

At 49 years old Abram went back to his father Terah and convinced his father to abandon his pagan gods to follow God, Most High. Nimrod again tried to kill Abram, so he fled and went to dwell in the north in the city of Haran. Then Chedorlaomer rebelled against Nimrod so he was too occupied to follow Abram.

Book of Jasher says that Nimrod had a significant dream which was interpreted as Abram would bring about the downfall of Nimrod's kingdom, and that a descendent of Abram would kill Nimrod. (This person was Esau!)

Then God spoke to Abram giving him his great call to be **the 7th King of Righteousness**. Gen 12:1-3 After this Chedorlaomer went to war capturing more territory, but leaving a wake of devastation behind him. Abram went to war against Chedorlaomer and killed him releasing all his captives, including Lot. This was where Abram met Melchizedek BUT the book of Jasher calls Melchizedek SHEM!! [No scholar accepts this identification] "And Adonizedek king of Jerusalem, the same was Shem..... And Adonizedek blessed Abram, and Abram gave him a tenth.....for Adonizedek was a priest before God. [Adoni = my lord; Zedek = righteous]

Abraham to Levi: The Age of Torah

After the sacrifice of Isaac, Abraham realised that God had chosen Isaac to be **the 8th King of Righteousness** so he sent him away to learn the ways of God: "When his days of mourning (for Sarah) passed, Abraham sent away his son Isaac, and he went to the house of Shem and Eber, to learn the ways of the Lord..... Jasher 24:17

Isaac thought his son Esau would be the next one, but **God chose Jacob** to be **the 9th King of Righteousness**. Jasher 26:39: "After the death of Abraham God blessed his son Isaac and his children. The Lord was with Isaac as he had been with his father Abraham, for Isaac kept all the commandments of the Lord as Abraham had commanded him....."

Esau abandoned the faith of his fathers and became a worldly and aggressive person whereas Jacob was sent away to learn his new role as **the 9th King of Righteousness**. Jasher 28:18, **At that time Isaac sent his younger son Jacob to the house of Shem and Eber to learn the ways of the Lord.**" He stayed there 32 years until the death of Shem! (Jasher 28:24-25) Then God spoke to Jacob and renewed the covenant with him in Gen 28:12-16.

Of Jacob's 12 sons Reuben the firstborn, should have received the inheritance from his father, but he was rejected because of fornication.

Levi was another of Jacob's sons. In his Testament (no 2) he said that he had an experience of enlightenment and repented of his sins. In no 4 of his testament, he said that God spoke to him, "your sins are forgiven, and you will become a son to Him, a servant and minister of His Presence. You will shine the light of knowledge on Jacob.... you and all your seed will be blessed **until the Lord visits the heathen in the tender mercies of His Son, even forever.**"

Levi testament no 9 says that “my father Jacob had a vision concerning me that I should become a priest unto the Lord.....Isaac continually taught me the law of the Lord ...the law of sacrifices etc.

Jasher 36:15, “At that time the portion of birthright, together with the kingly and priestly offices, was removed from the sons of Reuben, for he had profaned his father’s bed. The birthright was given to Joseph, the kingly office to Judah and the priestly office to Levi.”

The prophecies stated that the Messiah would come from the Tribe of Judah, and therefore be the legitimate king of Israel. He would have to be filled with the Spirit to be the Prophet and ordained by another priest, for him to hold all 3 offices of Priest, Prophet and King – the Melchizedekian role.

In the beginning the priesthood of Melchizedek was practically the same as that of the new Order of Levi which came into being with the choice of Jacob’s son. It developed over time and was to survive until the coming of the Messiah.

Levi passed his priesthood to his son Kohath who instructed his sons to keep all the laws of priesthood and to protect and guard the Testaments of their fathers. He passed all of this on to Amran who was the father of Moses, Aaron and Miriam. At the time of the Exodus, God commanded that the line of priests were to come from Aaron’s lineage.

There were 12 HP’s from Aaron to Zadoc who was appointed by Solomon in place of Abiathar. From this point onwards all HP’s had to be of the lineage of Zadok. The kings could only come from Judah, and eventually this was narrowed down to the lineage of King David.

There were 12 HP’s from Zadok to the Babylonian captivity and 15 after the return to Israel. During the reign of Antiochus 4th Epiphanes, who persecuted the Jews, some of the Zadok priests were martyred because they would not agree to the apostasy imposed upon them.

It was at this time that the faithful Zadok priests went out into the wilderness to form a faithful remnant to prepare for the coming of Messiah. They took the temple library with them to Qumran.

The place we call Qumran they called The New Damascus! We learn this in the Damascus document in the DSS. The name derives from 2 Hebrew words: ‘dam’ = blood and Masheq = stronghold. Qumran became the stronghold of the true faith where the ancient paths were followed.

Jeremiah 6:16-20, “Thus says the Lord, stand by the roads and look; ask for the ancient paths, where the good way is; then walk in it, and you will find rest for your souls.” This is what the Zadok priests of Qumran did.

*** We have seen 9 Melchizedekian priests up to now. Finally, we must look at Jesus and John the Baptist to see the last and greatest Melchizedekian priest. Melchizedek means ‘king of righteousness’, but from the way the Essenes dealt with it, the name could be ‘King of the Zadok priests’. The Messiah, Yeshua, is the King of Righteousness and the King of all Zadok (holy) priests both from the OT and the NT!

JESUS and JOHN the BAPTIST: The Age of Grace

- 1) There were only 10 Melchizedekian priests. Jesus was the last and the greatest of them. Everything led to him who is God’s eternal Priest/Prophet and King. 10 = the number of completion or fullness.
- 2) In the history above I have demonstrated that the previous MCD priest either chose or pointed out the next MCD chosen by God. Then God confirmed His choice by a spiritual experience or encounter with God.
- 3) Matthew 1:1-16 gives the royal genealogy of Christ, beginning with Adam, and going through Abraham and King David down to Joseph, husband of Mary.

What about the priestly line?

- a) In the 10 volume work of the Ante Nicene Fathers of the Church there is a text called “Hippolytus, fragments on the Pentateuch”. Until the discovery of the DSS scholars didn’t know what to make of it.
- b) It gives a complete list of the priestly/prophetic line from Moses to Christ and part of the Church age afterwards.
- c) Hippolytus did not list the HP’s nor the Kings. Instead, he lists the prophets and the School of the prophets. In this list some are priests; some are called teachers, but they are listed because they were prophets. **No 56 in the list is Zechariah, the father of John the Baptist.**
- d) Hippolytus says in this text that Annas and Caiaphas were evil – which was the assessment of the Essenes also. This helps us to understand the struggles of the time of Christ.

- e) Because they were the leaders they **should** have been leaders of the school of the prophets, but I have already shown you that they declared the time of the prophets was over!
- f) God did use Caiaphas to give a prophecy regarding Jesus in John 11:50, "You do not realise that it is better for you (!) that one man die for the people than that the whole nation perish." John explains in verse 51, "he did not say this on his own, but as high priest that year he prophesied that Jesus would die for the Jewish nation.....but also for the scattered children of God".
- g) Therefore, according to the Mosaic Law true leadership was taken away from Annas and Caiaphas.
- h) Joseph, the Levite would then take their place but he had gone to Qumran, so the role then fell to Zechariah, John the Baptist's father, who would have passed it on to his only son – but he, too, went to Qumran!
- i) Mt 3; Mk 1; Lk 3 and Jn 1 all speak about John the Baptist who lived in the desert as a celibate priest, publicly preaching repentance and baptising in order to prepare the nation for the soon-coming Messiah.

JOHN THE BAPTIST:

- a) Because John is associated with baptism many think that he invented this ritual! That was not so. Ritual washings were 'the norm' in Qumran.
- b) They were called *Mikvah* and were used daily by the Essenes. Kirbet Qumran – the ruins of Qumran show several of those Mikvah places. This was a washing of immersion in water.
- c) The DSS Community Rule 5:13-14 states "he should not go into the waters to share in the pure food of the men of holiness, for they have not been cleansed unless they turn away from their wickedness, for it is unclean among all the transgressors of his word."
- d) Notice the connection between repentance/conversion and the cleansing waters. It is the same for Christians with regard to Baptism.

- e) Mt 3:11 does not explain WHY John was baptising because the original audience needed no explanation. He just emphasises repentance.
- f) John baptised *literally anyone* who came to him repentant: Mt 3:5-6; Mk 1:4-5
- g) Lk 3:2-3 says that John did this in obedience to an inspiration from God
- h) Jn 1:24-27 has the Pharisees questioning WHY he was baptising if he was not the Messiah, Elijah or the Prophet. John's reply was *to reveal the Messiah to the crowd present.*
- i) So, the Pharisees were saying that Baptism was the Messiah's work!
- j) There is a reference in Ezek 36:25-29 which speaks of a baptism of renewal so that they can truly become God's people.
- k) We know that the Qumran Community used baptisms as initiation rites into their community, but the Pharisees had no reason to do that.
- l) Acts 19: 1-5 shows that JB used baptism as an initiation rite. His disciples had to be baptised into Christ afterwards in order to enter the church.
- j) Location where John baptised: Jn 1:28 says that it was in Bethany on the far side of the Jordan. This place was called Bethabara = house of the ford. It was a day's walk from Qumran. Origin 3rd century AD said this was where the baptisms took place.
- k) When questioned by the Pharisees John claimed that he – personally – was the fulfilment of Isaiah 40:3 "A voice cries: "In the wilderness prepare the way of the Lord, make straight in the desert a highway for our God."
- l) We know that the whole community at Qumran proclaimed that they were doing this: community rule 8:12-14: "When these exist as a community in compliance with these arrangements, they are to be segregated from within the dwelling of the men of sin to walk to the desert, prepare the way of.... Straighten in the step a roadway for our God."
- m) It looks as if JB not only was a member of Qumran, but maybe its Master also! It is because he was doing what the community rule told the Master to do! "(He) shall impart true knowledge and righteous judgements to those who have chosen THE WAY..... this is the time for the preparation of the way into the wilderness....." If he WAS the leader it would give weight to his claim to be 'THE VOICE'

- n) John's diet of locusts and wild honey seems to be that of Qumran also because there are instructions in the Community Rule regarding how to cook them alive in either fire or water!

John the Baptist's Lineage as a priest:

According to Mosaic Law JB would have been a priest

- a) His father, Zechariah belonged to the Abijah section of the priesthood and served in the temple: Lk 1:5
- b) His mother was also from the tribe of Levi: Lk 1:5
- c) Therefore, he would inherit the priesthood from Zechariah and be expected to serve in the temple as he did, but John went out into the wilderness from childhood: Lk 1:80
- d) Josephus, the Jewish historian, reported that it was customary for the priests at Qumran to receive other people's children whom they would train to be members of their community. Since they were celibate priests they had no children of their own: "But choose out other person's children, while they are pliable, and fit for learning, and esteem them to be of their kindred, and form them according to their own manners."
- e) **It may be that JB and Jesus' mother had something in common! She was presented to the temple priests as a young child and he may have been presented to Qumran as a young child also! She was in the physical temple with a troubled priesthood, and he was in the spiritual temple with very holy priests! Both were preparing for the coming of the Messiah!
- f) If John was raised in Qumran it would be normal for him to work in the wilderness rather than the populated areas of the land.

THE BAPTISM OF JESUS:

Since John's baptism was a baptism of repentance and conversion why did he baptise Jesus, The Sinless One? If we look at it from the perspective of the Melchizedekian priesthood it will make more sense.

- a) The previous MCD priest should point out the next one.... or acknowledge him in some way.
- b) John pointed Jesus out to the crowds identifying Him as 'The Lamb of God'.....
- c) John pointed Jesus' exalted position out to the crowd: 'I am not fit to undo his sandal-strap'
- d) Did John baptise Jesus into the MCD Priesthood? Jesus' response is interesting:
- e) Mt 3:15, "..... it is proper for us to do this **to fulfil all righteousness.**"
- f) This was followed by the descent of the Holy Spirit upon Jesus anointing Him as the Prophet/Priest/King Messiah.... **Thus, making Him the fulfilment of the Order of Melchizedek.**

Note: Jacob had divided the MCD role into 3 distinct parts: the priest, prophet and king were to be different people. In Christ the three roles are united again – and forever – in one person, that of the eternal High priest.

In the Church's celebration of Christ, the Universal King, it uses both OT and NT texts to bring it all together: Daniel 7:13-14, and Psalm 92 – his universal kingship; John 18 gives his declaration of Kingship to Pilate in the presence of the Sanhedrin and all Israel; Finally, Rev 1:5-8 proclaims him the alpha and Omega who will return on the clouds of Heaven.

The school of the prophets continued in the Church because the Essenes entered the Church. Cf. Acts 11:27, "during this time some prophets came down from Jerusalem to Antioch. One of them named Agabus....." Cf. Acts 21:10 where Agabus is seen as active in the Church...

John the Baptist and Herod:

- 1) It is known that Herod the great favoured the Essenes because one of their members prophesied over him when he was a youth telling him that royalty would be bestowed on him and how long he would reign....
- 2) Herod the Tetrarch was one of his 4 sons who lived an immoral life with his sister-in-law, Herodias. Lev 18:16 forbids this. Because JB pointed this out to them Herodias wanted to kill John: Mt 14:3-5

- 3) The DSS Damascus Document 6:21-7:3 repeats the prohibition on fornication but tells its members to reprove the offender without holding resentment against them.
- 4) Herod's response to John is complex; He imprisoned him and yet wanted to listen to him but without understanding (blinded by his own sinful life): Mk 6:20
- 5) Herod's false oath killed John: Mk 6: 21-29
- 6) Mt 11:2-6: John the Baptist in prison sent a message to Jesus to ask if he were the One they expected. He could not have been asking if Jesus was the 'Messiah' of the S/P who only thought of Messiah as a useful tool to enhance their power.