



Finding Christ in the Tabernacle

THE PROMISE

*“Now therefore, if ye will obey my voice indeed, and keep my covenant, then ye shall be a peculiar treasure 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 19:5-6, also see Psalms 135:4, 1Peteter 2:9)*

The Abrahamic Covenant through the Priesthood

Abraham sought for the “blessings of the fathers and the right whereunto [he] should be ordained to administer the same”, Abraham 1:2, to be a “greater follower of righteousness, and to possess a greater knowledge, and to be a father of many nations, a prince of peace”. As a result, he was ordained a High Priest by the hand of Melchizedek, JST Genesis 14:25, D&C 84:14.

Abraham was promised by God that his posterity would be made a great nation that would have God’s authority and power (priesthood) to bless all the families of the earth, Abraham 2:9-11,

Genesis 12:1-3, as well as have eternal life, D&C 132:29-30, the greatest gift that God could promise.

Though Abraham’s posterity grew significantly and prospered in the land of Egypt for hundreds of years after Joseph saved his father, Exodus 1:7, Jacob/Israel, and siblings’ families, a new Pharaoh came into power. He and the nation of Egypt felt threatened by the children of Israel’s flourishing and dominance, Exodus 1:1-11, and placed slave masters over them to oppress and control them. This was foretold to Abraham, Genesis 15:13-16.

Over the centuries of living in Egypt, the children of Israel adopted (or were forced to adopt) many Egyptian religious and cultural practices, which included their abhorrence to animal sacrifices, Exodus 8:26 (which represented some of the Egyptian gods). Over time, this diminished their ability to practice sacrifices as well as the patriarchal (Melchizedek) priesthood that would perform them.

God not only restored the Melchizedek or Holy Priesthood to Israel through Jethro (Moses' father-in-law) to Moses, D&C 84:6-16, but hoped to have all of Israel be holders of this priesthood, Exodus 19:5-6, in entering a new covenant with Him, Exodus 19:4-8, Leviticus 20:26, and to dwell among them, Exodus 19:10-11, so they could know Him, D&C 84:19, and "see the face of God, even the Father, and live", D&C 84:21-22.

Israel's Rejection (Provocation) of Entering God's Presence

As the children of Israel prepared to meet God (face to face) as was promised, Exodus 19:17, they saw the smoke, fire and quaking on Mount Sinai where God was, Exodus 19:18, 20:18, and were afraid.

They declined God's covenantal proposal and requested that Moses be the one to meet with God and they would hear God's words through him, Exodus 20:18-2, Deuteronomy 5:2-5, 18:16, Hebrews 12:18-20.

As a part of the rejection, Moses learned the children of Israel had built an idol (golden calf) to worship in place of their opportunity to meet God face-to-face. Subsequently, Moses destroyed the higher law that was on the original



Did you know that God gave two separate laws or covenants to the children of Israel? Why did they accept the latter one rather than the first one?

tablets he had been given by the Lord and provided a law of carnal commandments, JST Exodus 34:2.

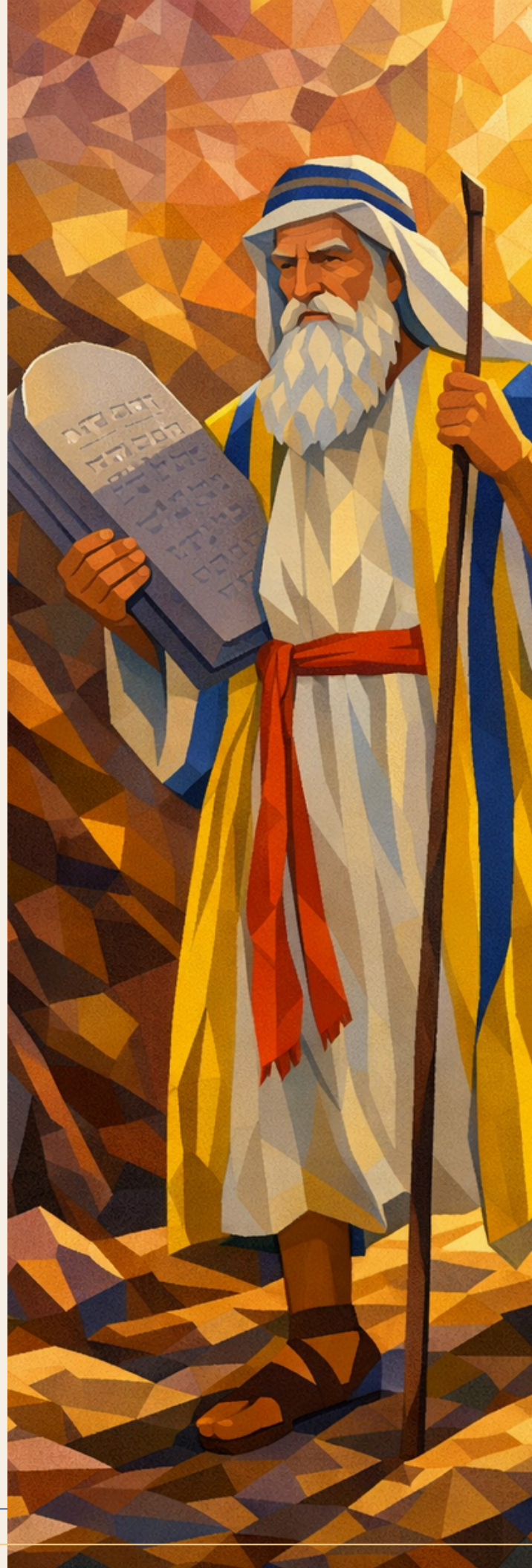
This rejection or provocation, Jacob 1:7, Alma 12:36-37, created a fissure in the covenantal relationship that God ultimately wanted for his people, Psalms 95:8-11, Hebrews 3:6-11, so they could be in His presence or His rest, Psalms 132:7-9, 13-14, 66:1.

Because of Israel's hardness of their hearts, Moses was unable to prepare/sanctify them to "behold the face of God". Subsequently, God "swore that they should not enter into His rest (presence) while in the wilderness" with Moses ultimately being taken out of their midst along with the Holy Priesthood, D&C 84:23-25, JST Exodus 34:1-2.

Establishment of the Aaronic/Levitical Priesthood

With the Holy (Melchizedek) Priesthood withheld and the higher law (on the first tablets) destroyed, the Lord commanded Moses to create a second set of tablets, Exodus 34:1, of carnal commandments, as a portion of the original Law of Moses.

Aaron and his ancestral tribe of Levi, Exodus 6:16-20, had consecrated themselves to the Lord and stood by Moses regarding the golden calf debauchery, Exodus 32:26, 29, which demonstrated to the Lord their devotion and their desire to be righteous.





Moses was commanded to ordain Aaron and his sons (as well as his later posterity), Exodus 28:1, 30:30, to receive a lesser priesthood that would minister in the tabernacle and later the temple. This priesthood focused on the preparatory gospel elements of repentance, remission of sins and preparing for the Lord, D&C 84:25-27, emblematic of the ministering of angels.

To assist Aaron and his posterity regarding the tabernacle and preparing sacrifices, the Lord called male members of the tribe of Levi, Numbers 8:16-18, to receive and carry out assignments in this lesser priesthood, Numbers 3:5-13. In their vicarious work for the Israel, they were to:

- Act as representatives, bringing sacrifices and mediating between God and the people, Leviticus 16:30.

- Maintain the tabernacle/temple and its sanctity, Numbers 3:38.
- Teach the people God's laws and apply them, Deuteronomy 33:10, Leviticus 10:11.
- Serve as judges and maintain ritual purity, Leviticus 13:2-3.

John the Baptist was a descendant of Aaron through both of his parents, Zacharias and Elizabeth, Luke 1:5-17, and thus a Levite specifically out of the lineage of Aaron. He was prepared to be the forerunner to the Messiah and fulfill the Aaronic Priesthood role in that effort, D&C 84:27-28.

Consecrating and Sanctifying Aaron and His Sons to be Priesthood Holders

At the door of the Tabernacle (symbolic of the Messiah coming to His house at

the east gate) in front of the congregation – having the children of Israel be witnesses as well as sustaining the ordinances – Moses ordains, Hebrews 5:1-3, washes, Leviticus 8:6, anoints with oil, Leviticus 8:12, 30:12, and clothes Aaron and his sons in priestly clothing, Leviticus 8:7-9, to consecrate and sanctify them to serve as priests in the Tabernacle. This process of consecrating and sanctifying Aaron and his sons, as well as the Tabernacle and its instruments, was conducted over seven days, Leviticus 8:33, Exodus 29:35-36, symbolizing perfection and holiness (similar to the creation of this world).

No one could take on this priesthood authority except they were called in the same way Aaron was called of God through a prophet, Hebrew 5:4, Exodus 28:1.

As part of the sanctification process,

Moses was commanded to take the blood of the ram of consecration (which Aaron and his sons had laid hands on the ram to consecrate it as a sin offering) and put it on the right earlobe, the right-hand thumb, and the right-foot large toe of Aaron and his sons, Lev 8:22-24, to further consecrate them and make them holy. This signaled to Aaron and his sons to listen to the Lord, act on His behalf, and walk with Him.

In addition to anointing the Tabernacle and its various vessels, Exodus 40:9-11, to make them holy and sanctified, Moses sprinkled oil and blood on Aaron and his sons' priestly robes, that he was commanded to dress them with, to consecrate and sanctify them, Leviticus 8:30.

I WILL ALSO CLOTHE HER (ZION'S)
PRIESTS WITH SALVATION: AND HER
SAINTS SHALL SHOUT ALOUD FOR
JOY. (PSALMS 132:16)



Priestly Robes and Vestments of the High Priest

To set Aaron and his sons apart as High Priests of Israel, the Lord commanded the creation of holy garments described as “splendour and beauty” (Exodus 28:2-6). These sacred vestments helped set apart and sanctify them as they performed their duties and ordinances in the Tabernacle.

Whenever priests entered the Tabernacle, they remained barefoot after washing their hands and feet, a sign of reverence for the sacred space.

Two sets of priestly clothing were made for Aaron and his sons, depending on the occasion.

The Levite priests wore white linen breeches (undergarments), a white linen checkered tunic, a linen girdle or belt, and a white turban, Exodus 28:39-40, 42.

The white linen robes signified purity and holiness, and amplified the role of the priests acting as angels/messengers of the Lord, Malachi 2:7, patterned after the heavenly temple and its angelic hosts, Ezekiel 9:2-11, 10:2-7, Revelation 15:5-6.

On the Day of Atonement, the High Priest wore the same simple linen garments as the Levite priests, Leviticus 16:4, with the exception of a colorful sash to set them apart from the other priests, Exodus 28:39. These priestly robes symbolized humility and purity before God. On all other days, however, he was to wear the Golden Garments—a more elaborate attire that included the white linen tunic and breeches, along with:

HEADPLATE or gold band is secured over the front of the Mitre on the High Priest's forehead and tied around the head with blue ribbons. The band was engraved with, "Holy to Yahweh", Exodus 28:36-38, symbolizing the High Priest acting in the Lord's stead and the power of His name, John 14:13-14, I Corinthians 6:11.

EPHOD or apron made of blue, purple, scarlet and fine white linen – representing (blue) heaven, (purple) royalty, (gold) divinity, (white) purity, and (scarlet) blood sacrifice – tied behind the priest's waist included straps that went to the top of the High Priest's shoulders from the back and connected to the breast plate on his chest. Each strap included an onyx stone with six of the tribes of Israel's names engraved on each one to remind the priest of whom he carries on his shoulders, Exodus 28:6-10.



MITRE (CAP) to cover the High Priest's head, Exodus 28:39-40, was to symbolically remove from God's abode the priest's own pride and any wrongdoing connected with Israel's offering while suggesting great humility.

ROBE made of blue that tied at the top and hung over the shoulders of the High Priest, front and back, while being open on the sides had 36 fabric-made pomegranates (blue, purple, and scarlet) sewn into the base skirt area on each panel with 36 golden bells also sewn in between the pomegranates, Exodus 28:31-35. The bells signaled the High Priest's movements to avoid divine judgment and alerted the people of his survival in the Holy of Holies, while pomegranates represented righteousness, fruitfulness, and the blessings of the Promised Land.

BREASTPLATE of judgment was made of gold, with blue, purple, scarlet and linen. It had 12 stones in four rows of three, each engraved with the name of a tribe of Israel, starting with Reuben on the first row and ending with Benjamin on the last row. Each stone was considered a precious stone from topaz to sapphire. The plate fabric folded in half allowing the twelve stones to be on the front, Exodus 28:15-21.

SASH (girdle belt) reflected in the same colors of the Ephod and was put on Aaron by Moses as he dressed him in the Golden Garments of the priesthood, Leviticus 8:7. It symbolized the need for purity and strength, representing the mediator's commitment between God and the people.



URIM AND THUMIN stones, representative of the tribe of Levi, were tucked between the two halves behind the front side with 12 stones. In addition to linking to the Ephod straps at the top of the priest's shoulders, ribbons on either side of the middle of the unfolded breastplate attached to the Ephod to ensure the plate was securely kept against the priest's chest. It was symbolic of the twelve tribes being kept close to the priest's heart with the Urim and Thummin to be on Aaron's heart to bear judgment of Israel before the Lord, Exodus 28:22-30.

The Vicarious or Intermediary Role of the High Priest

Aaron and his posterity who were called to be presiding High Priests were a foreshadowing of the Messiah. In their priestly capacity, on the Day of Atonement (Yom Kippur) they atoned for their sins and the sins of Israel. The High Priest was to be first sanctified and cleansed of sin by the sacrifice of a bull for himself and family, Leviticus 16:6. Next, the High Priest was to take two goats (sometimes referred to as rams), Leviticus 16:7-10, and sacrifice one and let the other go into the wilderness with the sins of Israel placed on it by the officiating Priest.

The High Priest would take the blood of the bull and sprinkle it seven times on the Mercy Seat of the Ark of the Covenant on behalf of himself and his

family, and do the same with the blood of the sacrificed goat on behalf of Israel, Lev 16:14-15, making full atonement for himself, his family and all of Israel, symbolizing completeness and perfection.

The blood of sacrificed animals symbolized life, Leviticus 17:11, and was used by the High Priest to make atonement on behalf of Israel and himself.

The Messiah, the Great High Priest, Hebrew 4:14-16, would sacrifice himself, Isa 53:7, shed his own blood for the world, Hebrew 9:12, atone for all sins, Isaiah 53:4-6, Hebrew 10:10, and enter the presence of God, Hebrew 9:24, 10:12, similar to what Aaron did symbolically for Israel by making an animal sacrifice for all Israel and then entering the Holy of Holies and sprinkling the animals blood on the Ark of the Covenant.



Because of Abraham's covenant with God, the children of Israel were rescued and given the opportunity to be with Him – in His presence. Unfortunately, Israel was unwilling to accept the Lord's higher covenant and received the lesser or Mosaic covenant and the Aaronic or Levitical Priesthood that would be intermediary with the Lord. Preparing Aaron and his sons, as well as male Levites, for the priesthood required extensive consecration and sanctification rites that made them holy, and a type for the Savior. The Mosaic law was a schoolmaster, Galatians 3:24, that prepared the children of Israel to receive the Messiah and ultimately his higher covenant.