

Discussing How To Restore The Early Church

Returning Intimacy and Power to the Father's Children

*"I tell you that if two of you on earth agree about anything you ask for,
it will be done for you by my Father in heaven.
For where two or three come together in my name, there am I with them."*
(Matthew 18:19,20)



SECTION 1 - LESSON 11

A HEBRAIC PERSPECTIVE

*A Priesthood Change: From Levitical To Melchizedek's
Empowered By The Holy Spirit
Immersion In The Holy Spirit
The Holy Spirit As Teacher
The Spirit of Conviction*



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A Hebraic Perspective:

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A Hebraic Perspective

A Priesthood Change:

From Levitical to Melchizedek's

“Then Jesus came from Galilee to the Jordan to be baptized by John. But John tried to deter him, saying, ‘I need to be baptized by you, and do you come to me?’ Jesus replied, ‘Let it be so now; it is proper for us to do this to fulfill all righteousness.’ Then John consented.

As soon as Jesus was baptized, he went up out of the water. At that moment heaven was opened, and he saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove and lighting on him. And a voice from heaven said, ‘This is my Son, whom I love; with him I am well pleased’” (Matthew 3:13-17).

A little review of a concept that's foreign to contemporary Christian practice would be helpful here. The Levitical priesthood of the Older Testament was established by God to provide a means for His people to receive forgiveness and reconciliation with Him.

An unblemished animal was brought before the altar in order that the *penalty for the sins* of the one offering it might fall upon the sacrifice, and the sinner be forgiven. The mediator between the sin-

ner and God was a priest from the tribe of Levi. The priest offered the blood from the sacrificial substitute before God, the bloody death that was deserved by the guilty sinner. That gory visual reminder of the detestability of sin in God's sight was a potent reminder to avoid sin and walk in obedience to God's ways!

Once a year, on *Yom Kippur*, the Day of Atonement, the High Priest of the Levitical priesthood entered the Holy of Holies behind the Temple curtain to represent the nation before God's presence. However, because the High Priest himself needed forgiveness, this arrangement provided only temporary forgiveness. Thus, the daily sacrifices had to continue, day after day, year after year.

While many priests served before the Lord with their own division for two weeks each year, there was only one High Priest. Each time a new High Priest was anointed, the outgoing High Priest would baptize the incoming one by immersing him in a *mikveh*, waters of purification.

Can you picture this? The incoming High Priest is taken down into the water and immersed by the outgoing priest. This is a crucial point in the change of priesthood.

At this point, let's make the connection with Jesus, Who is now the High

Priest of all who are His. Have you ever considered this point: *How did Jesus receive His Priesthood?*

Along the shores of the Jordan River, Jesus came to John the Baptizer, who qualified as a Levitical priest through the hereditary line of his father, Zachariah (see Luke 1:5). [Some historians point out that John would have been a legitimate High Priest of the Levitical system if the Romans hadn't put Caiaphas in that role.]

Since Jesus was without sin, he didn't require a baptism of repentance, that which John was doing. Instead, Jesus received the *anointing of His Priesthood* from the last potential High Priest of the Levitical line in order to satisfy the righteous requirements of His role as *our* High Priest. Jesus, the High Priest of the New Covenant, would offer Himself once and for all as the Perfect Sacrifice.

John misperceived the Lord's motive for immersion, and humbly objected. But Jesus made His point clear: *"Let it be so now; it is proper for us to do this to fulfill all righteousness"* (Matthew 3:15).

In effect, John, the last of the Levitical line of priests, baptized Jesus in the "Jordan Mikveh". Through this transitional act, Jesus initiated the empowered priesthood of *Melchizedek*, the priest to whom Abraham delivered a tithe of the choicest spoils of war. In the likeness of the priest Melchizedek, Jesus lived an "indestructible life" (see Hebrews 7:16). He could thus be recognized as the Messiah Who fulfilled these priestly qualifications: *"You are a priest forever, in the order of Melchizedek"* (Hebrews 7:17).

The name of Melchizedek bears special examination, for it so fittingly describes Jesus, the High Priest and King who had so long ago been prophesied: *"First, [Melchizedek's] name means 'king of*

righteousness'; then also, "king of Salem" means 'king of peace'" (Hebrews 7:2). Jesus, our King of righteousness, fulfills the very words given to the prophet Jeremiah:

"Behold, the days are coming," declares the LORD, "When I shall raise up for David a righteous Branch; And He will reign as king and act wisely And do justice and righteousness in the land. In His days Judah will be saved, And Israel will dwell securely; And this is His name by which He will be called, 'The LORD our righteousness' (Jeremiah 23:5,6,NAS).

John's awareness of Jesus as the Messiah was prompted by the prophetic expectation aroused by his own father's words of praise: that John would prepare the way for the coming Lord and give his people the knowledge of salvation through the forgiveness of their sins (Luke 1:76,77).

With the immersion of Jesus into a new priesthood that was *completely different* from the Levitical system, a new Covenant was about to begin. The Levitical requirements were "weak and useless", unable to make anyone perfect (see Hebrews 7:18,19). But Jesus inaugurated a new and *perpetually effective* priesthood through His own sacrifice:

For this reason Christ is the mediator of a new covenant, that those who are called may receive the promised eternal inheritance—now that he has died as a ransom to set them free from the sins committed under the first covenant (Hebrews 9:15).

Our Lord Jesus is *not* the priest of a religious system; His priesthood far sur-

passes that of the Levitical priests. Jesus has brought about an eternal *better hope* through which we draw near to God! (See Hebrews 7:19.) He is our personal intermediary in heaven, and He wants you to trust that He is there on your behalf.

As you seek to serve Jesus, your “Melchizedek” priest, you need the same *empowerment* by His Spirit as He had. To allay any doubts that Jesus might not be the Anointed One of God, “*the Spirit of God descend[ed] like a dove and light[ed] on him*” — the same Spirit Who abides in those who walk in the Lordship of Jesus.

Only when *you* are baptized into the same Spirit that anointed Jesus can you complete our Father’s purposes and be *transformed* into the nature of Jesus. Neither the temple regulations of old nor the steeples of today’s Levitical system of intermediary clergy can effect the life changes that only our Melchizedek, Jesus, can.

Through our King and High Priest we can *draw near to God*. We who embrace the true Gospel are the Spirit’s dwelling place. No earthly structure is holier than another, for where the Spirit of Jesus is, there dwells His presence. “*Do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit, who is in you, whom you have received from God?*” (1 Corinthians 6:19). [For more on this, see our newsletter March, 2001: [Living as the Family of Melchizedek.](#)]

The clergy system of today is a throw back to the temple Levitical order. Revisionists in the fourth century resurrected the old priestly role to support the pattern they had adapted from the Greek pagan priests.

Note this, however: The High Priesthood of Jesus our Melchizedek and

the old Levitical priesthood cannot exist at the same time. They represent two entirely different covenants. The former that is enacted from heaven has *replaced* the latter system through the shed blood of the Priest Himself:

For Christ did not enter a man-made sanctuary that was only a copy of the true one; he entered heaven itself, now to appear for us in God’s presence. Nor did he enter heaven to offer himself again and again, the way the high priest enters the Most Holy Place every year with blood that is not his own. Then Christ would have had to suffer many times since the creation of the world. But now he has appeared once for all at the end of the ages to do away with sin by the sacrifice of himself (Hebrews 9:24-26).

How much do you know about Jesus as a “*priest in the order of Melchizedek*”? Can you describe why perceiving Jesus in this light is important to you? (You may want to explore the Book of Hebrews for insight into the role of Jesus as our High Priest.)

Describe what you believe to be the *biblical background* for the current clergy system in Christendom. What similarities do you see between the clergy role and that of the obsolete Levitical priesthood?

A Hebraic Perspective Empowered By The Holy Spirit

**“Not by might nor by power, but by my Spirit,’ says the LORD Almighty”
(Zechariah 4:6)**

As a result of Peter’s message at Pentecost, many from the Hebraic Stream embraced Jesus as their long-awaited Messiah. The teachings of Jesus, including His affirmation of the need to be born again, confirmed that God had been guiding this group for sometime. Their ancestors in the Hebraic Stream had already put into practice the *relational priorities* and *foundational spiritual practices* they would need in their faith pilgrimage.

A new thought for you to consider: The Church, the “*called-out ones*”, did not begin at Pentecost. The “church” as exemplified by a life of love-grounded obedient trust began with Abraham, the first “*called-out one*.” This is why he is called the *father* of all who put their trust in Jesus (Romans 4:16), and why the Gospel was first spoken to Abraham (Galatians 3:8).

As we’ve already mentioned, the Hebraic Stream up until the first coming of Jesus were the “*called out ones*”. These had been walking in the footsteps of Abraham in their heart relationship of obedient trust in God. And, these same Hebraic “*called-out ones*” responded to Peter’s proof that Jesus fulfilled the prophecies as God’s Anointed One. It was through their repentance and trust that these “*called-out ones*” were forgiven and *empowered by the Holy Spirit*.

Everything that the earliest followers of Jesus needed to know about enacting their faith in a manner pleasing to God had already been made known to their ancestors. To repeat,

EVERYTHING you find in the Newer Testament relational priorities and faith practices were already part of the Hebraic Stream *before* the coming of Jesus. All they needed were His sacrificial atonement and the empowerment of the Holy Spirit.

Think about the above statement for a moment:

- The Father had ensured that the relational priorities and faith practices that would fulfill His purposes were *already in place* before the coming of Jesus.
- For the majority of Christians, and possibly you, this is a whole new awareness. So many have confined themselves to the Newer Testament as an independent entity, disconnected from its roots in the Hebrew Scriptures. Some go so far as to refer to the “New Testament Church” as though the Older Testament were insignificant and useless instead of *foundational* for the continuing truth presented in the Newer Testament.
- Our concerned Father also realized that those who trusted in His Son would need the empowerment of His Spirit if they were to walk in the obedient trust that would fulfill His purposes.

The need for the Spirit’s power wasn’t unique to the Hebraic early Church. Many Christians limit the Holy Spirit’s work to the Newer Testament. But this is far from the truth. The Spirit’s role and presence permeate the Hebrew Scriptures. For example, the Spirit was an integral part of creation in Genesis. He was in the midst of the Israelites during their wilderness journey (Isaiah 63:11).

The Older Testament testifies that the Holy Spirit entered particular individuals

to enable them to perform extraordinary acts on God's behalf. Let's examine three instances in the Hebrew Scriptures in which the Spirit *came upon* someone.

A key illustration is Joseph, whom God raised up in authority over all of Egypt to prepare the country to face the coming famine. Even Pharaoh testified that "*the Spirit of God lives in him!*" (Genesis 41:38).

Then we encounter Bezalel, in whom our Lord placed His Spirit so he could serve Moses in building the Tabernacle (Exodus 31:3).

And when God wanted to raise up a wise successor for Moses, we're told, "*Now Joshua son of Nun was filled with the Spirit of wisdom because Moses had laid his hands on him. So the Israelites listened to him and did what the LORD had commanded Moses*" (Deuteronomy 34:9).

When our Lord promises, "*Not by might nor by power, but by my Spirit*" (Zechariah 4:6), do you realize that He means for this to apply FOR ALL AGES?

The Holy Spirit in our Father's children not only separates us out from all mankind in relationship and motivation; He also enables us to joyfully obey and complete our Father's purposes for us. To live for Jesus in the midst of evil, you need spiritual power.

Describe your own views on the Holy Spirit as He pertains to your life. Does He seem to be more of an abstract concept? or, is He a living Person through Whom you communicate in union with Jesus

A Hebraic Perspective Immersion In The Holy Spirit

"It's true that I am immersing you in water so that you might turn from sin to God; but the one coming after me is more powerful than I — I'm not worthy even to carry his sandals — and he will immerse you in the Holy Spirit and in fire" (Matthew 3:11, CJB)

No one can point to the Holy Spirit and say, "There He is!" Yet, Scripture confirms that an invisible God-Person enters into every true follower of Jesus as a sign that our Father has consummated His Covenant with that individual.

In some sectors of Hellenized Christianity, baptism in the Holy Spirit is a controversial subject. And because the Spirit is so significant in the way our Father uses His people to fulfill His purposes, Satan would like nothing more than to make the Holy Spirit a divisive topic.

Remember that water baptism in the early Church was derived from the Jewish *mikveh* in which a person was immersed in water for purification purposes. This is the backdrop to the promise of the "*baptism in the Holy Spirit*". It is an *immersion into* the Spirit. And as you notice in the Book of Acts, those with the Spirit of Christ were transformed!

Picture yourself there on that Pentecost morning described in Acts chapter 2. The promised Holy Spirit unmistakably arrived! But why was His indwelling presence so necessary?

- The Holy Spirit is first and foremost the evidence that our Father has *accepted us* as children of the Covenant that was made sure in Jesus.
- Our pilgrimage with the Holy Spirit is the means through which we become

increasingly transformed into Christ's likeness.

- And, His power through us is what makes us effective in fulfilling our Father's purposes: "***But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth***" (Acts 1:8).

[See Chapter 1 of *God's Instruments for War*, "***The Anointing of the Holy Spirit: God's Power Given To Man***".]

Wouldn't you like to have heard Peter's words firsthand?

Repent and be baptized, every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins. And you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. The promise is for you and your children and for all who are far off—for all whom the Lord our God will call" (Acts 2:38,39).

Even though none of us was there, the promise they received of the Spirit is for each of us who trusts in the work, power and authority of Jesus. The promise is for you...

Do you believe in your heart that a follower of Jesus today **needs** a Spirit-empowered life to fulfill our Father's purposes in and through him? Our God doesn't depend on your strength or intelligence to fulfill His plans. He values instead your **dependence on His Spirit**.

What is your belief about baptism in the Holy Spirit?

Describe how you *know* that the Holy Spirit indwells you. Cite both Scripture and personal experience to evidence His presence.

A Hebraic Perspective ***The Holy Spirit As Teacher***

"But the Counselor, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, will teach you all things and will remind you of everything I have said to you" (John 14:26)

The Hebraic followers of Jesus clearly understood what it meant to be "born again." The rabbis of the Hebraic Stream had been teaching this truth for over 200 years. Spiritual rebirth was a shift from your mind to your heart. In a sense, to be born again was a change in motivation from "**what**" you did to "**why**" you did it.

[See ***Lesson 8: The Hebraic Stream Versus The Judaizing Stream***.]

To His followers Jesus foretold that they would receive the Counselor Who would teach them this new way of life. He would reveal Himself as that inner voice to guide them and quicken their understanding of God's ways.

The Apostle John affirms this role of the Holy Spirit when he assures, "***...as his anointing teaches you about all things and as that anointing is real, not counterfeit—just as it has taught you, remain in him***" (1 John 2:27).

Life with the indwelling Holy Spirit isn't meant to be one-way communication. To understand the Holy Spirit as

the followers of Jesus did, think of the invisible Person of the Holy Spirit as your intimate, two-way communicator with your heavenly Father:

- The invisible Holy Spirit expresses our Father’s will and His love through your spirit into your mind so you can respond in obedient love.
- As the Spirit of wisdom He gives you God’s understanding of truth.
- When you pray, the Holy Spirit intercedes with our Father and guides you to pray according to our Father’s will.

Can you see how the process by which you’ve learned in the past through your mind **CHANGES** when your spirit perceives and agrees with our Father through the Spirit of Jesus?

Prior to the Spirit’s indwelling, all that you learned was acquired through your PHYSICAL SENSES as they sent information to your MIND.

But as a Spirit-led follower of Jesus, truth is learned, affirmed and applied by the HOLY SPIRIT to your SPIRIT.

The Spirit of Jesus guides and teaches those He indwells by announcing the truth He’s received from Jesus to the spirit of Jesus’s followers (see John 16:13-15). These “announcements” aren’t oral in the sense that your ears pick them up. Rather, the “ears” of your spirit respond to the Holy Spirit’s inner proclamation.

Sadly, so many Christians never make the transition from the physical to the spiritual dimension. They depend solely on their five senses to impart information to their mind. In doing so

they negate dependence on the Spirit of Jesus. Ultimately they may find themselves sinning against God by grieving and quenching His Spirit.

Describe how *you* learn and apply biblical truth. How dependent are you on hearing from the Spirit and obeying what He says?

As you consider your own prayer life, what part does the Holy Spirit play? What did He last make known to you apart from your physical senses?

A Hebraic Perspective The Spirit of Conviction

“When [the Holy Spirit] comes, he will convict the world of guilt in regard to sin and righteousness and judgment”
(John 16:8)

In Lesson 6, *The Older Testament: Key To Repentance*, we emphasized the Older Testament as the source for understanding the all-important requirement of repentance. That’s why it’s so evident that Jesus, John the Baptizer and Peter at Pentecost clearly understood this Hebraic pre-condition. Each one preached *repentance* as the first step into the Kingdom.

Consider this vital point: *In order to repent you need to be convicted.* And that’s exactly what Jesus tells us will be part of the Holy Spirit’s ministry — the *One Who convicts*. Conviction means that

you perceive your sin from God's vantage point and recognize that there are consequences if you continue on that path.

When Peter finished addressing the Jews at Pentecost, the impact of the Holy Spirit as Convictor was profound and immediate: *"When the people heard [Peter's words], they were cut to the heart and said to Peter and the other apostles, 'Brothers, what shall we do?'"* (Acts 2:37; see also 2 Corinthians 7:10,11).

Jesus revealed to His disciples the Spirit's role as Convictor so that they would recognize the Spirit's presence in action. The convicting work of the Holy Spirit is a great kindness that our HOLY God has given to mankind. If the Spirit DIDN'T convict people of their violations of God's commands, they'd only grow more evil.

Envision, for example, if this nation had no police establishment to enforce the laws of this land. If lawbreakers were not convicted, what do you think would happen? Society would become more bent on evil and ever more lawless.

That's why our Father so accurately described humanity in terms of *"every inclination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil all the time"* (Genesis 6:5). God knew we needed help! We need to be convicted when we break His laws.

Consider how necessary the indwelling Holy Spirit is to followers of Jesus for them to be able

- to be convicted of their sins when they're walking in unrighteous, worldly ways.
- to repent for their sins by turning from them and walking uprightly.
- to be cleansed of all unrighteousness.

If you'll read our article, ***The Gospel Of The Covenant Is The Pilgrimage To Salvation***, you'll see how powerful is the prayer of a righteous person who's FREE from unconfessed sin! What glory that person brings to our Father!

In essence, the convicting work of the indwelling HOLY Spirit enables followers of Jesus to live HOLY lives. He enables them to be used for HOLY purposes in God's Kingdom.

How do you recognize when the Holy Spirit is convicting you of sin?

How would you describe your receptivity to the Holy Spirit's conviction? Quick to respond? Resistant? Unresponsive?

Ask those close to you in the faith to describe your willingness to turn from sin when it's made known to you.
