

The Royal Priesthood: From Shadow to Substance

For centuries, a profound mystery lay embedded within the history of ancient Israel. It was a blueprint written in the lives of flawed men, captured in the chambers of earthly palaces, and detailed in the smoke of tabernacle sacrifices. To the casual observer of the King James Bible, the historical books of Kings, Chronicles, and Leviticus seem like records of an ancient, bygone era. Yet, when the veil is lifted, these narratives reveal an intricate training manual. The meticulous, strict instructions that God delivered to the kings of Israel and Judah, alongside the rigorous commands given to the Levitical priesthood, were never meant to end with them. They were shadows of a grander, eternal reality.

The New Testament reveals that God is currently preparing a select group of believers to inherit an extraordinary destiny. These individuals are not merely saved to exist in passive idleness; they are actively called, trained, and tested to be resurrected into a dual office that ancient Israel never allowed to be combined in a single human being. They are to become the future Kings and Priests of the Kingdom of God, ruling and teaching on the earth under the supreme authority of Jesus Christ.

Chapter I: The Dual Identity of the Resurrected

To grasp how ancient laws apply to resurrected beings, one must first identify the ultimate destination of the saints. In the opening chapter of the Book of Revelation, the Apostle John sounds a triumphant note regarding the redemptive work of Jesus Christ:

And from Jesus Christ, who is the faithful witness, and the first begotten of the dead, and the prince of the kings of the earth. Unto him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood, And hath made us kings and priests unto God and his Father; to him be glory and dominion for ever and ever. Amen.

— Revelation 1:5-6

This is not a symbolic sentiment or a metaphorical title. It describes a functional, governing body. This reality is reinforced during a magnificent heavenly vision in Revelation chapter five, where the four living creatures and the twenty-four elders sing a new song before the Lamb, explicitly declaring the geographic realm and scope of this future administration:

And they sung a new song, saying, Thou art worthy to take the book, and to open the seals thereof: for thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us to God by thy blood out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation; And hast made us unto our God kings and priests: and we shall reign on the earth.

— Revelation 5:9-10

The scope of this authority extends into the thousand-year millennial rule of Christ, as confirmed later in the book:

Blessed and holy is he that hath part in the first resurrection: on such the second death hath no power, but they shall be priests of God and of Christ, and shall reign with him a thousand years.

— Revelation 20:6

The average reader must pause to consider the vast logistical and spiritual implications of these verses. To reign on the earth for a millennium means governing millions of physical human beings who survive the tumultuous events closing this present age. These survivors will need structured leadership, equitable laws, infrastructure management, dispute resolution, and above all, deep spiritual education. They will require rulers who possess absolute authority yet exercise it with flawless, incorruptible compassion. They will need teachers who can walk among them, understand human frailty, yet lead them directly to the truth of God. This is why the double training program of king and priest is necessary, and why its curriculum was established thousands of years ago in the soil of the promised land.

Chapter II: The Decree of the King—Deuteronomy 17

In the ancient near east, kings were absolute monarchs. They frequently ruled by whim, accumulated vast hoards of personal wealth, built massive standing armies, and established harems to seal political alliances. They elevated themselves above their subjects, treating their citizens as mere fuel for their personal ambitions. Knowing the corrupting nature of absolute power on the human heart, God laid down a radical, pre-emptive set of constitutional laws for any king who would sit upon the throne of Israel.

Long before Saul or David ever wore a crown, God spoke through Moses in the wilderness, outlining the strict boundaries of Hebrew kingship in the seventeenth chapter of Deuteronomy. These instructions were designed to ensure that the king remained a servant of the Almighty and a brother to his people. When we dissect these ancient rules, we find the exact character requirements for those who will rule in the first resurrection.

1. The Prohibition of Material and Military Reliance

The first set of restrictions targets the three great avenues of human corruption: military pride, physical lust, and material greed. God commanded:

But he shall not multiply horses to himself, nor cause the people to return to Egypt, to the end that he should multiply horses: forasmuch as the LORD hath said unto you, Ye shall henceforth return no more that way. Neither shall he multiply wives to himself, that his heart turn not away: neither shall he greatly multiply to himself silver and gold.

— Deuteronomy 17:16-17

In antiquity, horses were the equivalent of advanced military hardware—tanks and fighter jets. Multiplying horses meant relying on human military might rather than the unseen arm of God. Multiplying wives meant allowing political alliances and physical desires to dilute single-minded devotion to the Lord, exactly as happened later to King Solomon, whose foreign wives turned his heart after other gods. Greatly multiplying silver and gold shifted the king's security from spiritual faith to material wealth.

How does this apply to a resurrected King? A spirit-born ruler in the Kingdom of God has completely overcome the pull of physical flesh, avarice, and pride. During their mortal lives, these individuals are trained to reject the 'Egypt' of this world. They learn not to rely on carnal weapons or human systems. The Apostle Paul notes that 'the weapons of our warfare are not carnal, but mighty through God to the pulling down of strong holds' (2 Corinthians 10:4). By learning to rely entirely on God through physical trials, poverty, and vulnerability, the future kings develop an unbreakable trust in divine power. When they are resurrected, they will not govern through oppression, standing armies, or economic manipulation. They will rule by the power of the Holy Spirit, ensuring that their governance is perfectly stable, fair, and free from the systemic corruption that plagues every human government today.

2. The Internalization of the Divine Law

The second instruction in Deuteronomy 17 is arguably the most unique requirement ever placed on a monarch in human history. God demanded that the king become a literal scribe and lifelong student of the law:

And it shall be, when he sitteth upon the throne of his kingdom, that he shall write him a copy of this law in a book out of that which is before the priests the Levites: And it shall be with him, and he shall read therein all the days of his life: that he may learn to fear the LORD his God, to keep all the words of this law and these statutes, to do them: That his heart be not lifted up above his brethren, and that he turn not aside from the commandment, to the right hand, or to the left: to the end that he may prolong his days in his kingdom, he, and his children, in the midst of Israel.

— Deuteronomy 17:18-20

Imagine the scene: a freshly crowned monarch, instead of indulging in immediate banquets or organizing his court, is required to sit down with parchment and ink. Word by word, line by line, he must manually transcribe the entire text of God's law from the master copy kept by the Levites. He could not delegate this task to a royal secretary. He had to do it himself so that the words would enter his eyes, pass through his mind, and be recorded by his own hand. Furthermore, this book was to be his constant companion. He was to read it every single day of his life.

The purpose was twofold: first, to develop a deep, reverent fear of God and an absolute commitment to executing His statutes; second, to maintain profound humility—'that his heart be not lifted up above his brethren.' The king was not above the law; he was subject to it, just like the lowest citizen in the land.

This is the exact spiritual process occurring within the called-out believers today. They are in the process of transcribing God's law, not merely on scrolls of parchment, but upon the living tissue of their hearts and minds. God describes this transformation under the New Covenant:

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.

— Hebrews 8:10

A resurrected king does not need an external rulebook because the law of God has become their very nature. Through years of daily study, meditation, prayer, and practical application during their physical

lifetimes, they have learned to think like God. They have struggled against sin, repented of failures, and deeply internalized the spirit of the law. When they take their seats upon millennial thrones, they will rule with flawless justice because their hearts are completely immune to the pride that ruined human kings. They will look upon the physical citizens of the world not as subjects to be exploited, but as 'brethren' to be served, protected, and carefully guided into righteousness.

Chapter III: The Standard of the Priest—Leviticus and Ezekiel

While the king represented God's authority and justice to the people, the priest represented the people before God, while simultaneously teaching them how to maintain a relationship with the Holy One of Israel. The Levitical priesthood was bound by rules of holiness that were significantly stricter than those given to the ordinary Israelite. The closer a person was permitted to approach the presence of God, the higher the standard of purity required. These ancient priestly boundaries outline the absolute spiritual perfection, separation, and instructional clarity required of the resurrected priests.

1. Absolute Sobriety and Spiritual Discernment

One of the most critical, direct commands given to the priesthood occurred immediately after a terrifying national tragedy. Nadab and Abihu, the sons of Aaron, took their censers, put strange fire therein, and offered it before the Lord, which He commanded them not. Instantly, fire went out from the Lord and devoured them, and they died before the Lord (Leviticus 10:1-2). Immediately following this catastrophic judgment, God spoke directly to Aaron, revealing a primary cause of their fatal lapse in judgment:

Do not drink wine nor strong drink, thou, nor thy sons with thee, when ye go into the tabernacle of the congregation, lest ye die: it shall be a statute for ever throughout your generations: And that ye may put difference between holy and unholy, and between unclean and clean; And that ye may teach the children of Israel all the statutes which the LORD hath spoken unto them by the hand of Moses.

— Leviticus 10:9-11

Physical wine and strong drink cloud the human mind. They impair judgment, dull the conscience, and slow down analytical reasoning. A priest operating under the influence of alcohol could easily miscalculate a sacred boundary, confuse a clean animal with an unclean one, or fail to accurately diagnose a spiritual or physical condition among the people. God demanded absolute, uncompromised mental clarity within His sanctuary because a priest's fundamental job description was twofold: to discern between the holy and the unholy, and to accurately teach the people.

This command is heavily repeated in the prophetic blueprint of the future temple described by Ezekiel, demonstrating its enduring spiritual validity:

Neither shall any priest drink wine, when they enter into the inner court... And they shall teach my people the difference between the holy and profane, and cause them to discern between the unclean and the clean. And in controversy they shall stand in judgment; and they shall judge it according to my judgments: and they shall keep my laws and my statutes in all mine assemblies; and they shall hallow my sabbaths.

— Ezekiel 44:21, 23-24

For those destined to be resurrected as priests, this instruction is elevated to the highest spiritual plane. The 'wine' and 'strong drink' of this present world represent more than physical beverages; they represent the intoxicating, deceptive philosophies, false doctrines, and moral confusion of human society. Babylon the Great is described as having 'made all nations drink of the wine of the wrath of her fornication' (Revelation 14:8).

True believers must maintain strict spiritual sobriety today. They must keep their minds completely clear of worldly deceptions and unscriptural traditions. By learning to diligently discern between the holy and the unholy in a world that calls evil good and good evil, they develop the precise spiritual judgment required for their future offices. When resurrected into immortal spirit bodies, they will possess flawless clarity. They will never experience a lapse in judgment, nor will they ever compromise the truth. They will stand in the millennial courts of the earth to resolve human controversies with absolute equity, acting as clear-minded, infallible teachers who can point human beings to the exact path of life.

2. Separation from Defilement and Death

The ancient Levitical code strictly prohibited priests from coming into contact with death, defilement, or anything that would compromise their ritual purity. Leviticus 21:1 commands, 'There shall none be defiled for the dead among his people.' Furthermore, Ezekiel 44 repeats this standard, allowing contact with a dead body only under highly restrictive circumstances involving immediate family, requiring an extensive seven-day purification process afterward (Ezekiel 44:25-27). The high priest was under an even more absolute restriction: 'Neither shall he go in to any dead body, nor defile himself for his father, or for his mother' (Leviticus 21:11).

Death represents the ultimate consequence and physical manifestation of sin. Contact with death meant a temporary cessation of priestly service. Additionally, the priests were subject to strict marriage laws: 'They shall not take a wife that is a whore, or profane; neither shall they take a woman put away from her husband' (Leviticus 21:7), a rule echoed in Ezekiel 44:22, which mandates they marry only virgins of the house of Israel or widows of priests.

These intense physical boundaries prefigure the absolute spiritual separation from sin required of the future resurrected priesthood. The saints are currently commanded to 'Come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing' (2 Corinthians 6:17). They must guard their spiritual garments against defilement by avoiding the moral decay and corrupt relationships of this present evil world.

At the resurrection, this battle against defilement reaches its absolute victory. The mortal flesh, which is subject to decay, temptation, and death, is completely discarded. The Apostle Paul describes this ultimate transformation:

So also is the resurrection of the dead. It is sown in corruption; it is raised in incorruption: It is sown in dishonour; it is raised in glory: It is sown in weakness; it is raised in power: It is sown a natural body; it is raised a spiritual body.

— 1 Corinthians 15:42-44

Having been raised to incorruptible life, the resurrected priests are completely and permanently separated from spiritual death. They are immortal, holy, and incapable of sinning. They are spiritually 'virgins' in

terms of their total, unadulterated fidelity to Jesus Christ, matching the description of the firstfruits in Revelation 14:4: 'These are they which were not defiled with women; for they are virgins. These are they which follow the Lamb whithersoever he goeth.' This absolute purity qualifies them to handle the sacred spiritual things of God's kingdom without any risk of defilement.

Chapter IV: The Violation of Boundaries—The Warning of Uzziah

To appreciate the profound nature of the resurrection ministry, one must understand how strictly separated these two offices were throughout human history. In the Old Testament, a king could never be a priest, and a priest could never be a king. The tribe of Judah held the scepter of governance, while the tribe of Levi held the censer of sanctuary service. Crossing this boundary was considered an act of high treason against the direct sovereignty of God.

The most vivid and terrifying illustration of this boundary violation is recorded in the life of King Uzziah of Judah. Uzziah was an incredibly successful, powerful, and brilliant ruler. He built massive fortifications, organized a formidable army, and his fame spread far abroad. But his immense success became his trap. The writer of Chronicles records his downfall in chilling detail:

But when he was strong, his heart was lifted up to his destruction: for he transgressed against the LORD his God, and went into the temple of the LORD to burn incense upon the altar of incense. And Azariah the priest went in after him, and with him fourscore priests of the LORD, that were valiant men: And they withstood Uzziah the king, and said unto him, It appertaineth not unto thee, Uzziah, to burn incense unto the LORD, but to the priests the sons of Aaron, that are consecrated to burn incense: go out of the sanctuary; for thou hast transgressed; neither shall it be for thine honour from the LORD God.

— 2 Chronicles 26:16-18

Uzziah's military and political dominance blinded him into thinking he could command the spiritual realm as well. He believed his royal crown granted him immediate access to the holy place. When the valiant priests confronted him, Uzziah grew furious, refusing to back down. He held the censer in his hand, ready to force his way to the altar. The narrative continues:

Then Uzziah was wroth, and had a censer in his hand to burn incense: and while he was wroth with the priests, the leprosy even rose up in his forehead before the priests in the house of the LORD, from beside the incense altar. And Azariah the chief priest, and all the priests, looked upon him, and, behold, he was leprous in his forehead, and they thrust him out from thence; yea, himself hasted also to go out, because the LORD had smitten him. And Uzziah the king was a leper unto the day of his death, and dwelt in a several house, being a leper; for he was cut off from the house of the LORD...

— 2 Chronicles 26:19-21

By striking his forehead with leprosy, God sent an unmistakable, visible message to all of Israel: no fleshly human being, no matter how powerful, wealthy, or righteous, can bridge the gap between civil governance and holy priesthood on his own merit. The human heart is simply too unstable to handle the weight of both crowns. Throughout the era of human flesh, the two roles had to remain completely separated to prevent absolute tyranny and spiritual destruction.

Chapter V: The Melchizedek Order—The Convergence of the Crowns

How then can the resurrected saints safely occupy both offices simultaneously? How can they escape the curse of Uzziah? The answer lies in a completely different, higher spiritual order—an ancient priesthood that predated Levi and transcends all human lineage. It is the Order of Melchizedek.

The first appearance of this mystery occurs in Genesis, when Abraham returns from rescuing his nephew Lot. He is met by a mysterious figure who holds a dual title:

And Melchizedek king of Salem brought forth bread and wine: and he was the priest of the most high God. And he blessed him, and said, Blessed be Abram of the most high God, possessor of heaven and earth:

— **Genesis 14:18-19**

Notice carefully: Melchizedek was simultaneously the King of Salem (peace) and the Priest of the Most High God. Centuries later, King David was inspired to write a stunning messianic prophecy, declaring that the coming Messiah would break the Aaronic boundary and enter this ancient order:

The LORD hath sworn, and will not repent, Thou art a priest for ever after the order of Melchizedek.

— **Psalms 110:4**

In the New Testament, the author of Hebrews dedicates an immense amount of detailed exposition to explaining this text, proving that Jesus Christ fulfilled this prophecy. Jesus was born of the tribe of Judah—the royal line—yet He holds a permanent, supreme priesthood, not through physical lineage, but by the power of an endless life:

Whither the forerunner is for us entered, even Jesus, made an high priest for ever after the order of Melchizedek... For this Melchizedek, king of Salem, priest of the most high God, who met Abraham returning from the slaughter of the kings, and blessed him... 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.

— **Hebrews 6:20, 7:1, 3**

When the saints are resurrected, they do not enter the Levitical priesthood, nor do they sit upon a corruptible earthly throne. Instead, they are adopted directly into the Melchizedek Order as younger brothers and sisters of Jesus Christ. They are made partakers of His divine nature. Because they are spirit beings, completely cleansed of human ego, and operating under the absolute leadership of Christ, they can safely carry both responsibilities without any conflict.

Chapter VI: The Millennial Reign—The Application on Earth

When the first resurrection occurs, the long training period for the saints ends, and their functional administration begins. The strict rules they studied, internalized, and practiced during their mortal lives are deployed globally to restore a shattered planet.

As Kings, they will enforce the laws of God with absolute stability and perfect equity. They will not accept bribes, favor the wealthy, or ignore the cries of the poor. The prophet Isaiah describes the beautiful, peaceful reality of this righteous government:

And it shall come to pass in the last days, that the mountain of the LORD's house shall be established in the top of the mountains, and shall be exalted above the hills; and all nations shall flow unto it. And many people shall go and say, Come ye, and let us go up to the mountain of the LORD, to the house of the God of Jacob; and he will teach us of his ways, and we will walk in his paths: for out of Zion shall go forth the law, and the word of the LORD from Jerusalem. And he shall judge among the nations, and shall rebuke many people: and they shall beat their swords into plowshares, and their spears into pruninghooks: nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more.

— **Isaiah 2:2-4**

The resurrected kings will be the direct administrators of this global disarmament. When local disputes arise between nations, these spirit-born rulers will execute swift, divine judgment, rendering decisions that are so perfectly just that nations will willingly beat their advanced weaponry into agricultural tools.

Simultaneously, as Priests, they will implement a massive, compassionate global education program. They will not remain distant, isolated monarchs inside unapproachable palaces. Like the ancient priests who walked among the tribes of Israel to diagnose illnesses and teach the Torah, the resurrected priests will move among the physical populations of the millennium. They will act as immediate spiritual guides, correcting people before they can make destructive choices. Isaiah captures this beautiful interaction in another profound prophecy:

And though the Lord give you the bread of adversity, and the water of affliction, yet shall not thy teachers be removed into a corner any more, but thine eyes shall see thy teachers: And thine ears shall hear a word behind thee, saying, This is the way, walk ye in it, when ye turn to the right hand, and when ye turn to the left.

— **Isaiah 30:20-21**

Imagine a physical human being during the millennium starting to stumble into greed, anger, or moral confusion. Before the sin can take root, an immortal, resurrected teacher appears or speaks with absolute clarity, saying, 'This is the way, walk ye in it.' They will explain the deep spiritual intent behind the Sabbath, the Holy Days, and the statutes. They will teach the world how to put a clear difference between the clean and the unclean, the holy and the profane, ensuring that the entire earth becomes filled with the knowledge of the Lord as the waters cover the sea (Isaiah 11:9).

Conclusion: The High Calling of the Present

Ultimately, the historical records of the KJV are not cold, dead ink. The strict instructions given to the ancient kings and priests are the structural framework of a magnificent training regimen. Every trial, every struggle against sin, every moment spent meditating on God's law, and every effort to maintain spiritual sobriety in this present evil world is part of a grand preparation. God is building a royal priesthood, an incorruptible government capable of bringing lasting peace, healing, and true education to a broken world.

The ancient shadows found in Deuteronomy, Leviticus, and Chronicles have found their true, eternal substance. Those who overcome in this life are being meticulously prepared to step into the ultimate destiny: to be raised in power, to wear both the crown of the king and the turban of the priest, and to reign victoriously on the earth under the King of kings, Jesus Christ.