup>, was a Benjaminite and as we progress further into this matter it is a very important point. It was God's intention to form an everlasting kingdom from King Saul and this would have

<sup>16</sup> 1Samuel 12:14-15

<sup>17</sup> 1Samuel 12:24-25

<sup>18</sup> 1Samuel 13:13-14

<sup>19</sup> 1Samuel 15:26-28

<sup>20</sup> 1Chronicles 8:33

resonated all the way down to the birth of our Lord. But, as we have read, this was not to be.

*And Samuel said unto Jesse, Are here all thy children? And he said, There remaineth yet the youngest, and, behold, he keepeth the sheep. And Samuel said unto Jesse, Send and fetch him: for we will not sit down till he come hither.*

*And he sent, and brought him in. Now he was ruddy, and withal of a beautiful countenance, and goodly to look to. And the LORD said, Arise, anoint him: for this is he.*

*Then Samuel took the horn of oil, and anointed him in the midst of his brethren: and the Spirit of the LORD came upon David from that day forward.<sup>21</sup>*

The Lord has Samuel anoint David as King elect, and interestingly David is the son of Jesse who is of the tribe of Judah. The account of this period continues:

*And the men of Judah came, and there they anointed David king over the house of Judah.<sup>22</sup>*

*And the time that David was king in Hebron over the house of Judah was seven years and six months.<sup>23</sup>*

*So all the elders of Israel came to the king to Hebron; and king David made a league with them in Hebron before the LORD: and they anointed David king over Israel*

*David was thirty years old when he began to reign, and he reigned forty years.*

*In Hebron he reigned over Judah seven years and six months: and in Jerusalem he reigned thirty and three years over all Israel and Judah.<sup>24</sup>*

*And it came to pass that night, that the word of the LORD came unto Nathan, saying,*

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<sup>21</sup> 1Samuel 16:11-13

<sup>22</sup> 2Samuel 2:4

<sup>23</sup> 2Samuel 2:11

<sup>24</sup> 2Samuel 5:3-5

*Go and tell my servant David, Thus saith the LORD, Shalt thou build me an house for me to dwell in?*

*Whereas I have not dwelt in any house since the time that I brought up the children of Israel out of Egypt, even to this day, but have walked in a tent and in a tabernacle.*

*In all the places wherein I have walked with all the children of Israel spake I a word with any of the tribes of Israel, whom I commanded to feed my people Israel, saying, Why build ye not me an house of cedar?*

*Now therefore so shalt thou say unto my servant David, Thus saith the LORD of hosts, I took thee from the sheepcote, from following the sheep, to be ruler over my people, over Israel:*

*And I was with thee whithersoever thou wentest, and have cut off all thine enemies out of thy sight, and have made thee a great name, like unto the name of the great men that are in the earth.*

*Moreover I will appoint a place for my people Israel, and will plant them, that they may dwell in a place of their own, and move no more; neither shall the children of wickedness afflict them any more, as beforetime,*

*And as since the time that I commanded judges to be over my people Israel, and have caused thee to rest from all thine enemies. Also the LORD telleth thee that he will make thee an house.*

*And when thy days be fulfilled, and thou shalt sleep with thy fathers, I will set up thy seed after thee, which shall proceed out of thy bowels, and I will establish his kingdom.*

*He shall build an house for my name, and I will stablish the throne of his kingdom for ever.*

*I will be his father, and he shall be my son. If he commit iniquity, I will chasten him with the rod of men, and with the stripes of the children of men:*

*But my mercy shall not depart away from him, as I took it from Saul, whom I put away before thee.*

*And thine house and thy kingdom shall be established for ever before thee: thy throne shall be established for ever.*<sup>25</sup>

It is these last passages that we should pay attention to. God has said that King David's kingdom "*shall be established for ever before thee: thy throne shall be established for ever*", and therefore the tribe of Judah became the chosen vehicle through whom our Lord and Saviour would be brought forth.

Within the Faithchasers' library there are several articles, some small and others large, that discuss God's plan to teach mankind obedience with the end game being that God would redeem him back into eternal life in the heavenly realm. Note that careful wording. This Plan is referred to as The Redemption Plan and it extends throughout the entire history of the universe – and in particular the entire history of our local world.

The thrust of the Plan is that God sought to have the spirits of mankind be in His everlasting heavenly kingdom. Part of that Plan had mankind being created in the image of those in the heavens, hence our form, and also that mankind would need to be obedient by choice to the will of God for eternity. The "how bit" that God brought this about is what we have recorded in the Bible extending from Song Lines preserved from the times of Adam and Eve in the Garden in Eden down to our Lord's appearance on the Earth.

There are many aspects of that Redemption Plan that are accounted in the biblical texts and the particular point we are looking at in this article is the lineage of our Lord, which many will recall is referred to as The Seed of Eve that we first saw in the Book of Genesis. In essence the Seed of Eve from the account in Genesis is a single specific seed that would be brought forth at the most appropriate time as The Son of God, ie Emmanuel in the Hebrew language, which was transliterated to be "Iesous" in the Greek language and "Jesus" in the English language. Moving on, it is the lineage of this divine Seed that is the reason for this article.

We left off with King David's kingdom being permanently established and from the biblical accounts and its genealogies we can trace very specifically the lineage from King David to Joseph, the husband of Mary, through David's son, Solomon, and also from King David to Mary through Nathan, David's other son. That Jesus was truly the rightful King of Israel is borne from his kingly lineage culminating in both of his "parents" (for the purposes of royal entitlement) that Joseph and Mary both had a royal entitlement to the throne of King David.

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<sup>25</sup> 2Samuel 7:4-16

These lineages are recorded in the Gospels of Matthew and Luke, and many commentators hastily point out that they are not consistent. To clarify the differences, the Matthew genealogy<sup>26</sup> follows the male lineage from Solomon to Joseph (and please note that there is a point of commonality for the two lines at Zorobabel). The Luke genealogy<sup>27</sup> follows the female lineage however it lists the names of the husbands of the wives in the lineage, not the mothers themselves. There is also a small confusion in Luke, Verse 3:23, where we see that Heli is the father of Joseph. This is a translational hiccup where Heli is in fact Mary's father, ie Joseph's father-in-law.

We can see how important it was to establish an everlasting kingdom through whom our Lord would come forth, but before we go too far ahead in these times, we have not yet finished the story of the priestly Levitical tribe.

We left off with King David being anointed over the combined tribes of Israel plus Judah/Benjamin. The move away from Judges to a royal monarchy was the preferred model for the Children of Israel however this came at a great cost. Following David's reign, his son Solomon inherited the throne, but shortly into his reign the unification of the tribes failed and the commonwealth of Israel was split into Judah/Benjamin with Solomon as King at Jerusalem and the other ten tribes with Jeroboam as their monarchy.

Over the following four hundred years there were over forty kings between the two kingdoms. (Note the exact number is a grey area because of co-regency kings, multiple terms as monarchy and a degree of fluidity in tracking exactly who was reigning over what kingdom at specific times.) However what is obvious is that the greater majority of the Kings over the ten tribes of Israel did evil in the sight of the Lord, and whilst the Judah/Benjamin Kings fared better in their service to God, in the latter part of the kingdom one after another they were evil in their hearts and hence both kingdoms were subjugated and the all of the children of the tribes of Israel were carried off captive to their northern conquerors.

We can reflect on whether the period of the Kings was successful, and in a generalisation it would be seen as not having a favourable outcome for Israel as a whole. In the due course of time the Children of Israel were permitted to return to Jerusalem and hence we see the Governorships of Zerubbabel (Zorobabel) and Nehemiah, but a return to having a God-anointed designated monarchy was not again permitted.

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<sup>26</sup> Matthew 1:1-17

<sup>27</sup> Luke 3:23-38

It is at about this time (or if anything a little before it) that the prophet Malachi is raised up by God and whilst many readers assign him to be a minor prophet, his message had enormous ramifications into the future – as we will see. Had the High Priest or the Governors at the time of Malachi’s ministry listened with all of their heart pressing to be in service to God, the outcome of what we now know to be common history may never had occurred. I refer to the rise of the Greek empire and the impact of its Hellenization followed by the rise and domination of the Roman Empire over the Jewish state.

We might think about why these two foreign super-powers were permitted by God to subjugate the remnants of the Jewish nation, but I would draw attention to the behaviour of the Children of Israel during the period of both the Judges and the Kings and their failure to heed God’s words, *“Only fear the LORD, and serve him in truth with all your heart: for consider how great things he hath done for you. But if ye shall still do wickedly, ye shall be consumed, both ye and your king.”*<sup>28</sup> And as we have that saying, “Nary a truer word was spoken.”

So what was it that Malachi prophesied that was going to be so critical to the future of the Children of Israel for millennia into the future? Well, any prophecy, by its very nature, is about the future and in this case it is certainly about the future, but it is apparent that what was not understood at the time was the period into the future to which it applied; nor was it understood that the prophecy would change forever the future of the rest of mankind who at that timeline were held captive to all Godless forms of paganism and humanist beliefs and behaviours.

The Word of the Lord through the Malachi prophecy was given to the remnant Jewish population circa 440 BC. Note though that Nehemiah was absent from Jerusalem for twelve years from about this time and on his return the remnant of the returned Children of Israel had again reverted to iniquity :

*The burden of the word of the LORD to Israel by Malachi.  
I have loved you, saith the LORD. Yet ye say, Wherein hast thou loved us? Was not Esau Jacob's brother? saith the LORD: yet I loved Jacob, And I hated Esau, and laid his mountains and his heritage waste for the dragons of the wilderness.*

*Whereas Edom saith, We are impoverished, but we will return and build the desolate places; thus saith the LORD of hosts, They shall build, but I will throw down; and they shall call them, The border of wickedness, and, The people against whom the LORD hath indignation for ever.*

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<sup>28</sup> 1Samuel 12:24-25

*And your eyes shall see, and ye shall say, The LORD will be magnified from the border of Israel.*

*A son honoureth his father, and a servant his master: if then I be a father, where is mine honour? and if I be a master, where is my fear? saith the LORD of hosts unto you, O priests, that despise my name. And ye say, Wherein have we despised thy name?*

*Ye offer polluted bread upon mine altar; and ye say, Wherein have we polluted thee? In that ye say, The table of the LORD is contemptible.*

*And if ye offer the blind for sacrifice, is it not evil? and if ye offer the lame and sick, is it not evil? offer it now unto thy governor; will he be pleased with thee, or accept thy person? saith the LORD of hosts.*

*And now, I pray you, beseech God that he will be gracious unto us: this hath been by your means: will he regard your persons? saith the LORD of hosts.*

*Who is there even among you that would shut the doors for nought? neither do ye kindle fire on mine altar for nought. I have no pleasure in you, saith the LORD of hosts, neither will I accept an offering at your hand.*

*For from the rising of the sun even unto the going down of the same my name shall be great among the Gentiles; and in every place incense shall be offered unto my name, and a pure offering: for my name shall be great among the heathen, saith the LORD of hosts.*

*But ye have profaned it, in that ye say, The table of the LORD is polluted; and the fruit thereof, even his meat, is contemptible.*

*Ye said also, Behold, what a weariness is it! and ye have snuffed at it, saith the LORD of hosts; and ye brought that which was torn, and the lame, and the sick; thus ye brought an offering: should I accept this of your hand? saith the LORD.*

*But cursed be the deceiver, which hath in his flock a male, and voweth, and sacrificeth unto the Lord a corrupt thing: for I am a great King, saith the LORD of hosts, and my name is dreadful among the heathen.<sup>29</sup>*

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<sup>29</sup> Malachi 1:1-14

There is a lot to digest from this prophecy and it is most worthy of getting an understanding of each of the points that God is saying through Malachi. We see that the priests despise the Lord's name, they offer polluted sacrifices on his altar and will only do service for rewards. God states that He has no pleasure in them and critically that He will not accept an offering at their hand. Now this is a very powerful judgment against Jewry and their priesthood and certainly does not fit into the remnant community that returned from exile at the time of Nehemiah and Zerubbabel. So at what period are we to look for this prophecy to come to fruition?

The key is:

*“For from the rising of the sun even unto the going down of the same my name shall be great among the Gentiles; and in every place incense shall be offered unto my name, and a pure offering: for my name shall be great among the heathen, saith the LORD of hosts.”*

This very clearly is when the Lord is brought forth as The Only Begotten Son of God, Emmanuel.

And indeed through hindsight we are recognising that this prophecy is aimed at the priesthood in the period leading up to the birth of our Lord upon the earth. This maybe a moot point to make here, but even in today's "age of enlightenment" Jewry flatly rejects the name of our Lord and has cast it down. But we shall move on!

In Malachi's second chapter, we find that it is even more devastating than the first. Here we are left in no doubt that the Lord is bringing the priesthood to account.

*And now, O ye priests, this commandment is for you.*

*If ye will not hear, and if ye will not lay it to heart, to give glory unto my name, saith the LORD of hosts, I will even send a curse upon you, and I will curse your blessings: yea, I have cursed them already, because ye do not lay it to heart.*

*Behold, I will corrupt your seed, and spread dung upon your faces, even the dung of your solemn feasts; and one shall take you away with it.*

*And ye shall know that I have sent this commandment unto you, that my covenant might be with Levi, saith the LORD of hosts.*

*My covenant was with him of life and peace; and I gave them to him for the fear wherewith he feared me, and was afraid before my name.*

*The law 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 many away from iniquity.*

*For the priest's lips should keep knowledge, and they should seek the law at his mouth: for he is the messenger of the LORD of hosts.*

*But ye are departed out of the way; ye have caused many to stumble at the law; ye have corrupted the covenant of Levi, saith the LORD of hosts.*

*Therefore have I also made you contemptible and base before all the people, according as ye have not kept my ways, but have been partial in the law.*

*Have we not all one father? hath not one God created us? why do we deal treacherously every man against his brother, by profaning the covenant of our fathers?<sup>30</sup>*

There are a number of interesting points in this text too, however I wish only to highlight that the Lord deems that the priesthood is broken. We read a lamentation for the priesthood of old and in particular the strong relationship that under girded the Lord's covenant with Levi. We read that:

*“The law 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 many away from iniquity.”*

And we know that these four principles upon which Levi conducted himself were very dear to the Lord, and why the Lord is saying this about Levi is because those qualities are missing in the priesthood that he is referring to in the prophecy.

The Lord uses very strong language here: *“Ye are departed out of the way”, “Ye have caused many to stumble at the law and ye have corrupted the covenant of Levi.”* So how bad had things become for the Lord to judge the priesthood in such manner? But the Lord was not finished, He said, *“Therefore have I also made you contemptible and base”*. And so it was done.

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<sup>30</sup> Malachi 2:1-10

The Lord continues:

*Judah hath dealt treacherously, and an abomination is committed in Israel and in Jerusalem; for Judah hath profaned the holiness of the LORD which he loved, and hath married the daughter of a strange god.*

*The LORD will cut off the man that doeth this, the master and the scholar, out of the tabernacles of Jacob, and him that offereth an offering unto the LORD of hosts.*

*And this have ye done again, covering the altar of the LORD with tears, with weeping, and with crying out, insomuch that he regardeth not the offering any more, or receiveth it with good will at your hand.*

*Yet ye say, Wherefore? Because the LORD hath been witness between thee and the wife of thy youth, against whom thou hast dealt treacherously: yet is she thy companion, and the wife of thy covenant.*

*And did not he make one? Yet had he the residue of the spirit. And wherefore one? That he might seek a godly seed. Therefore take heed to your spirit, and let none deal treacherously against the wife of his youth.*

*For the LORD, the God of Israel, saith that he hateth putting away: for one covereth violence with his garment, saith the LORD of hosts: therefore take heed to your spirit, that ye deal not treacherously.*

*Ye have wearied the LORD with your words. Yet ye say, Wherein have we wearied him? When ye say, Every one that doeth evil is good in the sight of the LORD, and he delighteth in them; or, Where is the God of judgment?<sup>31</sup>*

The striking piece of information in this text is that the Lord has set his gaze upon Judah. And because later in the same sentence we read that Judah dealt treacherously and committed an abomination in Israel and Jerusalem we can see that the Lord is referring to the familial tribe and not the region or Jerusalem.

The backdrop to these future events was a decline in the adherence to God's word by the remnant Jewish families that were at Jerusalem and the rise of the super powers across the known world. Under the Greek Empire of Alexander the Great the life-style referred to as Hellenization took hold, and although Alexander was well disposed toward the Jewish population, the Hellenization that followed was arguably a more fearsome weapon than overt conflict. In its

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<sup>31</sup> Malachi 2:11-17

wake, Hellenization over-wrote Hebrew culture and attitudes toward the God of the Hebrew forefathers. It was the culture of the ancient Greeks that in hindsight impacted so drastically throughout the then populated world that it challenged the very foundations of the Hebrew teachings. And not only in the Judean region was the Greek culture bringing social changes, but to all of the nations it came into contact with - and in particular the Roman Empire.

The last two hundred years before the turn of the era was a very turbulent period for the Judean region. The Greek wars took a heavy toll on the Jewish population and Judah Maccabee, who was the patriarch of the Hasmonean Dynasty, came to prominence through his drive to revolt against those who were destroying the Hebrew culture. And as many commentators have written, this Dynasty came to the fore as a subsequence of the abuse that the Children of Israel in Judea sustained from invading nations, which included for a time the outlawing of their worship of God.

In that two century period the Dynasty did win reprieves in several quarters, but it came at a cost. The trailing end of the Dynasty saw it go off the rails and form political alliances with whom they should not have and as a consequence fell to their susceptibility toward Hellenization (for want of a word) that pushed them contrary to the will of God.

More specifically, it was in this time that Judah Maccabee's children usurped the role of the Levitical Tribe and filled the role of High Priest – hence offered strange fire before God. The point that perhaps needs to be not left unsaid is that whilst the dynasty thought they were taking the high principled and moral road, none-the-less the Maccabees were of the Tribe of Judah – not Levi.

Following the Greek occupation of the Middle East came the Roman Empire whose negative affect on the Jewish community was magnified because the Romans had been Hellenised for some time before they undertook their expansionist policies abroad and the Empire was able to gain traction through local Jewish figures who were wealthy and worldly and who, themselves, had already been Hellenised.

For old Israel, those who knew the God of their forefathers and practised the Law and who had grown up through the times of their fathers extolling the miracles and wonders that God had done - they never recovered. The weight placed upon them by the warring Greek empires and the later Roman subjugation was too much to sustain and they succumbed to iniquity as the generations rolled over.

Putting all of this together, under the rule of the Hasmoneans, the position of High Priest was usurped by priests not of the lineage of Aaron, and then in the course of time the position was influenced by Roman political interference and its incumbents were also not related to the Tribe of Levi. Hence we can say it was corrupted beyond retrieval and was never restored.

To add further discontent, Herod, was appointed King over Judea by the Roman State. Whilst history records Herod as being raised in the Jewish traditions, it becomes obvious that he was only Jewish in appearance. His father was an Edomite and it is reported that upon his appointment by the Roman State as being “King of the Jews” [sic] he accompanied his Roman handlers to offer sacrifices to the Roman gods.

If we were to write a book about the final centuries leading up to the change of the era in the Middle East we would surely call it Jerusalem Lost.

Now the Malachi prophecy still continues:

*Behold, I will send my messenger, and he shall prepare the way before me: and the Lord, whom ye seek, shall suddenly come to his temple, even the messenger of the covenant, whom ye delight in: behold, he shall come, saith the LORD of hosts.*<sup>32</sup>

*But who may abide the day of his coming? and who shall stand when he appeareth? for he is like a refiner's fire, and like fullers' soap:*

*And he shall sit as a refiner and purifier of silver: and he shall purify the sons of Levi, and purge them as gold and silver, that they may offer unto the LORD an offering in righteousness.*

*Then shall the offering of Judah and Jerusalem be pleasant unto the LORD, as in the days of old, and as in former years.*<sup>33</sup>

The last passage clarifies for us that the Lord will herald the quantum shift in our obedience and service to God and although it would be different to the obedience required by God under the Mosaic Law, it would be pleasant unto the Lord. Now in relation to the first passage of this text, “*Behold I will send my messenger and he shall prepare the way before me*” the Lord was revealed by John the Baptist who was the messenger as reported by Matthew and Luke in their gospels.<sup>34</sup>

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<sup>32</sup> Malachi 3:1

<sup>33</sup> Malachi 3:2-4

<sup>34</sup> Matthew 11:10-11 and Luke 27-28

That the babe born to Joseph and Mary in Bethlehem was the Seed of Eve, the Only Begotten Son of God and our Lord and Saviour needs no further discussion. Born into a royal family and through his combined lineage to King David's everlasting throne, Jesus the Messiah took the mantle passed through hereditary and became the rightful King over all Israel.

This should have been a time of great rejoicing for not only Israel but also for the region of Judea and indeed for the whole world. But it was not, and the prophecy of the Lord through Malachi came to its fruition. Were the inhabitants of Israel expecting the Lord to come with great thunderings, smoke and fire as he did in the desert to lead the Children of Israel with signs and wonders with the power of God from past times where enemies were subdued and great prosperity returned to the lands of milk and honey? Was there an expectation of Elijah coming down from heaven in like manner that he was taken up? Yes for some I do think this was in the back of their minds and hence the Messiah's appearance in the earth would not be something hidden, and certainly the population in general would not have expected the Lord to be born to a carpenter; certainly not to come out from Nazareth and most certainly not being born in an animal lean-to on a bed of straw.

Believers today now understand why the Lord came into the world in a manner more befitting a servant and we can only wonder at God's great wisdom for his only begotten son to be so presented to the world. Satan knew who he was; the pagan magicians knew who he was and followed a star to the inn to give presents, but those to whom the Lord came recognised him not.

The outward appearance of all of these worldly events in the eyes of the Roman State officials, and the Hellenised population, and the pagan foreigners was that Jesus was a usurper and a nuisance, and so they conspired to get rid of him. Did they succeed? Emphatically no! Instead, they triggered a series of events that would shake the foundations of the world with repercussions rippling down the millenniums to the end of time. Had they have known who he really was, would they have acted any differently? I think I will leave that as a rhetorical question.

The Lord Jesus Christ, Messiah of Israel and the Salvation Lord magnificently heralded in the giving of the Holy Spirit to mankind and thereby opened the gates to the vaults of death and released the prisoners. Godly men from ancient times walked in the streets of Jerusalem after their release. The eighty four disciples received the baptism of the Holy Spirit and the Christian movement was truly thrust into the world.

Did the Pharisees and Sadducees recognise the son of God? No! Did Herod? No! And remember that he was the Roman appointed “King of the Jews”. But those who did were fishermen, trades people and public servants. The world saw this nuisance fellow hanged. The believing disciples saw the Lamb who was sacrificed for the sin of mankind. The world saw that someone stole the dead body. The disciples saw the risen Lord in his glory. The world saw strife and unrest in the land. The disciples saw the living Lord and his salvation for those who believed having faith that their salvation would lead to reconciliation and redemption to heaven by God.

The “Christianity” as taught by our Lord and Saviour became the new Law of Moses, not replacing it, but fulfilling it. Do we still have laws? Yes! Do we still sacrifice? Yes! Do we still seek forgiveness from our Lord? Yes! And what a magnificent God he is.

We move on now into bringing this article to conclusion, and to do this we have taken passages from both the Book of Hebrews and Peter’s first letter. I would strongly encourage you to take the time to read the following Hebrews text carefully now that we have discussed the contextual landscape surrounding it.

*Wherefore in all things it behoved him to be made like unto his brethren, that he might be a merciful and faithful high priest in things pertaining to God, to make reconciliation for the sins of the people.<sup>35</sup>*

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*Wherefore, holy brethren, partakers of the heavenly calling, consider the Apostle and High Priest of our profession, Christ Jesus;<sup>36</sup>*

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*For we have not an high priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; but was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin.<sup>37</sup>*

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*So also Christ glorified not himself to be made an high priest; but he that said unto him, Thou art my Son, to day have I begotten thee. As he saith also in another place, Thou art a priest for ever after the order of Melchisedec.*

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<sup>35</sup> Hebrews 2:17

<sup>36</sup> Hebrews 3:1

<sup>37</sup> Hebrews 4:15

*Who in the days of his flesh, when he had offered up prayers and supplications with strong crying and tears unto him that was able to save him from death, and was heard in that he feared;*

*Though he were a Son, yet learned he obedience by the things which he suffered;  
And being made perfect, he became the author of eternal salvation unto all them that obey him;*

*Called of God an high priest after the order of Melchisedec.<sup>38</sup>*

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*Whither the forerunner is for us entered, even Jesus, made an high priest for ever after the order of Melchisedec.<sup>39</sup>*

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*For this Melchisedec, king of Salem, priest of the most high God, who met Abraham returning from the slaughter of the kings, and blessed him;*

*To whom also Abraham gave a tenth part of all; first being by interpretation King of righteousness, and after that also King of Salem, which is, King of peace;*

*Without father, without mother, without descent, having neither beginning of days, nor end of life; but made like unto the Son of God; abideth a priest continually.*

*Now consider how great this man was, unto whom even the patriarch Abraham gave the tenth of the spoils.*

*And verily they that are of the sons of Levi, who receive the office of the priesthood, have a commandment to take tithes of the people according to the law, that is, of their brethren, though they come out of the loins of Abraham:*

*But he whose descent is not counted from them received tithes of Abraham, and blessed him that had the promises.*

*And without all contradiction the less is blessed of the better.  
And here men that die receive tithes; but there he receiveth them, of whom it is witnessed that he liveth.*

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<sup>38</sup> Hebrews 5:5-10

<sup>39</sup> Hebrews 6:20

*And as I may so say, Levi also, who receiveth tithes, payed tithes in Abraham.  
For he was yet in the loins of his father, when Melchisedec met him.<sup>40</sup>*

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*If therefore perfection were by the Levitical priesthood, (for under it the people received the law,) what further need was there that another priest should rise after the order of Melchisedec, and not be called after the order of Aaron?*

*For the priesthood being changed, there is made of necessity a change also of the law.*

*For he of whom these things are spoken pertaineth to another tribe, of which no man gave attendance at the altar.*

*For it is evident that our Lord sprang out of Juda; of which tribe Moses spake nothing concerning priesthood.*

*And it is yet far more evident: for that after the similitude of Melchisedec there ariseth another priest,*

*Who is made, not after the law of a carnal commandment, but after the power of an endless life.*

*For he testifieth, Thou art a priest for ever after the order of Melchisedec.<sup>41</sup>*

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*(For those priests were made without an oath; but this with an oath by him that said unto him, The Lord sware and will not repent, Thou art a priest for ever after the order of Melchisedec:)*

*By so much was Jesus made a surety of a better testament.*

*And they truly were many priests, because they were not suffered to continue by reason of death:*

*But this man, because he continueth ever, hath an unchangeable priesthood.*

*Wherefore he is able also to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by him, seeing he ever liveth to make intercession for them.*

*For such an high priest became us, who is holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners, and made higher than the heavens;*

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<sup>40</sup> Hebrews 7:1-10

<sup>41</sup> Hebrews 7:11-17

*Who needeth not daily, as those high priests, to offer up sacrifice, first for his own sins, and then for the people's: for this he did once, when he offered up himself.*

*For the law maketh men high priests which have infirmity; but the word of the oath, which was since the law, maketh the Son, who is consecrated for evermore.<sup>42</sup>*

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*Now of the things which we have spoken this is the sum: We have such an high priest, who is set on the right hand of the throne of the Majesty in the heavens;<sup>43</sup>*

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*But now hath he obtained a more excellent ministry, by how much also he is the mediator of a better covenant, which was established upon better promises.*

*For if that first covenant had been faultless, then should no place have been sought for the second.*

*For finding fault with them, he saith, Behold, the days come, saith the Lord, when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah:*

*Not according to the covenant that I made with their fathers in the day when I took them by the hand to lead them out of the land of Egypt; because they continued not in my covenant, and I regarded them not, saith the Lord.*

*For this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, saith the Lord; I will put my laws into their mind, and write them in their hearts: and I will be to them a God, and they shall be to me a people:*

*And they shall not teach every man his neighbour, and every man his brother, saying, Know the Lord: for all shall know me, from the least to the greatest.*

*For I will be merciful to their unrighteousness, and their sins and their iniquities will I remember no more.*

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<sup>42</sup> Hebrews 7:21-28

<sup>43</sup> Hebrews 8:1

*In that he saith, A new covenant, he hath made the first old. Now that which decayeth and waxeth old is ready to vanish away.<sup>44</sup>*

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*Then verily the first covenant had also ordinances of divine service, and a worldly sanctuary.<sup>45</sup>*

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*But Christ being come an high priest of good things to come, by a greater and more perfect tabernacle, not made with hands, that is to say, not of this building;<sup>46</sup>*

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*For where a testament is, there must also of necessity be the death of the testator.*

*For a testament is of force after men are dead: otherwise it is of no strength at all while the testator liveth.*

*Whereupon neither the first testament was dedicated without blood.*

*For when Moses had spoken every precept to all the people according to the law, he took the blood of calves and of goats, with water, and scarlet wool, and hyssop, and sprinkled both the book, and all the people, Saying, This is the blood of the testament which God hath enjoined unto you.*

*Moreover he sprinkled with blood both the tabernacle, and all the vessels of the ministry.*

*And almost all things are by the law purged with blood; and without shedding of blood is no remission.*

*It was therefore necessary that the patterns of things in the heavens should be purified with these; but the heavenly things themselves with better sacrifices than these.*

*For Christ is not entered into the holy places made with hands, which are the figures of the true; but into heaven itself, now to appear in the presence of God for us:*

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<sup>44</sup> Hebrews 8:6-13

<sup>45</sup> Hebrews 9:1

<sup>46</sup> Hebrews 9:11

*Nor yet that he should offer himself often, as the high priest entereth into the holy place every year with blood of others;*

*For then must he often have suffered since the foundation of the world: but now once in the end of the world hath he appeared to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself.*

*And as it is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment: So Christ was once offered to bear the sins of many; and unto them that look for him shall he appear the second time without sin unto salvation.<sup>47</sup>*

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*This is the covenant that I will make with them after those days, saith the Lord, I will put my laws into their hearts, and in their minds will I write them;*

*And their sins and iniquities will I remember no more. Now where remission of these is, there is no more offering for sin.<sup>48</sup>*

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*Ye also, as lively stones, are built up a spiritual house, an holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God by Jesus Christ.*

*Wherefore also it is contained in the scripture, Behold, I lay in Sion a chief corner stone, elect, precious: and he that believeth on him shall not be confounded.*

*Unto you therefore which believe he is precious: but unto them which be disobedient, the stone which the builders disallowed, the same is made the head of the corner,  
And a stone of stumbling, and a rock of offence, even to them which stumble at the word, being disobedient: whereunto also they were appointed.*

*But ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people; that ye should shew forth the praises of him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvellous light:<sup>49</sup>*

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<sup>47</sup> Hebrews 9:16-28

<sup>48</sup> Hebrews 10:16-18

<sup>49</sup> 1Peter 2:5-9

Jesus Christ our Lord and Saviour, High Priest after the order of King Melchizedec and born into the Tribe of Judah through both of his worldly parents. The Lord opened the way for mankind to be forgiven of sin and to be reconciled through Salvation to God. We read in the Pauline letter that Salvation came not out of the Tribe of Levi through the High Priest Aaron and his lineage, but through the Tribe of Judah through the everlasting Kingdom of David.

Consider this point. King Melchizedec of Salem reigned in the era of Abraham before Jacob was born and hence pre-dated the existence of the familial tribe of Levi. We have read in the New Testament Hebrews' text that the Mosaic Law and the forgiveness of sin by animal sacrifice were never going to be permanent because there was a better way. And indeed this was so.

This also raises a deeper question for our congregations of today. The traditional model for church convocations, including the rabbinical model, is the separation of mankind into clergy and laity, whether we speak of rabbis, priests, ministers or pastors they all fall into the same structure of a divinely higher priestly role over a general congregation, hence a three tiered pyramid hierarchy having the normal believers on the bottom level, the priestly role that intercedes between the people and the highest level, God.

The new paradigm shifted all of this structure up one level and did away with the lowest level of the "common" believers and thereby making all believers priests in their own right and giving us our risen Lord and Messiah who became our High Priest.

This shift was signalled very clearly in John's prophecy from the Lord as given to us in the Book of Revelation. The outer courtyard of the Temple was removed, ie the commons area was dispensed with. Also we have a direct determination from our Lord that the old structure should be dispensed with and refers to it as the Nicolaitans'<sup>50</sup> system about which he is very forthright in declaring his abhorrence of it. And when you think about this, if we continue in the old temple model of priesthood and laity we bring to nought the reason why Jesus sacrificed his life. We deny him being the High Priest over His Royal Priesthood and thereby we also reject the sacrifice of the Lamb for our sins leaving no provision for any reconciliation back to God our Father.

Now all of this was not just a mega shift in how the Hebrew population would conduct its worship of God, but it was a juxta positioning of a new pathway opening up to the whole of mankind the fruition of God's Redemption Plan, ie

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<sup>50</sup> Revelation 2:15

it offered a choice for whether mankind would be obedient – or not, and that choice would determine any future elevation into the eternal heaven of God's abode.

We therefore can make a conclusion about the primary statement of this article. Is the priesthood covenant of Judah really mankind's only hope for the future? Emphatically, Yes!

Good Christian men and women of Australia. Our Lord Jesus Christ has brought us into ministry for the Kingdom of God and made us all priests in the Royal Priesthood of the Order of King Melchizedec. Stand up and become that which the Lord has appointed you to be – we are the priesthood to our High Priest, the Lord of Salvation, Jesus Christ, unto God our Father.

**There be no man that can appoint themselves between the Royal Priesthood of believers and their High Priest.**

Geoffrey Rooke