

The study of the Priest in the Order of Melchizedek is a series of 7 parts, of which this first part contains an introduction, followed by a brief description of what is discussed in the following parts.

**Part 1 - Introduction.**

The starting point of this series is Peter's call:

- *As you come to him (Jesus), the living Stone - rejected by humans but chosen by God and precious to him - you also, like living stones, are being **built into a spiritual house** to be a **holy priesthood**, offering **spiritual sacrifices** acceptable to God through Jesus Christ. (1 Peter 2:4-5)*

This priesthood is a new priesthood in the order of Melchizedek, of which Jesus is the high priest.<sup>1</sup> And, as with the appointment of the sons of Aaron to be priests, God also tells the new priests ...

- *I am giving you the service of the priesthood **as a gift**. (Numbers 18:7)*

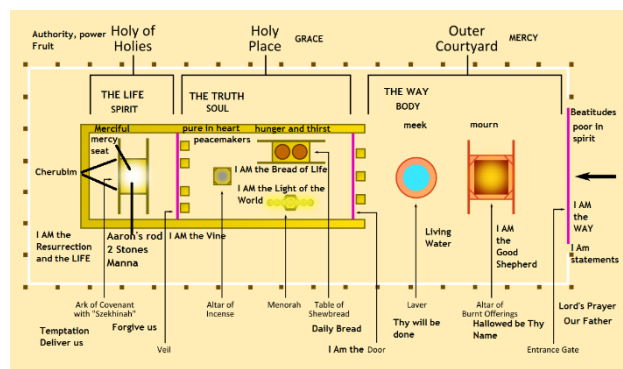
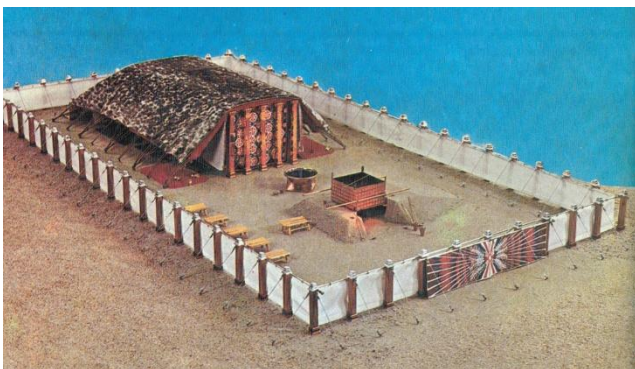
Because they alone were allowed to enter the Holy Place of the tabernacle, God regards the priesthood given to the Levitical priests as a gift.

Likewise, the priesthood in the order of Melchizedek is a gift, as Jesus said to the disciples:

- *The knowledge of the secrets of the kingdom of God **has been given to you**, ... (Luke 8:10)*

This series of studies about the priest in the order of Melchizedek is an attempt to unveil some of these secrets. This is done on the basis of the objects encountered by the Levitical priests while serving in the tabernacle.

Depiction of the tabernacle that is extensively discussed in the series of studies:



**Part 2 - Ordination to the priesthood:**

From the family of Levi God designated Aaron and his offspring as priests. Before they became active in that office at their service in the tabernacle, they had **first to be ordained as priests**. Then they were able to perform the ministries at the various sacred objects present in the tabernacle.

This **second part** of the study series describes how a **disciple** of Jesus Christ is **ordained as a priest** in the order of Melchizedek.

After his/her ordination as a priest, he/she can enter the court and take the first step in the tabernacle, along the new and living way, which is Jesus Christ.

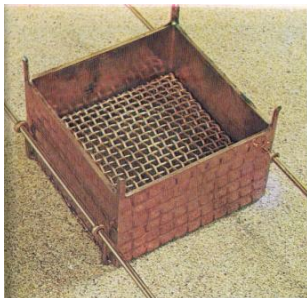
1 Study: Hebrews 7:12 - Change of priesthood.



The objects he/she encounters in the tabernacle are symbols for his/her, **spiritual points of interest** as a follower of Jesus.

### **Part 3 - The courtyard, the altar of burnt offering.**

In the **third part** of this series of studies, we first consider the significance of the tabernacle for our time, and what it means to enter the courtyard through the first curtain.



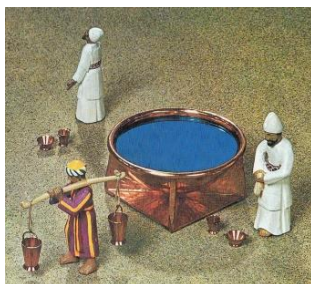
Then the meaning of the **altar of burnt offering** in the courtyard is discussed.

At the altar of burnt offering, the priest in the order of Melchizedek reflects upon the fact that Jesus **offered Himself** upon this, and thus brought about eternal redemption.

It is also pointed out that the priest/disciple is **clothed** with Jesus Christ through this redemption. In being so, he/she reconciles him/herself to God and thereby receives his/her **call to go out** into the world **with reconciliation**, as the messenger of Jesus Christ.

### **Part 4 - The courtyard, the laver.**

In the **fourth part**, the second object in the forecourt, the **laver**, is discussed, in which, as it were, a **mirror** is held to the priest/disciple.



By washing their feet here, he/she is expected to **cleanse** him/herself from the last ties with the world. Only after this is he/she allowed to enter the holy place through the **second curtain**.

The meaning of this curtain is also explained in this part of the series of studies.

### **Part 5 – The Holy Place and the light of the lampstand.**

The **fifth part** first describes what it means to **live** as a priest/disciple **in the Holy Place**.

The Holy Place of the tabernacle was a completely enclosed space in which everything was covered with gold, an image of **holiness**. The seclusion symbolises the **intimacy of the soul**. Here, **in the symbols of Light and Bread**, the priest in the order of Melchizedek meets **Jesus as the Person He really is**.

The **symbolic** objects of Light and Bread speak of how Jesus desires to make a home in the heart, the soul of the priest/disciple.

As He said to his disciples:

- **Remain in me, as I also remain in you.** (John 15:4)



In this 5th part of the series of studies, the **first symbol** the priest/disciple encounters in the **Holy Place** is considered, i.e. the **light** shining from the **lampstand**.

Jesus, as the only source of light in his/her life along the new and living way.

How the priest/disciple is involved as light bearer in the world is also discussed.

### Part 6 – The Holy Place and bread of Presence on the table.

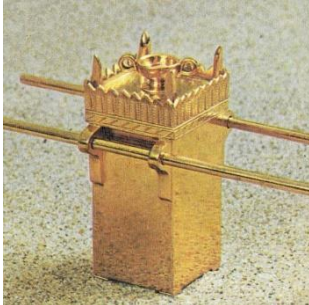


**Part six** reflects on who Jesus is as the **bread** of the Presence on the table, the **second symbol** in the **Holy Place**.

In relation to Jesus Christ, this is the **only** spiritual food for the priest/disciple in his/her life.

What has happened until now in the life of the priest in the order of Melchizedek is also discussed briefly.

### Part 7 – The altar of incense and the ark.



In part seven, the priest/disciple in the **Holy Place** finally comes to stand at the **altar of incense**, upon which he/she offers incense.

Incense is the image of the prayers that the priest/disciple sends to God.

Because the veil was torn when Jesus died on the cross, the priest in the order of Melchizedek now stands right in front of the **ark**, in the sight of God, who sits enthroned between the cherubim on the **atonement cover**.



**The Ark in the Most Holy Place** is the **ultimate goal** to which Jesus, as the new and living way, leads the priest/disciple.

Here he/she learns about the character of God.

God, who speaks from the cherubim on the **atonement cover**.

In conclusion, an attempt is made to summarize what is the meaning of the abundant life that Jesus promised.



**In conclusion:**

The purpose of this series of studies is to draw the attention of the disciple to the fact that living with Jesus Christ is much more than just the joy of the forgiveness of sins through Jesus' blood. It is the desire that all who read and ponder these studies will be moved by the symbolism of the Tabernacle, thereby enriching their personal life and strengthening their relationship with the triune God.

A disciple of Jesus Christ, ordained as a priest in the order of Melchizedek, could hereby continue to live in the **courtyard**, near the **altar** and the **laver** - symbols of what Jesus did for him/her.

There is more, however.

As Jesus says in John 10:10, He came into the world so that the priest/disciple might receive **life in Him that surpasses everything**.

That means, along the new and living way through the tabernacle, also entering into the **Holy Place** and, there, getting to know the person and the character of Jesus Christ and thus accepting this wonderful life as a gift. Receiving Him as **Light and Bread**, indwelling in one's own soul, and dwelling at the **altar of incense, in the sight of God**, who sits enthroned between the cherubim in the **Most Holy Place**, above the atonement cover of the **ark**.

Whoever wishes to begin the journey through the Tabernacle is invited to continue with the studies following this introduction.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> Study: The priest in the order of Melchizedek (2) to (7).