

Faith Is Action

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In This Issue:

COHANIM OF CHRIST



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Who's On the Lord's Side?

God's purpose in allowing Israel to wander in the wilderness forty years was to weed out all the rebels, because at one point they so provoked Him to anger, He was ready to disown them! God had called Moses up into the holy Mount to deliver unto Him the holy oracles—the *Ten Commandments*, and during the 40 days he was there, the people became restless, “*and rose up to eat and to drink and to play*” (refers to sexual orgy). They took their golden earrings and from them made a molten calf and worshipped it (Ex.32:1-6).

God was so angry, He told Moses: “*Go get down —For thy people, which thou broughtest out of Egypt have corrupted themselves.... Now therefore let me alone, that my wrath may wax hot against them, and that I may consume them: and I will make of thee a great nation*” (vv.7&10). God called them *Moses' people!* He told Moses: “*Get out of My way that I might stir Myself up and break out on them!*” He was going to wipe them out and start over with Moses and his seed.

Can you see how important



intercessory prayer is? When there is no intercessor to intervene, God stirs Himself up to break out in judgment upon the rebellious, and God didn't want to do that. That's why He chose Moses, because He knew Moses' make-up: He knew Moses would do what He did, and say what He said on behalf of the people in that situation. Moses reasoned to God: "If you kill these people now, all of Your enemies will say that You brought them out of Egypt, only to let them die in the wilderness, because You could not provide for them. And what about Your covenant with Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob that You swore to them, to multiply their seed and to give them this land?" (vv.11-13).

No less than six times Moses interceded on behalf of the people when they provoked God to anger and He was ready to pour His wrath out, and in each incidence, God was merciful. But his greatest intercession on behalf of the people was the day after when Moses came down from the Mount and saw the molten calf and the people dancing around it for himself. His anger waxed hot, and he cast the tablet of the Ten Commandments to the ground, breaking them. Then he stood in the gate of the camp and declared: "*Who is on the LORD'S side? Let him come unto me.*" And the tribe of Levi gathered unto him. Moses commanded them to slay with the

sword the men who had participated in the rebellion.

The following day Moses spoke to the people: "*You have sinned a great sin, and now I will go up unto the LORD; perhaps I shall make an atonement for you.*" He returned to the Mount and told God: "*Oh this people have sinned a great sin, and have made them gods of gold. Yet now, if You will, forgive their sin; and if not, blot me, I pray thee, out of thy book which thou hast written*" (vv.30-32). Amazing! Moses was saying: "*If You are going to destroy them--start at me!*" God was merciful again, and as angry as He was, He delayed His judgment for Moses' sake. What an intercessor!

God had destroyed an entire Egyptian dynasty to bring Israel out of Egypt and lead them into the Land of Promise, and He proved them 40 years to remove the last remnants of Egypt's influence before taking them in. There are wonderful lessons in the Book of Exodus: *The coming out* of the children of Israel from the house of bondage and land of servitude through ten terrible plagues. But He also had to *take them into* the Land of Promise, "*a land flowing with milk and honey.*" This is a Hebrew idiom meaning that the land was full of herds bringing forth milk and butter from eating the lush grass. It was a fertile land, unlike the desert sand and

rocks where they wandered 40 years.

Their exodus began with the first *Passover* on the eve of their deliverance. It was the physical beginning of Israel as a nation, but they became a *spiritual people unto God* 50 days later, on the *day of firstfruits*, which occurred seven sabbaths after *Passover*. ($7 \times 7 = 49 + 1 = 50$, which is the meaning of Pentecost in Greek.)

A Kingdom of Priests

God called Moses up into the mountain, and told him to tell the people: “*Ye have seen what I did unto the Egyptians, and how I bare you on eagles’ wings and brought you unto Myself. Now therefore, if ye will obey my voice indeed, and keep my covenant, then shall ye be a peculiar people unto me above all people: for all the earth is mine. And ye shall be unto me a kingdom of priests, and an holy nation.*” (Exodus 19:4-6). God’s desire was to make them a *special people—a kingdom of priests*. I hope you see that they were *all* called to be priests! Israel was to be a nation of priests to the rest of the nations, and God would dwell among them, *but she failed*.

The Hebrew word for *priest* is COHEN which today is a common Jewish surname. The plural form is COHANIM (pronounced ko-ha-neem). The root meaning of COHEN is *to draw nigh to serve*,” because the priests were to draw

nigh to God’s Presence. Under the Old Covenant, *only the priests* could draw nigh to God into His Presence. And only once a year with the blood of the lamb could *the high priest—COHEN GADOL—* go into the Holy of Holies to sprinkle it upon the lid of atonement—the Mercy Seat atop the Ark of the Covenant. But God’s original purpose was for *the whole nation of Israel, the seed of Abraham*, to be a peculiar people, a kingdom of priests to represent Him to all of the families of the earth.

Come Up To the Mount

God commanded Moses to tell the people: “*Sanctify yourselves.*” Sanctification has a two-fold meaning: “*to separate from and to consecrate to.*” They were to separate themselves from everything unclean, and in the OT, this was always with physical washings. They were to wash themselves and their clothes, and everything in the camp, because God said, “*I will come down in the midst of them!*” God will not come down where there is uncleanness! If He did, He would destroy it. Whenever God comes into contact with sin, He obliterates it. God gave them three days to get everything clean and remove all the vestiges of Egypt. The men were to abstain from sex with their wives.

Before God will manifest

Himself to someone, He wants all of Egypt, all of the world and the flesh, out of his life; not just being clean on the outside, but as Peter said:

*“Wherefore, laying aside all malice, and all guile, and hypocrisies, and envies, and all evil speakings, as newborn babes desire the sincere milk of the word, that ye may grow thereby: If so be that ye have tasted that the Lord is gracious. To whom coming, as unto a living stone, disallowed indeed of men, but chosen of God, and precious. Ye also, as lively (living) stones are built up a spiritual house, **an holy priesthood**, to offer up spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God, by Jesus Christ” (1Pet.2:1-5).*

God has offered us the same thing He offered Israel—to be His priests! That’s why we do not need a man to stand between us and God. *We are priests! We are COHANIM! We are those who draw nigh unto God: “But ye are a chosen generation, **a royal priesthood**, a peculiar people; that ye should shew forth the praises (virtues) of him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvelous light. (1Pet.2:9).*

We are those who draw nigh! We do not need a priest. God has made us a *royal priesthood*, or as God told the children of Israel: “*a kingdom of priests.*” John recorded in Revelation 5:10: “*And has made us unto our God kings and*

priests (or a kingdom of priests), unto our God... and we shall reign on the earth.”

God chose Israel, His special people, to be His COHANIM, to have the unique privilege to draw nigh unto His Presence, and also the other function of a priest, to intercede for others, to find favor in God’s sight for others. This is what God intended for Israel, and this is what He has called us to! We should see ourselves as God’s COHANIM who can draw nigh unto God’s holy presence! Therefore, we must be clean; we must be holy! Paul said: “*Wherefore, having these promises, dearly beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and the spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God” (2Cor.7:1).*

What promises? They are given in the last verses of the preceding chapter, which should have not been broken up: “Wherefore come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing: and I will receive you (promise). And will be a Father unto you (promise), and ye shall be my sons and daughters (promise), saith the Lord Almighty” (2Cor.6:17-18).

These are the same promises God gave to Israel and the same prerequisites He gave them to obtain these promises. But they failed. They did not go up into the mountain that day. They did not draw nigh unto God’s presence

that day: *Only Moses did.*

They had tasted and seen that the Lord is good; they had come out of Egypt. They could have remained in Goshen, but they came out and saw that the Lord was good. He protected them from the ten plagues, and not one came on the land of Goshen. When the judgment of the first-born came, He spared their first-born. That's why He claimed their firstborn as His, because He saved them in Egypt. But on the day when they were to come up into the mount at the sound of the shofar, *they retreated!* The Lord told Moses that He would come down in a thick cloud, so the people could hear His voice when He spoke to Moses.

On the morning of the third day there were thunders and lightning, and a thick cloud covered the Mount. When the shofar sounded exceeding loud, the people trembled. Moses brought the people to the base of the Mount from which ascended fire, and smoke covered the mountain as it quaked greatly. Again, the shofar sounded long, becoming louder and louder. Then Moses spoke, and God answered him by voice. They were terrified when they saw the thunder and lightning and the mountain smoking, and heard God's voice. They retreated and stood afar off, and said to Moses: *"You speak with us, and we will hear. But let not God speak with*

us, lest we die" (Ex.20:19). They drew back, and the farther you are from hearing God's voice, the more you will fall into sin. This was the beginning of their backslidings.

Moses went up and received the graven tablets of The Ten Commandments God engraved with His own hand. For 40 days, Moses stayed before God, and when he delayed, the people rose up to play, fashioning and worshipping the molten calf they created from their golden earrings, and God's wrath was kindled against them to destroy them! Moses was the COHEN, the *intercessor* to stand between God and the people to plead for mercy. God needed someone to *draw nigh*, to find favor in His sight that He might be merciful to them. God told Moses, *"These are a rebellious people, a stiffnecked people! I will kill them all, and make a new people out of you!"*

But Moses answered: *"You can't do that, God."*

"Why can't I?" God probably said.

"Because Your enemies and the nations are watching, and if You kill them, they will say it was because You could not provide for them!"

At this God relented, and Moses returned with the tablets in hand. But when he saw what the people had done, his anger waxed hot, and he broke the tablets on

the ground. (And just think, God had said *Moses was the meekest man on earth!*) After Moses commanded the Levites to slay the rebels, He interceded for the people again that God would forgive them and renew the covenant (Exodus 32).

The Second Set of Commandments

God called Moses back to the Mount to receive a new set of Commandments. He was there another 40 days, during which time Moses asked to see God's glory. You can tell when someone has been with God, because when Moses came down from the Mount, his face shone with the SHEKINAH glory of God until the people could not look upon him. Moses didn't know that his skin shone with the glory, "*and the people were afraid to come nigh him*" (Ex.34:30). They were too afraid to come near Moses with the glory! How much more to come near God's glory! Moses had to put a veil over his face while he talked with them.

Paul said that a veil is on their hearts even to this day, and their minds are blinded when they read the writings of Moses, and will remain so until the veil is taken away (2 Cor.3:14-15). *They were supposed to be the recipients of the glory, the COHANIM, the drawers-nigh to come into God's presence!* But because of their sin, God had to alter His plans. No longer could He dwell amongst the people, and He

commanded the Tabernacle to be built that He might dwell behind its curtain of separation, keeping them from His glory. For His COHANIM He chose the tribe of Levi and gave Israel a temporary place of worship with temporary carnal ordinances of the flesh. He had wanted them to be His *spiritual people*, and they failed, but He did not discard them. He was still going to have a people He could dwell in, a priestly people who would draw nigh unto His presence.

New Testament Cohanim

As with ancient Israel, many of those who received Jesus as their Messiah went back after His crucifixion. After His resurrection, 500 gathered in the upper room in Jerusalem to await the coming of the Holy Spirit, but almost all went back. Jesus said, "*Behold, I send the promise of my Father upon you: but wait in Jerusalem, until you be endued with power from on high*" (Lk.24:49). They were being given the promise: "*You will be My COHANIM—My drawers-nigh.*"

He had given them a forty-day post graduate course and opened up the Word to them how Christ should suffer and enter into His glory, that all scriptures should be fulfilled. Each day they went to the Temple to offer sacrifice, from Passover to the day of First Fruits aka Pentecost. During these fifty days no leaven was to be eaten,

and in Bible typology, leaven refers to sin. But by Pentecost their number had dwindled to 120 faithful.

“And when the day of Pentecost had fully come, they were all in one accord in one place. And suddenly there came a sound from heaven as of a rushing mighty wind. And it filled all the house where they were sitting. And there appeared unto them cloven tongues like as of fire, and it sat upon each of them. And they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and began to speak with tongues as the Spirit gave them utterance” (Acts 2:1-4).

Instead of the fire of God filling the Mount as it did on Sinai, it filled them, and they became the COHANIM: *God’s spiritual people and priests!*

God is calling us to be His COHANIM—To lay aside all leaven, and sin, and filthiness of the flesh and spirit, that we might *draw nigh* unto His presence, be filled with His glory and anointing, to fulfil the function of His priests and intercede for the people. Israel failed and drew back, but Paul said in Hebrews 10:39, *“But we are not of them who draw back unto perdition (destruction), but of them that believe unto the saving of the soul.”*

James commanded: *“Draw nigh to God, and he will draw nigh to you”* (Js.4:8). This is the **promise**, and he qualified how we

must draw nigh: *“Cleanse your hands... purify your hearts... have an attitude of repentance and godly sorrow for sin... humble yourselves in the sight of God. Put aside evil speaking and judging of your brother”* (vv.8-11).

The Israelites had to wash themselves before they came to the Mount of God, and we too must be *“sanctified by the washing of the water of the Word”* to draw nigh to God’s presence (Ref.: Eph.5:2).

We are no longer fenced off from God, separated by a veil from His presence! *“Having therefore boldness to enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus; by a new and living way which he has consecrated for us, through the veil of his flesh”* (Heb.10:19-20).

The tragedy is Israel failed, but through their failure God has temporarily set them aside as His COHANIM, and has opened wide the door to the Gentiles, fulfilling His original promise to Abraham: *“Through thee all the families of the earth shall be blessed”* (Gen.12:3). This was ultimately fulfilled through his seed, the Jewish Messiah, Jesus Christ, the Son of God:

“Wherefore remember, that ye being in time past Gentiles in the flesh, who are called Uncircumcision by that which is called the Circumcision in the flesh made by hands; That at that time ye were

*without Christ, being aliens from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers from the covenants of promise, having no hope, and without God in the world: **But now in Christ Jesus you who sometimes were far off are made nigh by the blood of Christ***" (Eph.2:11-13).

Stand in the Gap

We are to be the *drawers-nigh*, and God will accept us like He did Moses. When He is angry with the wicked and wants to break out upon them in His righteous judgment, we can be the intercessors to stand between them and God. God spoke through the prophet Ezekiel that when there is no one to stand in the hedge and make up the gap, He must destroy the wicked: "*And I sought for a man among them, that should make up the hedge, and stand in the gap before me for the land, that I should not destroy it: but I found none*" (Ezek.22:30).

The first occasion of intercession on behalf of another was Abraham's intercession for his nephew Lot who was about to be caught in the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah. Genesis 18:23 states: "*And Abraham drew near and said, Wilt thou also destroy the righteous with the wicked?*" Abraham had enjoyed sweet fellowship with God, ate a meal with God, and received personal prom-

ises that he and Sarah would have a son. But with catastrophe looming, **he drew near to God to intercede** for his loved ones! The only thing that can hold back God's judgment is when the COHANIM *draw nigh* unto His presence with holy sacrifice in intercession for the people.

Today, many who are called to be God's COHANIM, who stand in the pulpits of this nation, are offering up false worship like the sons of Korah in the wilderness. They challenged the leadership of Moses and Aaron, and Moses responded: "*Tomorrow the Lord will show who are His, and who is holy, and will cause him whom He has chosen to come near unto Him.*" The next day the 250 Korhites put fire in their censers before the Lord, and Aaron, the COHEN GADOL, put fire in in his, and God sent fire out of heaven and destroyed all 250 who had unholy fire in their censers (Numbers 16).

I've made up my mind that I am not going to fail God. I am thanking Him for such a great privilege to be a COHEN OF CHRIST. "*For the law made nothing better, but the bringing in of a better hope did; by the which we draw nigh unto God*" (Heb.7:19).

THE COHANIM Y CHROMOSOME

At the time of Israel's exodus from Egypt, there were about 70 Gentile nations in the earth. From these God specifically isolated the nation of Israel to be His peculiar, separated people as prophesied in Numbers 23:9: "...*The people shall dwell alone, and shall not be reckoned among the nations.*"

God had sent nine terrible plagues upon the land of Egypt; yet Pharaoh would not let the Hebrews go. God told Moses that one final plague would humble Pharaoh to surrender: The death of all firstborn throughout Egypt. In order for their firstborn to be safe, the Israelites had to slay a lamb and strike its blood upon the doorposts of their houses and stay inside. God said: "*At midnight I will smite all the firstborn throughout all of Egypt, but when I see the blood, I will pass over you.*" Pharaoh was broken by his son's death and let the Hebrews go.

In the wilderness, God told Moses to number the tribes except the tribe of Levi. Because He had delivered Israel's firstborn in Egypt, He claimed the firstborn for Himself, and He took the Levites in their place: *And the Lord spake unto Moses, saying, and I, behold, I have taken the Levites from among the children of Israel, instead of all the*

firstborn that opens the matrix among the children of Israel: therefore the Levites shall be mine" (Num.3:11-12).

They became the priests—COHANIM—who served in the Tabernacle. They held no other occupations; nor did they own property, but were supported by the other 11 tribes.

Then out of the Levites. God made yet another separation: Moses' brother Aaron and his sons were separated as *high priests*—COHANIM GADOL—and only they could serve in the Holy of Holies (Ex.28:1). The high priest, once a year, went behind the veil to make atonement with blood upon the Mercy Seat for the sins of the nation. This was a dynastic service that passed from father to son.

Millennia later, in 70 A.D., the Romans destroyed Jerusalem and burned the Temple, and animal sacrifices ceased. The Jews were dispersed throughout the earth, and their genealogical records perished in the Temple, including the critical COHANIM records of the Levites. The return of Jesus Christ as the Jewish Messiah (preceded by the rapture of the Church) requires the rebuilding of the Temple and resuming of animal sacrifices. But this cannot be

accomplished without the identification of the true sons of Aaron, as only they can do this service as mandated by God to Moses. But God has marvelously provided a solution through scientific breakthroughs in the study of human DNA: The male *Y chromosome* is passed directly from father to son, and researchers have found that men known to be descendants of the COHANIM have a distinctive marker on their *Y chromosome*! Any male descendant of Aaron can be identified by this unique chromosome with a simple saliva sample!

The Case of the Linen Britches

“And thou shalt make holy garments for Aaron thy brother, for glory and for beauty. And you shall speak unto all that are wise hearted, whom I have filled with the spirit of wisdom, that they may make Aaron’s garments to consecrate him; that he may minister unto me in the priest’s office.” (Ex.28:2-3)

The robe, girdle, coat, and ephod (vest) of the High Priest were royally exquisite, made of the finest blue, purple and scarlet linen embroidered with gold threads by gifted artisans. He wore a breastplate in which were set four rows of precious gems such as topaz, emerald, sapphire, amethyst, and diamond that was attached with chains of pure gold. Finally, upon his head, he wore a crown of pure gold engraved with the words **HOLINESS TO THE LORD**. Dressed in full regalia, the High Priest was no

less elegant than a king.

But on the holiest day of the year, in order to come into God’s Presence to receive cleansing and offer the sacrifice of atonement, he had to strip himself of these beautiful garments, and enter into the Holy of Holies dressed only in white linen: *“He shall put on the holy linen coat, the linen breeches (britches) upon his flesh.... to cover their nakedness from the loins to the thighs.... and shall be girded with a linen girdle, and with the linen turban.... these are holy garments; therefore shall he wash his flesh in water and so put them on, when they come near unto the altar to minister in the holy place; that they bear not iniquity and die”*(Ex.28:41-43, Lev.16:4, 23-24). He could not go into the Presence of God wearing the ornate garments dripping with gold and jewels. He could only enter in dressed in simple white linen.

Do we desire to enter into God’s Presence where holy fire consumes our sacrifice, and the heavens open up to the glory cloud? Then we must strip ourselves of our religiosity, reputations, ministry titles, status, and achievements: *“But we are all as an unclean thing, and all our righteousnesses (plural) are as filthy rags”* (Isa.64:6). We must come *“washed in the water of His Word”* (Eph.5:26). Paul charged: *“Dearly beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God”* (2Cor.7:1).