

The Priesthood With a Bride Heart

By R.T. Nusbaum *(edited from an excerpt shared in Ireland on May 13th 2009)*

The Bride Aspect of the Priesthood

There is an aspect of knowing who we are in our resurrection union with Christ that pertains to the fulfillment of the Old Testament priesthood. I Peter 2:5 declares that we are *“a holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God by Jesus Christ”*. Here Peter is referring to all believers everywhere as priests. He is declaring that we all are priests unto God through Jesus Christ. Peter also says that we are to offer up spiritual sacrifices by Jesus Christ. Although there is much to be known and embraced in this area, I would like to focus on one aspect of our “New Testament” priesthood that can represent the Bride of Christ. There are many different angles and aspects of comprehending Christ in His resurrected Body. We can know Him in the view of the corporate Body of Christ and see many great realities. Looking at the risen Christ from the Church side will again present another emphasis that is also true and wonderful. Yet in this article we are looking from the “Bride aspect” of Christ’s risen Body, and here the emphasis will be in relation to the believer’s heart and attention being towards the Lord. A bride’s attention, desire and activity is towards her husband. In like manner, a priest’s existence is given to ministering unto the Lord. The Old Testament’s priest’s attention was toward the Lord both night and day. Their gifts were offered up to the Lord. These priests were wholly separated unto the Lord in such a degree that surely a heartfelt love for the Lord ordered their consecration as completely His. A priest, in his essence, was a person wholly given unto the Lord.

A Sweet Ministry Unto God

If we were to go through the book of Leviticus and study the daily duties of the priests, we would discover that by far the vast majority of the offerings they offered were burnt offerings, which were sweet savor offerings. This is important to understand because most people are only aware of the “sin

offerings". The sin offerings were the offerings that pertained to the people's sins. But the priests offered up many other kinds of offerings that had nothing to do with sins. Although the sin offerings were only offered from time to time, there was a constant burnt offering going forth at all times. This perpetual offering was meant to ascend to God as a sweet savor both night and day, ministering to Him continually. The purpose of the sweet savor offerings was not to deal with people's sins, but to bless the Lord. As New Testament priests, we must understand that the sweet savor we are offering up to God is Christ Himself. That is why Peter said we offer up these spiritual sacrifices "by Jesus Christ". The nature of Christ is the sweet savor. He is what we offer up, rather than our stinky attitudes and responses! Now, just try to comprehend these Old Testament priests all day long offering up sweet savor offerings to the Lord. Although the sweet fragrance is meant to go up to the Lord, those priests would become soaked in the savor that was surrounding them. Now, for us as priests today, we can see that if we are constantly offering up Christ in this way we will become saturated in His Spirit. We will be changed; we will smell sweet because we will have the sweet savor of Christ upon us and in us.



Seeing His Heart in the Daily Offerings

Now we must consider that the offerings many times involved sacrificing lambs, goats, bullocks and other animals. Many of these animals were utterly consumed by fire even after they were slain. These priests were constantly witnessing the sacrificial love of God as they administered these offerings. All day long they saw that the sweet savor that was blessing God came from a lamb that was giving its life selflessly, even to the point of ashes. The sweet savor offering was a picture of Christ living selflessly to be a sweet savor to the Father. These priests were witnessing the way the Son relates to His Father in love and through the selfless eternal Spirit of the Lamb. What a glimpse into the true essence of eternal worship these priests had!

Besides all of the sweet savor burnt offerings, the priests also offered up sin offerings. In this offering the priests would again see the contrast between human motives and the motives of the Lamb of God. Daily each priest would observe this principle in action. For example, an Israelite man comes to the door of the tabernacle and he has a lamb for a sin offering. The priest takes it and says, "Oh Lord I offer this lamb up for this man." And as the priests do that all day long, they soon begin to realize, "It is the same Lamb dying for everyone who comes up here." They start seeing that God relates to man's sin and failure by dying, through pouring out His own blood to cover them! Beyond comprehending what a wonderful Savior this Lamb is, they begin to glory in the beautiful nature of this Lamb that continually, all day and every



day, pours out His Life for all. This is where the Bride heart of the priest becomes overwhelmed with the nature of the offering beyond what the offering is accomplishing. The priest, who understands the work of the ministry, now beholds the beauty of the Lamb Who alone fulfills this ministry. Before long the worship in the priests heart becomes directed towards God in His selfless nature. The priests watch as people continually hand their lambs over, the people not really comprehending the continual sacrifice going on for them. But the priests are aware of the Lamb. They are beholding Him in His nature constantly. Many who come to the priests are simply aware of their own need; "Go kill this lamb and just make sure that I am ok." The contrast between man's nature and God's nature becomes apparent. Beyond the work of the offering is the beauty of the nature of the sacrifice. The priests become inundated constantly with this reality. They are "saturated" with the sweet savor of Christ's self giving nature. Their life purpose was to present this Lamb unto God in sacrifice; in beauty of nature.

The Priesthood of the Lamb's Wife

These priests must have begun to recognize the true character of the Son in His self giving nature. In this way we can see the bride aspect of the priesthood. These priests were coming to know the heart and way of God as seen in the Lamb's self giving nature. It is the bride of Christ that comprehends that the Son is a Lamb in His eternal Person and joins with Him in His sacrificial nature. We find evidence of this all through out the book of Revelation where the Bride of Christ is only referred to as "the wife of the Lamb". The priests, like the bride, were discovering the real heart of the Lamb (Who is the husband). In this way the priests were separating their lives and purpose unto the Eternal Spirit and ministry of the Lamb. This is a true picture of the Bride. The Bride is known by God as one who has become married or "joined" to the Son in His Lamb Nature. She is no longer living according to her old selfish life, for she has been crucified with Christ. She has separated and consecrated herself, through the Cross of Christ, unto oneness with the Lamb. Like a priest, she will be about the ministry of the Lamb, allowing the sweet savor of His Life to flow through her blessing all who "come to her". Those who come to her will find one who has the Lamb slain within her, just like those who



came to the tabernacle found with the priests. She will be the place through which the Lamb can continue to pour out His Life for others. She will be His wife.... the Lamb's wife. And like a priest she will minister Christ in His Lamb nature to God and others.*