

AARON, THE MEDIATOR
Exodus 28:1-30

Intro: The study of the priesthood in Scripture is a very interesting and precious study. There are at least four stages through which it passed:

- 1) The ministry of the heads of families, like Abraham and Job.
- 2) The Aaronic and Levitical priesthood--which began in the days of Moses and Aaron, and continued until the death of Christ when the veil was rent in two.
- 3) The priesthood of our Lord Jesus Christ which began with His death and continues to the present.
- 4) The priesthood of all believers--since the ascension of Christ.

Aaron had his own ministry, followed by that of his sons. He also was a type of the Lord Jesus Christ, our great High Priest.

But Aaron also typifies our ministry as priests, and the things which were said of him have their application to us. We are to offer up spiritual sacrifices, but our ministry as priests is essentially a ministry of prayer.

Note some of the appropriate Scriptures:

- 1) 1 Pet. 2:5, 9.
- 2) Rev. 1:6.
- 3) Heb. 4:16.

Obviously anything that God has us do is a holy work, a necessary work, and an important work. Therefore it should have the greatest priority with us.

There are some details given in Exodus 28 which will help us to understand what our ministry as mediators and intercessors is.

I. IT WAS A MINISTRY FOR WHICH AARON WAS CHOSEN.

It was not his idea. He did not order it, nor did he determine what it should be. It was God Who selected him, and charged him with this work. Cf. Ex. 28:1

Cf. 1 Pet. 2:9. Note that "chosen generation" precedes "royal priesthood."

Whatever else the Lord may appoint us to do, this is our primary appointment from God.

II. IT WAS A MINISTRY GODWARD.

Three times we have the statement which is found in verses

1, 3, 4: "That he may minister unto me . . ."

How amazing this is! We have a sovereign, omniscient God, and yet He has ordained that we not only enter upon this ministry, but continue in it as long as we live.

We may not understand why such a work as this is necessary, but as we give ourselves to it, we see that blessing always follows. The early Apostles could not be pulled away from it.

III. IT WAS A MINISTRY FOR SPECIAL PEOPLE.

Aaron was not called to intercede for the whole world. His was a ministry on behalf of the people of God.

He carried their names upon his priestly garments--in two places: 1) On his shoulders.

2) Over his heart.

This speaks of two things about his ministry:

1) His God-given authority.

2) That his work was not just a duty, but it was to be done, as the "heart" suggests in the Hebrew, because he was willing, because he would rather do this than anything else, because it was on his mind continually, because he was motivated by love.

To pray for people takes time, and it consumes energy, if we are praying from our hearts. But that is the picture that we have here.

In this connection compare the way in which the tribes were represented on the ephod as compared with the way they were represented on the breastplate:

1) They all were there--twice!

2) On the ephod they were all represented by the same kind of a stone; on the breastplate they were all different. But in both instances they were pictured as being very precious.

In one way, we all have the same place before God, and yet, in the other, we are precious, though different.

What a lot of important lessons there are for us here as we think of praying for the people of God today--all precious, and yet all different. All having the same standing before God!

IV. IT WAS A MINISTRY WITH TWO SPECIAL PURPOSES:

A. In both cases, on the ephod and on the breastplate,

all of the people were to be remembered before the Lord. Cf. Ex. 28:12, 29.

Do you ever wonder how many of the Lord's people there are who have no one praying for them? Of course the Lord prays for them. And the Holy Spirit prays for them. But still the Lord has ordained that all of His people be remembered.

What an encouragement for fathers to pray for their wives and their children! For Sunday School teachers to pray for those in their classes! For those of us whose parents are gone to pray to pray for our brothers and sisters. And on and on. What about pastors? What about missionaries?

- B. Did you notice that the breastplate on which the twelve stones were placed was called, "the breastplate of judgment"? What does this mean?

Keil and Delitzsch have said that "judgment" means rights! Why do we go to the throne of Grace? Heb. 4:16 says, ". . . that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need."

Does this mean that we go just to find grace for ourselves, or that we can go on behalf of others also? Surely the latter is not excluded.

How many Christians do you think there are who never pray for themselves? All believers have certain rights before God, and these are contained in the promises that God has given to all of His people.

V. IT WAS A MINISTRY WHICH REQUIRED SPECIAL PREPARATION.

Two things also need to be said here:

- A. Before the priestly garments were put on, Aaron and his sons were to be washed with water. Cf. Ex. 29:4. The water speaks of the cleansing of the Word of God. Cf. John 15:3.

As we read the Word and meditate upon its truth, there is a divine cleansing which takes place in our hearts.

- B. Then the priestly garments could be put on. Cf. Ex. 29:5 ff.

These were for "glory and beauty," and speak of being clothed in the righteousness, the glory and perfection of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Concl: Do you understand this ministry better now?

Remember:

- 1) It all applied to Aaron and his sons. They were not there primarily for themselves, but for the people--to represent the people to God.
- 2) These also picture for us the intercessory work of our Lord Jesus Christ. We can go through these very same passages and see how the Lord feels and how the Lord prays as He intercedes for us.
- 3) But it shows us what our ministry is.

What kind of praying do you do? Do you spend any time at all in prayer? Is your praying mainly for yourself and possibly for those who are intimately related to you, or has the Lord shown you how extensive this ministry can be, and should be? Is it possible that as far as prayer is concerned you are just about where you were when you were first saved?

May the Lord speak to us through these chapters, and burden us to give ourselves to prayer that He might be glorified, and that His blessings might abound in the lives of those for whom we pray!