

EZEKIEL

Hard to Heart

“The Cohen Brothers’ Millennial Temple” 42:1-20

As background to our study tonight I’d like to read a September 9, 2010, article from an Atlanta newspaper titled, *The Cohen Gene - Key to a Prophetic Priesthood?*¹

A few years ago, Dr. Karl Skorecki, a nephrologist and researcher at the University of Toronto and Israel’s Rambam-Technion Medical Center, had an interesting thought. He speculated that the Kohanim, a family line that descends from Aaron, the brother of Moses, according to Jewish tradition, might be genetically distinct from other Jews and gentiles. Skorecki reasoned that if the Kohanim, the Cohens, were descended from one man, Aaron, as the Bible asserts then they would have common genetic markers.

The Cohens are mentioned in the Bible as far back as 2Kings 17:27-28. In fact, the term “cohanim...” often seems used interchangeably with the word “priests” in Jewish sources.

Fathers pass Y-chromosomes to their sons. The Y-chromosome does accumulate mutations, but is otherwise the same as a man’s ancient male ancestors. These combinations of mutations are known as *haplotypes*.

The study showed that over 98% of Cohen Jews possessed a particular genetic marker (YAP). Non-Cohen Jews possessed the marker in significantly lower percentages. A second study confirmed the results and showed that over 91% of Cohens possess six chromosomal markers now known as the Cohen Modal Haplotype (CMH). The CMH is common in both Ashkenazi and Sephardic Jews and indicates a common ancestor for both European and Mediterranean Jews.

¹ <http://www.examiner.com/conservative-in-atlanta/the-cohen-gene-key-to-a-prophetic-priesthood>

By counting the mutations in the Y-chromosome, researchers calculate that the Cohen line goes back approximately 106 generations or roughly 3,300 years. This is the approximate time of the Exodus from Egypt.

Further, the research showed that the Levites, the tribe from which Aaron came, are not as genetically distinct as the Cohens.

In the second part of the two part article the author stated the following:

The preservation of the Cohen line matters for a couple of reasons.

1. First, it offers support for the Bible's version of Jewish history. The fact that the Cohens have preserved their family line since the days of Aaron speaks to the importance placed on preserving the priestly line.
2. Second, it makes a feasible fulfillment of Biblical prophecy that a new Temple will be built.²

This is really, really big news on the prophetic front. Jews can know, scientifically, who are the priests that have the biblical right to serve in the Tribulation Temple.

Our text looks past the Tribulation Temple to the Millennial Temple. Priests will serve in it as well.

In chapter forty-two the Lord described to Ezekiel the chambers the priests will utilize.

Ezekiel 42:1 Then he brought me out into the outer court, by the way toward the north; and he brought me into the chamber which was opposite the separating courtyard, and which was opposite the building toward the north.

Ezekiel 42:2 Facing the length, which was one hundred cubits (the width was fifty cubits), was the north door.

Ezekiel 42:3 Opposite the inner court of twenty cubits, and opposite the pavement of the outer court, was gallery against gallery in three stories.

Ezekiel 42:4 In front of the chambers, toward the inside, was a walk ten cubits wide, at a distance of one cubit; and their doors faced north.

Ezekiel 42:5 Now the upper chambers were shorter, because the galleries took away space from them more than from the lower and middle stories of the building.

² <http://www.examiner.com/conservative-in-atlanta/the-cohen-gene-key-to-a-prophetic-priesthood-part-2>

Ezekiel 42:6 For they were in three stories and did not have pillars like the pillars of the courts; therefore the upper level was shortened more than the lower and middle levels from the ground up.

Ezekiel 42:7 And a wall which was outside ran parallel to the chambers, at the front of the chambers, toward the outer court; its length was fifty cubits.

Ezekiel 42:8 The length of the chambers toward the outer court was fifty cubits, whereas that facing the temple was one hundred cubits.

Ezekiel 42:9 At the lower chambers was the entrance on the east side, as one goes into them from the outer court.

Ezekiel 42:10 Also there were chambers in the thickness of the wall of the court toward the east, opposite the separating courtyard and opposite the building.

Ezekiel 42:11 There was a walk in front of them also, and their appearance was like the chambers which were toward the north; they were as long and as wide as the others, and all their exits and entrances were according to plan.

Ezekiel 42:12 And corresponding to the doors of the chambers that were facing south, as one enters them, there was a door in front of the walk, the way directly in front of the wall toward the east.

In Ezekiel 40:44 we saw dwelling-places for the priests during their administration of the service in the holy place and at the altar. These are for a different purpose, stated in verses thirteen and fourteen.

Ezekiel 42:13 Then he said to me, "The north chambers and the south chambers, which are opposite the separating courtyard, are the holy chambers where the priests who approach the Lord shall eat the most holy offerings. There they shall lay the most holy offerings - the grain offering, the sin offering, and the trespass offering - for the place is holy.

Ezekiel 42:14 When the priests enter them, they shall not go out of the holy chamber into the outer court; but there they shall leave their garments in which they minister, for they are holy. They shall put on other garments; then they may approach that which is for the people."

In the Old Testament the priest was an intermediary between God and man. The worshiper would bring his sacrifice only as far as the brazen altar. The priest took it from there, bringing it into the holy place. It represented the separation that existed between sinful man and a holy God.

The parts of the offerings not consumed by the Lord were for the priests to consume. These chambers will be where they partake of those meals.

These chambers will also serve as closets for the garments the priests wear when serving. These garments will be described later on in Ezekiel.

It seems every week we keep asking questions about why there is a Millennial Temple with sacrifices and a priesthood. After all, wasn't the veil in the first century Temple torn in two by God when Jesus died on the Cross to signify that the way into God's presence was open to all who trusted in Christ? Why, then, would the Lord reinstate a priesthood of any kind?

Thomas Ice is a Bible teacher and scholar we trust. He has this perspective on the Millennial Temple and its rites and rituals.

Critics of future millennial sacrifices seem to assume that all sacrifices, past and future, always depict Christ's final sacrifice for sin. *They do not!* There were various purposes for sacrifice in the Bible. Many of the sacrifices under the Mosaic system were purification rituals.

The purpose for a Temple throughout Scripture has been to establish a location upon earth (which is under the curse of sin) for the presence of God that reveals through its ritual God's great holiness. God's plan for Israel includes a relation to them through a Temple since He wants to dwell in the midst of His people.

Currently the church is God's spiritual Temple made of living stones. The Millennium will return history to a time when Israel will be God's mediatory people but will also continue to be a time in which sin will be present upon the earth. Thus, God will include a new Temple, a new priesthood, a new Law, etc., at this future time because He will be present in Israel and still desires to teach that holiness is required to approach Him.

This is contrasted with the fact that no Temple will exist in eternity because God and the Lamb are the Temple since there will be no sin in heaven, thus no need for ritual cleansing.

There is no contradiction to the Cross of Jesus Christ by the existence of a future Temple on the earth. There will still be billions of people who are born sinners who will need to see to understand that God is holy and they are separated from Him. The Millennial Temple and its priesthood will illustrate separation and the need for salvation.

Verses fifteen through twenty move outside to give us the external dimensions of the project.

Ezekiel 42:15 Now when he had finished measuring the inner temple, he brought me out through the gateway that faces toward the east, and measured it all around.

Ezekiel 42:16 He measured the east side with the measuring rod, five hundred rods by the measuring rod all around.

Ezekiel 42:17 He measured the north side, five hundred rods by the measuring rod all around.

Ezekiel 42:18 He measured the south side, five hundred rods by the measuring rod.

Ezekiel 42:19 He came around to the west side and measured five hundred rods by the measuring rod.

Ezekiel 42:20 He measured it on the four sides; it had a wall all around, five hundred cubits long and five hundred wide, to separate the holy areas from the common.

The total area occupied by this temple area was 765,625 square feet - **enough square feet for more than 13 football fields!**

Our thrice-holy God was present on earth in former times in the Tabernacle and, later, the Temple. *It's rites and rituals saved no one!* People were saved when believing in God they were justified by Him. The Temple simply but powerfully demonstrated that mankind is separated from God by sin and in need of salvation.

Jesus Christ will be literally, physically present on the earth in the Millennium. *The Temple, with its rites and rituals, will save no one.* People will be saved when they believe God and are justified by Him. The Millennial Temple will simply but powerfully demonstrate that mankind is still separated from God by sin and in need of salvation.

Mean time something incredible, something unheard of in the Old Testament, is taking place. God says His Temple is within us individually, as Christians, and within us corporately, as the church.

Individually:

1 Corinthians 6:19 Or do you not know that your body is the temple of the Holy Spirit who is in you, whom you have from God, and you are not your own?

Corporately:

1 Corinthians 3:16 Do you not know that you [plural] are the temple of God and that the Spirit of God dwells in you?

Probably the New Testament passage that most amplifies our roles *as and in* the current ‘temples’ on earth now is First Peter 2:5-10.

1 Peter 2:5 you also, as living stones, are being built up a spiritual house, a holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ.

1 Peter 2:6 Therefore it is also contained in the Scripture, "BEHOLD, I LAY IN ZION A CHIEF CORNERSTONE, ELECT, PRECIOUS, AND HE WHO BELIEVES ON HIM WILL BY NO MEANS BE PUT TO SHAME."

1 Peter 2:7 Therefore, to you who believe, He is precious; but to those who are disobedient, "THE STONE WHICH THE BUILDERS REJECTED HAS BECOME THE CHIEF CORNERSTONE,"

1 Peter 2:8 and "A STONE OF STUMBLING AND A ROCK OF OFFENSE." They stumble, being disobedient to the word, to which they also were appointed.

1 Peter 2:9 But you are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, His own special people, that you may proclaim the praises of Him who called you out of darkness into His marvelous light;

1 Peter 2:10 who once were not a people but are now the people of God, who had not obtained mercy but now have obtained mercy.

The kind of stones Peter was talking about were quarried from a rock-pit. Every person who receives Jesus Christ as Savior is quarried from the rock-pit of sin. You are then mortared into place by God's grace.

The thing that first strikes me is that we are stones and not bricks or boards. Bricks and boards are manufactured to exact specifications. Likewise you order your wood in its pre-manufactured sizes.

Stones are not like that. They are all different shapes and sizes; they are all very individual. You, as a living stone, are individual to God and unique.

It requires a great deal of skill to form and shape stones into a building. And these are living stones - indicating that their shape is constantly changing!

Living stones make for an interesting building. A living stone is never quite finished. Jesus goes on chiseling, grinding, buffing, smoothing you - all

while you are mortared with other living stones. Together by His skill we are being built-up a spiritual house.

The reference to the rejected stone had a long tradition among the Jews. They recalled that when Solomon built the Temple, all the masonry work was performed at a distance from the site so that the sound of hammers, axes, and other tools was not heard. Early in the construction a huge stone was delivered from the quarry. Considerable work had been done upon it but no one could identify where in the building it belonged. It was put aside as a misfit and lay on site unrecognized and useless. When the building began to take shape and its capstone was called for, someone remembered this rejected stone which, when placed in the gap, was the perfect fit.

The memory of this incident was put into Psalm 118:22 and is quoted here. When Jesus was on the earth He applied this Scripture directly to Himself. Peter and Paul both picked-up on this imagery. The chief cornerstone of the earthly Temple was a type of Jesus Who would be the foundation of a spiritual temple.

The Temple had and will have priests who offered sacrifices on behalf of the people. You and I are the "priesthood" and we "offer up spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ."

What can you offer to God as a sacrifice?

- According to Romans 12:1-2 you can offer your body as a living sacrifice. You are not a volunteer; you are a servant.
- According to Hebrews 13:15 you can offer the praise of your lips.
- According to Hebrews 13:16 you can offer your good works you do for others.
- According to Philippians 4:10-20 you can offer your money and other material possessions.

Israel was and remains God's "chosen" nation. He is not through with the physical descendants of Abraham. But God has currently chosen a new "generation" of people. It is all those who receive Jesus as their Savior,

whether Jew or Gentile. Jesus called this new generation the "church." It is the spiritual house which is being built on the foundation of Himself as the chief cornerstone.

The church is further described as a "royal priesthood, a holy nation." These words are a direct quote from Exodus 19:6. This was to be Israel's earthly destiny, and it will be again. For now, in these last days, the church has taken Israel's place as His priests in the spiritual house He is building on the earth.

You are "His own special people" until Jesus returns to take the church home to heaven. You are His priests and people "that you may proclaim the praises of Him who called you out of darkness into His marvelous light." We are the ones who are charged with the task of sharing Christ with unbelievers. Rather than a drudgery, it is said to be a delight - "proclaim[ing] the praises" of Jesus.

Do people get from your life that God is praiseworthy?

You were once in "darkness" but are now walking in "His marvelous light." A person walking in the dark is tentative... Gets lost easily... Stumbles and falls. Your relationship with God has brought you into the light of His revelation about His plan and purpose for all things - including your life and your future. You can turn-on the light wherever you find yourself.

The word for "proclaim" could be translated *advertise*. **You are an advertisement for God!**

Some ad campaigns are better than others. Let's be a good one!