



A Study in the Book of Hebrews

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Hebrews 8:3-5, Pt. 2

Handout for
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II. Post-Law Times

A. The Giving of the Written Law

1. The giving of the written Law begins with Moses in the land of Midian.
 - a. After Moses killed the Egyptian overseer who had been beating a Hebrew worker/slave, he fled to Midian because Pharaoh was seeking to kill Moses for his having killed the Egyptian (Exodus 3:1-15).
 - b. Moses in turn meets up with Jethro, the priest of Midian, through his seven daughters whom he helped in watering their flock, and Moses in turn was given Zipporah, a daughter of Jethro, as his wife (Exodus 2:16-25).
 - (1) One of the interesting and important aspects of Jethro's priesthood, is that in the Hebrew in Exodus 2:16, the phrase is not, "the priest of Midian," but rather, "to priest of Midian," or "to a priest of Midian" (וּלְכֹהֵן מִדְיָן) – *ûlêkôhên midyân*), which may be implying that he was not "the priest of Midian," that is, the only one, but rather "a priest of Midian," being one among others.
 - (2) Regardless of whether he was 'the only priest of Midian', or 'one among others' in that region, in being a "priest," he had to be serving an entity that he thought was divine, but who and what was that divine entity in his mind?
 - (a) In Exodus 18:9-12, we read the following:

And Jethro rejoiced over all the goodness which the LORD had done to Israel, in delivering them from the hand of the Egyptians. ¹⁰ ¶ So Jethro said, "Blessed be the LORD who delivered you from the hand of the Egyptians and from the hand

of Pharaoh, *and* who delivered the people from under the hand of the Egyptians. ¹¹

"Now I know that the LORD is greater than all the gods; indeed, it was proven when they dealt proudly against the people." ¹² Then Jethro, Moses' father-in-law, took a burnt offering and sacrifices for God, and Aaron came with all the elders of Israel to eat a meal with Moses' father-in-law before God.

- (b) As we read the above passage, we note that Jethro was not only aware of who the "LORD" was, but he also "blessed" the LORD and offered "a burnt offering and sacrifices for God."
- (c) Consequently, the permeation of God's oral truth through Noah, and perhaps even His written truth as well in some form through Noah's descendants, may be seen as attested here with Jethro, "a priest of Midian."
- (d) This very truth may also be seen as attested in "Melchizedek king of Salem" who "was a priest of God Most High God" (Genesis 14:18).
 - [1] The name Melchizedek in Hebrew is מַלְכִי־שֶׁדֶק (*malkî-şedeq*), and it means "my king is righteousness/deliverance/victory."
 - [2] In addition, in the phrase "king of Salem," the Hebrew word for "Salem" is שָׁלֵם (*şālēm*), and it is the word for "peace" – thus, "my king is righteousness king of peace."

[3] Some, therefore, see Melchizedek as a Christophany – that is, a pre-incarnate visitation of Christ, and this is based in large part on Hebrews 7.

[4] On the other hand, if this was merely a man who “was a priest of God Most High,” then indeed, once more, the oral truth of God disseminating from Noah through his descendants is evidenced here.

(e) What we are seeing, therefore, is that God’s Law was not something that first appeared with Moses in the burning bush and then on Mount Sinai, but rather God’s Law/Word is something that is eternal (John 1:1), and His eternal manifestation of His Law/Word has been in different forms and personages, culminating in the first coming of Jesus: “And He is the radiance of His glory and the exact representation of His nature, and upholds all things by the word of His power” (Hebrews 1:3a).

c. At the “burning bush,” God speaks to Moses and tells him of His plan to deliver His people from the Egyptians through Moses, but Moses balks at that suggestion by saying he doesn’t know God’s name, and then God reveals His Eternal Name to Moses:

And God said to Moses, "I AM WHO I AM"; and He said, "Thus you shall say to the sons of Israel, 'I AM has sent me to you.'" ¹⁵ And God, furthermore, said to Moses, "Thus you shall say to the sons of Israel, 'The LORD, the God of your fathers, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob, has sent me to you.' This is My name forever, and this is My

memorial-name to all generations. (Exodus 3:14-15)

- (1) The phrase, “I AM WHO I AM,” in Hebrew reads, אֶהְיֶה אֲשֶׁר אֶהְיֶה (*'ehyeh 'āšer 'ehyeh*).
- (2) The word אֶהְיֶה (*'ehyeh*) comes from the Hebrew verb הָיָה (*hāyā*), which means “to be, or exist” – thus, אֶהְיֶה (*'ehyeh*) means “I will continue to be,” clearly stating that God is eternal!

2. After Moses returns to Egypt and God accomplishes His plan of deliverance for His people, Moses and the Israelites return to Mt. Sinai where God first spoke to Moses, revealed Himself to Moses, and then called Moses to go to Egypt and be the instrument through which God would deliver His people:

In the third month after the sons of Israel had gone out of the land of Egypt, on that very day they came into the wilderness of Sinai. ² When they set out from Rephidim, they came to the wilderness of Sinai, and camped in the wilderness; and there Israel camped in front of the mountain. ³ And Moses went up to God, and the LORD called to him from the mountain, saying, "Thus you shall say to the house of Jacob and tell the sons of Israel: ⁴ 'You yourselves have seen what I did to the Egyptians, and *how* I bore you on eagles' wings, and brought you to Myself. ⁵ Now then, if you will indeed obey My voice and keep My covenant, then you shall be My own possession among all the peoples, for all the earth is Mine; ⁶ and you shall be to Me a kingdom of priests and a holy nation.' These are the words that you shall speak to the sons of Israel." (Exodus 19:1-6)

- a. The call, therefore, for the Israelites was to be a “kingdom of priests and a holy nation.”
- b. Interestingly, in the phrase, “you shall be to Me a kingdom of priests,” the word “you” is plural – thus, all of the people were to be “priests” in the sense of having a personal relationship with God, and that is the unique message of God’s truth through Israel, His Law, and the person of Jesus Christ.
- c. Christ thus came to finalize the message of God’s desire to have a personal relationship with individual men, and the Law was and is a “mentor” of that truth, and is also a mere shadow externally of what it means to know God in reality internally:

But an hour is coming, and now is, when the true worshipers shall worship the Father in spirit and truth; for such people the Father seeks to be His worshipers.²⁴ "God is spirit, and those who worship Him must worship in spirit and truth." (John 4:23-24)

My sheep hear My voice, and I know them, and they follow Me;²⁸ and I give eternal life to them, and they shall never perish; and no one shall snatch them out of My hand.²⁹ "My Father, who has given *them* to Me, is greater than all; and no one is able to snatch *them* out of the Father's hand. (John 10:27-29)

3. Thus, in Exodus, God begins to give the Law to Moses in chapter 20, in which verses 1-17 contain the Ten Commandments, and then the rest of the Commandments with regard to all aspects of their life, up through the building of the Tabernacle and all of its accoutrements, and then verse 40 in chapter 25, which is what is quoted in Hebrews 8:5: “And see that you make *them* after the

pattern for them, which was shown to you on the mountain” (Exodus 25:40).

- B. The Requirements of the Priests
 1. The Priests in turn had to bring sacrifices for their own sins, as well as that of the people:

Now it came about on the eighth day that Moses called Aaron and his sons and the elders of Israel;² and he said to Aaron, "Take for yourself a calf, a bull, for a sin offering and a ram for a burnt offering, *both* without defect, and offer *them* before the LORD."³ "Then to the sons of Israel you shall speak, saying, 'Take a male goat for a sin offering, and a calf and a lamb, both one year old, without defect, for a burnt offering,⁴ and an ox and a ram for peace offerings, to sacrifice before the LORD, and a grain offering mixed with oil; for today the LORD shall appear to you.'"⁵ So they took what Moses had commanded to the front of the tent of meeting, and the whole congregation came near and stood before the LORD.⁶ And Moses said, "This is the thing which the LORD has commanded you to do, that the glory of the LORD may appear to you."⁷ Moses then said to Aaron, "Come near to the altar and offer your sin offering and your burnt offering, that you may make atonement for yourself and for the people; then make the offering for the people, that you may make atonement for them, just as the LORD has commanded." (Leviticus 9:1-7)

Now the LORD spoke to Moses after the death of the two sons of Aaron, when they had approached the presence of the LORD and died.² And the LORD said to Moses, "Tell your brother Aaron that he shall not enter at any time into the holy place inside the veil, before the mercy seat which is on the ark, lest he die; for I will appear in the cloud over the mercy seat."³ "Aaron shall enter the holy place with this: with a bull

for a sin offering and a ram for a burnt offering. ⁴ "He shall put on the holy linen tunic, and the linen undergarments shall be next to his body, and he shall be girded with the linen sash, and attired with the linen turban (these are holy garments). Then he shall bathe his body in water and put them on. ⁵ "And he shall take from the congregation of the sons of Israel two male goats for a sin offering and one ram for a burnt offering. ⁶ ¶ "Then Aaron shall offer the bull for the sin offering which is for himself, that he may make atonement for himself and for his household. ⁷ "And he shall take the two goats and present them before the LORD at the doorway of the tent of meeting. ⁸ "And Aaron shall cast lots for the two goats, one lot for the LORD and the other lot for the scapegoat. ⁹ "Then Aaron shall offer the goat on which the lot for the LORD fell, and make it a sin offering. ¹⁰ "But the goat on which the lot for the scapegoat fell, shall be presented alive before the LORD, to make atonement upon it, to send it into the wilderness as the scapegoat. ¹¹ ¶ "Then Aaron shall offer the bull of the sin offering which is for himself, and make atonement for himself and for his household, and he shall slaughter the bull of the sin offering which is for himself. . . . And *this* shall be a permanent statute for you: in the seventh month, on the tenth day of the month, you shall humble your souls, and not do any work, whether the native, or the alien who sojourns among you; ³⁰ for it is on this day that atonement shall be made for you to cleanse you; you shall be clean from all your sins before the LORD. ³¹ "It is to be a sabbath of solemn rest for you, that you may humble your souls; it is a permanent statute. ³² "So the priest who is anointed and ordained to serve as priest in his father's place shall make atonement: he shall thus put on the linen garments, the holy garments, ³³ and make atonement for the holy sanctuary; and he shall make atonement for the tent of meeting and for the altar. He shall also

make atonement for the priests and for all the people of the assembly. ³⁴ "Now you shall have this as a permanent statute, to make atonement for the sons of Israel for all their sins once every year." And just as the LORD had commanded Moses, *so* he did. (Leviticus 16:1-11, 29-34)

2. Thus, just as Hebrews 8:3-5 states, the High Priest had to offer sacrifices for himself and his own family, but in addition, the High Priest had to be from the line of Aaron from the tribe of Levi, and Jesus' lineage was from the tribe of Judah, not the tribe of Levi.
 - a. Consequently, Jesus came to fulfill the Law as the Perfect Sacrifice, but He also stands outside of the Law in that He was not of the tribe of Levi and the lineage of Aaron.
 - b. On the other hand, God, through Jacob on his deathbed, prophesied about the coming Messiah through the tribe of Judah in unmistakable terms:

Judah, your brothers shall praise you; Your hand shall be on the neck of your enemies; Your father's sons shall bow down to you. ⁹ "Judah is a lion's whelp; From the prey, my son, you have gone up. He couches, he lies down as a lion, And as a lion, who dares rouse him up? ¹⁰ "The scepter shall not depart from Judah, Nor the ruler's staff from between his feet, Until Shiloh comes, And to him *shall be* the obedience of the peoples. ¹¹ "He ties *his* foal to the vine, And his donkey's colt to the choice vine; He washes his garments in wine, And his robes in the blood of grapes. ¹² "His eyes are dull from wine, And his teeth white from milk. (Genesis 49:8-12)

- c. Thus, we see that the Law was indeed "a copy and shadow of the heavenly things," including all of the

sacrificial aspects of worship, which sacrifices were fulfilled in the ultimate sacrifice of Jesus, but as God directed Moses to build and erect everything according to His specifications, that served the purpose, not the end, of representing the ultimate fulfillment of all aspects of the Law in Jesus:

Do not think that I came to abolish the Law or the Prophets; I did not come to abolish, but to fulfill. ¹⁸ "For truly I say to you, until heaven and earth pass away, not the smallest letter or stroke shall pass away from the Law, until all is accomplished. ¹⁹ "Whoever then annuls one of the least of these commandments, and so teaches others, shall be called least in the kingdom of heaven; but whoever keeps and teaches *them*, he shall be called great in the kingdom of heaven. ²⁰ "For I say to you, that unless your righteousness surpasses *that* of the scribes and Pharisees, you shall not enter the kingdom of heaven. (Matthew 5:17-20)