

The Priesthood Established

Key Verse: *“Thou shalt gird them with girdles, Aaron and his sons, and put the bonnets on them: and the priest’s office shall be theirs for a perpetual statute: and thou shalt consecrate Aaron and his sons.”*
—Exodus 29:9

Selected Scripture:
Exodus 29:1-9, 35-37

MUCH OF THE BOOK OF

Exodus deals with the erection of Israel’s Tabernacle. God commanded that it should be fully constructed by the first day of the religious year, which was approximately twelve months after the Israelites departed from Egypt. He also informed Moses where each of the furnishings should be placed.—Exod. 40:1-8

As a faithful servant of God, Moses carried out the commands he received exactly as he had been directed. (vss. 16-33) The Scriptures inform us that the

visible Tabernacle associated with Israel’s center of worship pictured heavenly realities that pertain to the present Gospel Age church as well as the entire human family in the future.—Heb. 9:23-28; Rev. 21:1-5

Additionally, instructions were given for anointing Aaron and his sons to minister in the priest’s office in connection with the Tabernacle. Included in these instructions were details concerning the consecration ceremony and inauguration of Israel’s priesthood.—Exod. 40:13-15; Lev. chapters 8 and 9

A detailed ceremony was employed, under God's direction, in connection with the installation into office of the priesthood of Israel. Inasmuch as the apostle says that the arrangements with Israel were a "shadow of good things to come," we are justified in drawing lessons from that consecration service that may help us to grasp more fully just what it really means to be a follower of the Master—the greater Melchisedec priest.—Heb. 10:1; 5:5,6

The consecration ceremony of Aaron and his sons lasted for seven days. (Lev. 8:33) The number seven is used in the Bible to represent the whole, or completeness of that to which it applies. The seven days of consecration, therefore, would picture very forcefully the fact that the consecration of Jesus, the greater high priest, and his footstep followers, the underpriests, is something that involves every aspect of life, and continues forever.

As already noted, the priests of Israel were the ones through whom God dispensed his blessings to Israel and directed them in the things which pertained to himself. So the prospective members of the greater Melchisedec priesthood, wholly devoted to God, also are to realize and appreciate God eternal purpose in calling them to this favored position. These will become part of the "royal priesthood," which will administer blessings to all mankind in God's coming kingdom.

"If therefore perfection were by the Levitical priesthood, ... 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. ... 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."—Heb. 7:11-17 ■