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The Kingdom Series **A Nation of Priests**

by haRold Smith
a citizen of the Commonwealth (Ephesians 2:19)

*"Now therefore, if you will indeed **obey My voice and keep My covenant** you shall be My treasured possession among all peoples, for all the earth is Mine; and you shall be to Me **a kingdom of priests and a holy nation**..." Exodus 19:5-6*

"So put away all malice and all deceit and hypocrisy and envy and all slander. Like newborn infants, long for the pure spiritual milk, that by it you may grow up into salvation - indeed you have tasted that YHVH is good. As you come to Him, a living stone rejected by men but in the sight of YHVH chosen and precious, you yourselves like living stones are being built up as a

*spiritual house, to be **a holy priesthood**, to offer spiritual sacrifices acceptable to YHVH through Yeshua haMashiach (the Messiah). For it stands in scripture: 'Behold, I am laying in Zion a stone, a cornerstone chosen and precious, and whoever believes in it shall not panic.' (ref. **Isaiah 28:16**) So the honor is for you who believe, but for those who do not believe: 'The stone that the builders rejected has become the cornerstone, a stone of stumbling and a rock of offense.' (ref. **Psalm 118:22**). **They stumble because they disobey the WORD (YHVH), as they were set in place to do.** But you are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, **a holy nation**, a people for His own possession, that you may proclaim the excellence of Him who called you out of darkness into His marvelous Light. Once you were not a people, but now you are YHVH's people; once you had not received mercy, but now you have received mercy." 1Peter 2:1-10*

From the Beginning, the over-arching Plan and Purpose of **YaHoVeH** (*click on the highlighted words to view content*), has been to have a Kingdom, a Family of Priests, wholly set apart and dedicated to serving Him alone. These Priests were to be a Holy Nation, a Holy Family bearing the image of His Name and manifesting the attributes of that Name to the *other* nations of the world. This was to be a Family of Priests where each member, in his own right through the keeping of **YHVH's Covenant** enjoyed this relationship of **echad** (Hebrew for "one or unity" - **John 17:18-21**) with the Source of Life that, in and through them, might be shown forth the Light of His Life into the darkness that enslaved the rest of the world - **a Light to the Nations** to attract the other nations into becoming members of YHVH's Kingdom as the words at the start of this article attest to. The Kingdom of YHVH (as depicted in the first article of this series, **the Scriptural Gospel**) is the restoration of the *opportunity* to enter into the same type of relationship initially experienced in *gan edan* (Hebrew for the Eden Garden) between the **first son of YHVH, Adam**, and the Source of Life, YHVH. As indicated in the previous article, the phrase "the gospel of salvation" is nowhere to be found in scripture - nor is there found any scripture telling people to *accept "Jesus"* as their personal **savior** so they might "go to heaven". Scripture does not designate "heaven" as a place but, rather, as a higher **state of being**. If you believe Yeshua came so that we would **worship Him** then you are following the tradition of men - not the **words of scripture**. This relationship with the Father of the Kingdom was to be the **inheritance** enjoyed by subsequent Sons birthed out of this union of *echad* - being One with the Father of His Family, Israel. The relationship **manifested** in *gan edan* was accomplished through a covenant agreement which resulted in being One with the Holy One of *Israel*. This Book (which we call the Bible) is the story, the chronology of YHVH's involvement with a peculiar people, a chosen race, born first through the **lineage** created in the first Son, Adam, and **culminating** in the second Son, Yeshua, to accomplish that singular Purpose. Having fulfilled that Purpose in Yeshua, the veil was ripped asunder and the door opened for any who would partake of YHVH's Word to enter and become one with the Father of that family (**John 1:12**).

Words mean things. We must constantly be reminded that **ALL** the books of scripture were written by Hebrews out of a Hebrew mindset influenced by a Hebrew culture that produced a uniquely Hebrew perspective being

conveyed primarily to a Hebrew audience which understood the nuances of the Hebrew language. To properly understand what these words mean necessitates viewing them from the Hebraic perspective they were written in - not from our current culture. Therefore, in scripture there are only two classifications of people - the Hebrew family of YHVH, known as the *House of Israel* and "others". These "others" are known as *goyim* (Hebrew for Gentiles) - the other nations who worship other gods. The term "**Gentile believer**" is an oxymoron (a concept that is made up of contradictory words) because to be a "Gentile" (from a Hebrew context) is to be a worshipper of pagan gods. A person is either a believer in the One True Holy One *of Israel* OR they are a Gentile, an "other" - scripturally, there is no middle ground. **Adoption** into the family of Israel is the *only* way into the Kingdom of YHVH. But, adoption into Israel is not new to the NT. **Exodus 12:38** tells us that when the Israelites came up out of Egypt that a *great mixed multitude* of different nations and faiths came up with them. They became *adopted* into the YHVH's Kingdom through their keeping of the Ten Words given at Sinai. YHVH has continued to adopt others into His family throughout the *Tanakh* (OT - **Leviticus 19:34**). That adoption doesn't erase our worldly classifications, however. Scripturally, one is still either Hebrew or Gentile, slave or free, male or female. But none of those classifications affect YHVH's adoption *policy*. If you are of Hebraic lineage, thank the Father that your ancestors were adopted into His Kingdom from the beginning. If you are from a Gentile lineage, thank the Father that He made a way for you to be adopted into His Kingdom as well - same Kingdom, same process. To be part of the Family of YHVH has two requirements stated in the verse from Exodus 19 opening this article - to obey the Father's voice and to keep **His Covenant** expressed in His Ten Words - and there is only **One Covenant**. Obeying His Voice is not the same as searching the scriptures. **2Timothy 3:16** tells us all scripture is inspired by YHVH, but scripture should only be used to validate that what we think we are hearing in Spirit is actually from the Father and is consistent with His Nature (**Jeremiah 7:22-23**, **John 4:23**, and **John 5:39**).



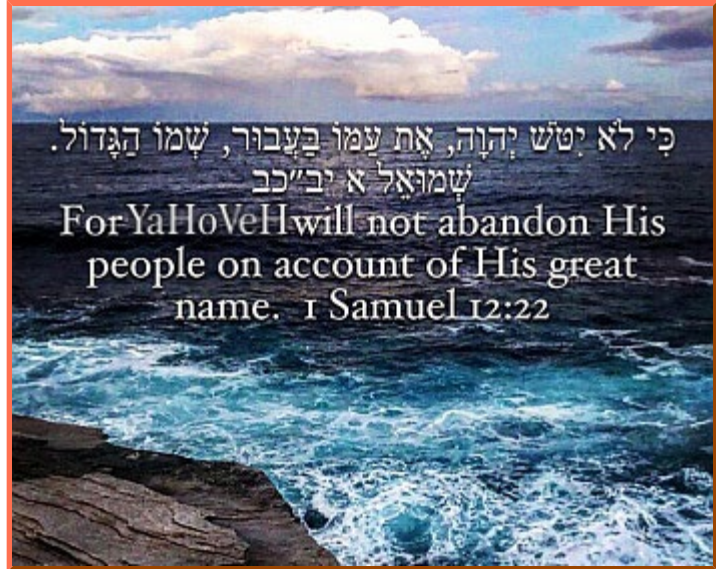
the Nature of YHVH is revealed in His Covenant

inhabitants of a family, a fold) and were merely a restating of the initial Plan and Purpose of YHVH to those embracing the manifestation of His Attributes in their lives now restored through the Resurrected Life of His Second Son, Yeshua *haMashiach* (the Messiah - *notice that salvation in this passage is something we "grow up into" by coming into the Presence of YHVH, not something to be acquired or taken*). Therefore, the Kingdom of YHVH should be considered to be any **containment** comprising His Family - the House *of Israel*. To belong to the Family of Israel is to be part of the *goy kadosh*. The verse from Exodus 19 above implies that YHVH *makes* these people into His holy nation, His *goy kadosh*. So, the real determination is *YHVH's* choice, not genetics. Peter recognized this important revision when he wrote, "*But you are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for YHVH's own possession...*" - quoting the Exodus passage but applying it to *all* followers of the Way regardless of ethnicity (1Peter 2:9 above). As far as YHVH is concerned, the real distinction in life is not Hebrew-Gentile, slave-free or male-female - it is Israel or not Israel. All who are chosen, all who are called, all who enter into a faithful commitment to the ways of YHVH exemplified in the Life of the Son, Yeshua, are Israel. That's why *Sha'ul* (the Hebrew apostle Paul) can thrust away the world's classifications in **Galatians 3:28**. Every follower of Yeshua by the embrace of His Life is part of the *goy kadosh*. All other distinctions are cast aside.

Christians have been taught that everything west of the book of Matthew has been done away with and replaced by a **new order**. This pre-dispositional mindset is most glaringly seen with the pronoun usage in 1Peter 2:6 at the start of this article which is supposed to be quoting **Isaiah 28:16** where the Greek word **autos** is translated as the English word "**him** instead of **it**" to denote a "rock" (cornerstone) - a "thing" not a "person". Thayer's Greek

Technically, the difference between a Hebrew and a Gentile is about birth. You and I have absolutely no say about who we have as parents. Some of us might wish we did, but genetics does not work in reverse. At least it doesn't seem to - until we take a very close look comparing this verse in Exodus to how it is being quoted in Peter's first letter above. The Hebrew phrase for "holy nation" is *goy kadosh*. But *goy* is the word for a Gentile, isn't it? The plural *goyim* are Gentiles, not the Hebrews. Of course, in this context *goy* means nation, but usually Israel is referred to as a "people" - i.e., the "**House** of Israel" meaning a *household, family, those belonging to the same household, family of descendants, descendants as organized body*. Peter's remarks above carried the same meaning with the usage of the Greek word **oikos** (translated "house" - meaning *any fixed residence or abode, i.e., any building, palace or tabernacle holding the*

Lexicon defines *autos* as, "**self**, as used (in all persons, genders, numbers) to distinguish a person or thing from or contrast it with another, or to give him (it) emphatic prominence." Why is this significant? Because the English translation transfers the *importance* of the event from YHVH's creative action to the rock itself; thus giving rise to the justification of worship to **another god**, "Jesus", to support a **pre-determined theology**. Likewise, in **Hebrews 7:12** the Greek word *metatithemi* (translated as the English word "change") is the same Greek word appearing a little further on as the English word "translated" in **Hebrews 11:5**. This passage describes the transformation of Enoch. It is not saying that YHVH "*replaced*" Enoch with someone "new"; rather, it is stating that he was "*changed*" into a *better* Enoch - but still possessing the same character and attributes that made him pleasing to the Father to begin with. So it is with the Priesthood and with **the Temple**. In keeping with the transformative Nature of the Holy One of Israel, the Temple and the Priesthood have not been "*replaced*", but elevated into something **better** while still possessing the attributes exemplified with the former that made it acceptable to the Father - the same transformation occurring with **His Words**. Until Yeshua, entrance into the priesthood was attained only by right of birth. The priesthood spoken of in 1Peter above, however, is not that of the Levitical priesthood, as many assume; but is the priesthood embodied by Yeshua after the order, the manner of *Malkiy-Tsedeq* (Hebrew for **Melchizedek**) which means "*my king is righteous*", (notice the *tsedaq* in his Hebrew name is the same Hebrew word for **righteous**). Thus, **Hebrews 7:3** states it is *Malkiy-Tsedeq* that *resembles* the priesthood Yeshua now occupies through servitude and lack of pedigree. Neither in Genesis nor in Hebrews is the statement made that Yeshua **IS** *Malkiy-Tsedeq*. That *Malkiy-Tsedeq* was a priest to the Most High is a substantiation of his name. Remember, that at this time in Genesis, there was no religion - only gods that were worshipped; and in Hebrew, names, like words, mean things. Thus, *Malkiy-Tsedeq* was set apart in a special way to YHVH. We are told he was a *physical* king over the *physical* realm of Salem and that there is no *recorded* genealogy or history of him. To believe he was *without* genealogy would be an *assumption* (reading something *into* the words rather than letting the words speak for themselves). The reason for this emphasis in Hebrews is to contrast the similarity and difference between the Levitical priesthood and the priesthood of the Messiah. We find that *Malkiy-Tsedeq's* introduction into scripture is as a **servant**, offering bread and wine. Likewise, the prayers of sacrifice offered by the Levitical priests within the *miqdash* (the inner temple sanctuary) were not for themselves. Their prayers were offerings of sacrifice as servants to the Most High on behalf of the Family of YHVH. With Yeshua's Sacrifice as the **Kinsman Redeemer** to restore the Kingdom to the Family of YHVH where **each member** of the Family is called to be a Priest in his own right, YaHoVeH *translated* the Priesthood out of the order of the Levites into the order of Melchizedek - not replacing it, but making it **better**.



*"Stand therefore, having fastened on **the belt of truth**, and having put on **the breastplate of righteousness**, and, as shoes for your feet, having put on the readiness given by **the gospel of peace**. In all circumstances take up **the shield of faith**, **the helmet of salvation**, and the **sword of the Spirit**, which is the word of YHVH, praying at all times in the Spirit, with **all prayer and supplication**. To that end keep alert with all perseverance, making supplication for **all the saints**."*
Ephesians 6:14-18

So, then, just what does it mean to be a "priest" in YHVH's Kingdom? Contrary to the popular Christian religious tradition depiction, warfare is not waged as a Roman soldier with weapons and armor to trade blows with another entity (see **Defining Enemies**). Most will be surprised to learn the "armor" the Hebrew apostle *Sha'ul* was referring to in Ephesians 6:14-18 above is not inspired by the garb of a Roman soldier, but came from its Hebraic root in the Original Writings as the clothing of a *priest* described in Exodus 28 below and is a picture of the Whole Armor of **YHVH**. Because of the Greco/Roman influence that crept into Christianity centuries *after* the Resurrection, these words have been taught to picture a Roman soldier's armor; but when studying these scriptures with the Hebrew perspective they were written from based on the Torah, as previously seen with **the Beatitudes** - a totally different picture appears. The word "priest" is *a title* translated from the Hebrew *kohen*, always denoting one who offers sacrifices and first occurs in **Genesis 14:18** as applied to Melchizedek. **1Peter 2:9** and **Revelation 1:6** tell us that those who actively embrace the Life of Yeshua by keeping the words of the Father are now under the Melchizedek Priesthood alongside that of the Elder Brother, continually offering sacrifices of praise and thanksgiving (**Hebrews**

7:1-10). Even though the *miqdash* is the place of intimacy with YaHoVeH that has been restored for all to be able to access, the protocol by which His Presence is accessed has not changed. While the priesthood of the Levite could only be attained through birth, the apostle was hearkening to the shadow expressed in the clothing worn by those priests of what is to be put on by His Holy Priesthood in order to stand before Him today.



The Belt of Truth can be seen in the *Ephod* of [Exodus 28:5-14](#) depicting an apron-like garment worn from the waist and covering the loins - [Ephesians 6:14a](#).

The Breastplate of Righteousness is described in [Exodus 28:15-30](#) and [Isaiah 59:17](#) - [Ephesians 6:14b](#).

The Feet of Shalom. Priests were always barefoot before the **Present Presence**, shod only in YHVH's *Shalom* because they were walking on holy ground ([Exodus 3:5](#) and [Isaiah 52:7](#)). - [Ephesians 6:15](#).

The Shield of Trust. Faith (*'aman* in Hebrew) means "to trust" ([Deuteronomy 7:9](#), [Psalm 115:10](#) and [Proverbs 30:5](#)) - [Ephesians 6:16](#).

The Helmet of Deliverance (in Hebrew, deliverance and salvation **mean the same**) is found in [Exodus 28:36-39](#) and is made of white fine linen, generally signifying righteous deeds ([Revelation 19:8](#)). This Turban carried an engraved plate attached to it that said "*Holy Unto YHVH*". Here, the emphasis is on the covering of thought processes, "*taking every thought captive unto the obedience of the Messiah*" ([2Corinthians 10:5](#)) - [Ephesians 6:17a](#).

The Sword of the Spirit is the Torah ([Exodus 20:1](#), [Isaiah 55:11](#), [John 17:17](#), see [Torah or "the Law"](#)). Priests carried no weapons of war, so the Word of YHVH (as with all of these descriptions about armor) is used defensively, to protect what is within - not offensively against someone or something externally ([Hebrews 4:12](#)) - [Ephesians 6:17b](#).

The Sacrifice of Prayer is found in [Exodus 30:7-8](#). The burning of incense signifies the supplications continually offered up to YHVH by His Priests ([Psalm 141:2](#), [Revelation 5:8](#) and [1Peter 2:5](#)) - [Ephesians 6:18](#).

[Ephesians 6:11](#) declares that those who would be priests alongside Yeshua are to "...put on the whole armor **of YHVH**" and in [Ephesians 6:13](#) to "...take up the whole armor **of YHVH**..." In other words, wearing the breastplate of righteousness is always in accord with the Nature of YHVH's righteousness which is selfLESSness ([Romans 14:7](#), see what it means [To Be Free](#)). "I put on righteousness, and it clothed me" ([Job 29:14](#), [Isaiah 11:5](#)). And having stood, continue to stand resisting the fiery darts of the enemy - the passions of the flesh (see [Arrows of Famine](#) for more information on those darts). The Armor of the Priesthood is designed by YHVH to protect His Priests from those forces of the flesh which would cause them to become an "**accuser of the brethren**" through those behaviors opposed to the Words of YHVH in [1Peter 2:1](#) above - the definition of the Hebrew word *sa-tan*.

Recently, a reader wrote to ask, "*If a person does NOT keep Sabbaths, knowing this is one of the 10 commandments, can they still be in the first resurrection in your view? Do you believe YHVH's word says that the only people in the first resurrection are the priests of YHVH, or does it indicate there are others in the first resurrection who are not priests, but are none the less given eternal life to function in a different role along with the priests, i.e. two sets of people resurrected or one set of people only?*"

It is not "my view" or what "I believe" that is important but what the words of scripture actually say and mean. Those of the "first resurrection" mentioned in [Revelation 20:4-6](#) says they will be "...priests of YHVH and of *haMashiach*..." The [first chapter](#) of the book of Revelation is addressed to "...*His servants*..." who are made "...*a kingdom, priests to His (Yeshua's) Elohim and Father*..." If we are to believe [Hebrews 12:14](#) that, without holiness, no one will see the Kingdom of YHVH let alone be priests in that Kingdom and the only way to **attain holiness** is through the keeping of His Covenant contained in **YHVH's Words** - it would seem that would include all 10 of them. In fact, scripture tells us in [Isaiah 66:22-23](#) that *Shabbat* will be celebrated in the new millennium. How is one to function as a priest of that kingdom if he does not honor the most basic of YHVH's Words? And there is no scripture that abolishes, amends, appends, changes or nullifies YHVH's Words. However, scripture does tell us there are others who presently occupy the Kingdom of YHVH waiting to be separated as tares from the wheat in that Day of Judgment.

In [Matthew 5:17-21](#), Yeshua says whoever "...*relaxes one of the least of these commandments and teaches others to do the same will be called least in the kingdom of heaven*..." Now, why would He address such people if they did not actually exist in the Kingdom? [Acts 6:1](#) also tells us that "*when the disciples were increasing, there became murmuring among the Hellenists toward the Hebrews*..." Hellenization did not mean that these people

were from Greece or "normally" spoke Greek as most English translations allude to. Hellenization was a *cultural movement*, not a change in language. Yes, the culture of Hellenism came from Greece, but people all over the Roman Empire adopted it without changing their local language. They simply embraced Greek values and Greek philosophy. In fact, even before the first century, history tells us there were a large number of Hebrews *living in Jerusalem* that were Hellenist. But they spoke Hebrew, just like everyone else among the *qahal* (see [the Church](#) for a full explanation of this Hebrew word). A mistake is made in presenting this situation as the Hellenists vs. the *native* Hebrews. It is two different *cultural orientations* among the *same* people - and this is important. Hellenists adopted a lot of views that were contrary to traditional Hebraic thinking. Hellenists were Hellenists because they were trying to fit into the world of the Roman Empire - they were politically correct, Greek educated, progressives who had different views and they tended to be "tolerant" of other gods; less inclined to worry about ancient practices and generally non-Torah observant. Just like today, by the way. So what were these Hellenists doing in the Messianic synagogues? Who let them in? And why in the world did the Twelve make special provision to deal with their complaints? They could have easily said, "*Who cares about those "outsiders" anyway? They don't think like we do. They don't have our values and practices. They are sinners!! We don't want them with us!*" But there they are, right in the midst of the assembly, part of the Messianic congregation, treated with the same dignity and compassion by the Twelve - just as James would later explain in essence in [Acts 15:21](#), "*We don't worry about how they will eventually behave because every week they hear Moses taught in the synagogue.*" Why were they there in the first place? Because they were "*growing up into their salvation*" - that's why. Because they believed that Yeshua was the Messiah *to Israel* - that's why. Because, if they are truly seeking Truth, all the rest would be resolved over time as they continue their walk with YHVH - just as we have experienced with Him. The treatment of widows might have initiated the problem, but the attitude of the Twelve reveals the real Nature of YHVH lived out in this group. If His Spirit brings you, who am I to say you don't belong?

"For those whom he foreknew he also predestined to be conformed to the image of his Son, in order that he might be the firstborn among many brothers." Romans 8:28

the Kingdom Series

Part One: the Scriptural Gospel - Part A

Part Two: the Scriptural Gospel - Part B

Part three: A Nation of Priests

Part Four: the Sheepfold

Part Five: Gatekeepers

a discussion of A Nation of Priests



???Questions???

Please feel free to email me at harold@hethathasaneer.com. While not claiming to have all the answers, it would be an honor to partake with you of what Spirit is uncovering.

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