

## **CHAPTER V**

### **CLOSING**

#### **5.1 Conclusion**

The priesthood in the Old Testament is a system established by God to maintain the relationship between Himself who is holy and the sinful people of Israel. The Book of Leviticus specifically deals with the priesthood in the Old Testament. The Book of Leviticus contains the rules of worship and religious ceremonies of the Israelites, especially those related to the duties of the priests of the tribe of Levi. The priests in the Old Testament played an important role in maintaining the holiness of the Israelites, both in worship and in daily life. The priests acted as intermediaries between God and the Israelites, tasked with offering sacrifices, teaching the Torah, and maintaining the holiness of the Israelites so that they would remain connected to God.

The concept of the priesthood in the New Testament underwent a fundamental change. Jesus Christ was seen as the Great High Priest who was the only Mediator between God and man. The priesthood was no longer based on the Levitical lineage, but rather on God's choice and the eternal priesthood according to the order of Melchizedek. The sacrifices offered were no longer animals or crops, but Jesus himself for the redemption of human sins. In addition, the New Testament also introduced the idea of a universal priesthood of believers. Every believer in Christ has direct access to God and is called to offer himself as a spiritual sacrifice through Christ.

The Old Testament and New Testament Scriptures have a close and inseparable relationship with each other. The relationship between the two can be explained through one key concept, namely typology. The Old Testament is a pre-form or typology of the New Testament, while the New Testament is the fulfillment or fulfillment of the Old Testament. What is written in the

Old Testament is a pre-form typology of what was later fulfilled by Christ in the New Testament.

In the context of the priesthood, the Old Testament has differences and continuity with the New Testament. The differences in the concept of the priesthood in the Old Testament and the New Testament include the following things. *First*, the basis of the priesthood. The priesthood in the Old Testament has a strong foundation in the lineage of the tribe of Levi, especially the descendants of Aaron. The New Testament presents a new concept of the priesthood through the presence of Jesus Christ who came from the tribe of Judah and not from the tribe of Levi. Jesus is the High Priest according to the order of Melchizedek (Heb. 5:6-10; 7:14-17), namely a priesthood that is not based on heredity or human rule, but on the direct appointment of God and the power of everlasting life.

*Second*, the type of offering and the focus of worship. The liturgy in the Old Testament had a primary focus on the offering of sacrifices, whether in the form of animals or crops. Worship in the Old Testament often emphasized the maintenance of ritual holiness and strict adherence to the Law. In the New Testament, the concept of sacrificial offerings experienced a radical fulfillment and replacement through the self-sacrifice of Jesus Christ. Jesus' death on the cross was the perfect sacrifice that occurred once and for all (Heb. 7:27, 9:11-14, 10:10). Worship in the New Testament experienced a shift in focus from physical rituals to spiritual offerings that included expressions of praise and thanksgiving to God, earnest prayer, loving service to others (Jas. 1:27; Acts 2:42), and total self-offering in response to God's grace that had been revealed in Christ (Rom. 12:1, Heb. 13:15-16).

*Third*, the nature of the ministry. Priests in the Old Testament had a very exclusive and centralized ministry role. Their ministry was strictly tied to the Temple which was the center of worship and sacrifice of the Israelites. The ministry of the priests in the Old Testament was characterized by its highly ritualistic nature. Every action and task they did was tied to a series

of detailed rules and procedures, as stated in the Torah and other books. In the New Testament, the concept of priestly ministry underwent a radical transformation, namely being universal, inclusive, and dynamic; and no longer tied to rituals and geographical or physical limitations (Heb. 9:15). Ministry in the New Testament shifted significantly toward active and real loving service.

*Fourth*, the participation of the people in the priesthood. The priesthood in the Old Testament was a privilege and responsibility limited to a certain group, namely the descendants of Aaron from the tribe of Levi. The people as a whole had a role in worship, but not in the capacity of priests who had special authority and function in mediating between God and man through ritual and sacrifice in the Temple. The New Testament priesthood is based on the priesthood according to the order of Melchizedek, a priesthood that does not depend on lineage but on spiritual calling and ordination. Through the redemptive work of Christ, every believer in Him is called to participate actively in the spiritual and liturgical life of the Church. The passage 1 Pet. 2:9 shows that the priesthood is no longer limited to a particular group, but belongs to all who are in Christ. The New Testament opens the door to a wider participation of all believers in the spiritual and liturgical life. It allows each believer to play an active role in building up the body of Christ through his or her individual gifts.

In addition to the above differences, the concept of the priesthood in the Old Testament has continuity in the New Testament. This continuity includes the following things. *First*, the mediator between God and His people. The primary role of the priest in both the Old and New Testaments is as an intermediary between God and His people. In the Old Testament, the priest from the tribe of Levi became the mediator between the nation of Israel and God (Heb. 5:1). The concept of the role of the priest as a mediator or intermediary experiences significant continuation and fulfillment in the New Testament. The central role as priest is now held by

Jesus Christ Himself. Jesus Christ is the only perfect and eternal Mediator between God and believers (1 Tim. 2:5, Heb. 7:24-25).

*Second*, community worship leaders and ministers in the sanctuary. One of the important functions carried out by the priests was to lead and organize community worship. In the Old Testament, the priests were responsible for leading various rituals and worship celebrations held in the Tabernacle and later in the Temple. In the New Testament, although the centralized priesthood as in the Temple in the Old Testament no longer applies, the role of leading and organizing community worship is maintained by the apostles and church leaders. They took the initiative in leading the early church worship meetings (Acts 2:42, 1 Cor. 14). This shows the continuity in the need for leadership in the context of corporate worship.

*Third*, teachers and preachers of God's law or commandments. One of the important responsibilities carried out by the priests is the task of teaching and preaching God's law or commandments to the people. In the Old Testament, the priests from the tribe of Levi specifically had the mandate to teach the Torah to the entire nation of Israel. They had the responsibility to teach the laws and statutes of God to the nation of Israel (Deut. 33:8-10). In the New Testament, the function of teaching and preaching the Word of God remains a crucial aspect of the ministry of the priests. The apostles, as eyewitnesses to the ministry and resurrection of Jesus Christ and their successors (Church leaders), continued Christ's mandate to preach the Gospel (Eph. 4:11; Matt. 28:19-20).

*Fourth*, ministry that sanctifies God's people. The role of the priest as a minister who sanctifies God's people has continuity and refinement between the Old and New Testaments. In the Old Testament, priests were chosen and ordained specifically for service in the Temple. They carried out sanctification through the performance of worship, sacrificial offerings, and prayers that brought the people of Israel close to God (Lev. 8:6-13; Ke. 28:4, 29:4-9). They also taught the Torah to the people and interpreted God's will. In this way, they guided the people of Israel

in obedience to God's law so that they could live holy before God and enjoy God's blessings (Jer. 18:18, Mal. 2:6-7). In the New Testament, Jesus Christ sanctifies God's people no longer through animal sacrifices, but through the sacrifice of Himself as an eternal atonement for sin (Heb. 9:11-28). Jesus also delegated authority to the apostles and their successors to continue the ministry of sanctifying the faithful (John 21 :15-17; Matt. 28:20; Luke 22:19).

*Fifth*, the figure chosen and sanctified by God. The principle of the sanctification and election of priests by God is a consistent foundation in both the Old and New Testaments. The Old Testament priests were sanctified or set apart to carry out certain religious duties through a series of rituals and obedience to special rules set forth in the Law (Lev. 21:1-24). In the New Testament, Jesus Christ himself is anointed and appointed as the perfect and eternal High Priest who surpasses the earthly priesthood of the Old Testament. He chose and sent the apostles and early Church leaders. Their successors were men who were specially called and chosen by God to serve in a special priesthood or ministerial priesthood. They were specially called and ordained for more specific ministry duties, especially in the sacramental ministry and shepherding of the Church.

The differences and continuities of the priesthood in the Old and New Testaments have significant theological and pastoral implications. The theological implications cover four things, namely God's sovereignty and plan of salvation, the uniqueness and excellence of Christ, the universality of the priestly ministry or the common priesthood of believers, and the transformation of worship and the role of priests. The implications in the pastoral context encourage the Church to position priests as servants who imitate Christ as the High Priest and not only as ritual servants and to strengthen the active participation of the people in the liturgy and life of the Church.

## **5.2 Suggestion**

### **5.2.1 For Seminary Institutions**

Seminaries need to integrate more deeply into their curricula the study of the priesthood in the Old and New Testaments. This will serve to shape an understanding of contemporary Christian ministry. It will also provide future priests or church leaders with a comprehensive theological perspective on the role of the priest and the common priesthood of believers. Pastoral formation should also place more emphasis on a leadership model that emulates Christ as the humble High Priest and equips prospective priests to empower and activate the common priesthood of the people in the life of the Church and society.

### **5.2.2 For the Church**

The Church should encourage the development and implementation of a liturgy that clearly reflects the active participation of all those who have the common priesthood, without diminishing the special role of the priest as an ordained minister. The liturgy should be a living communion that involves all members of the Church. The Church should develop programs of formation and service that encourage each of its members to understand and actualize the role of the common priesthood in their daily lives, both inside and outside church life.

### **5.2.3 For Church Leaders (Clergy)**

The clergy should continue to reflect on their role as ordained liturgical ministers who imitate Christ the High Priest and not merely as practitioners of rituals. Awareness of the common priesthood of the people should be the basis of all teaching, administration of the sacraments, and spiritual formation. The clergy should also continually remind and encourage the people of the Church to carry out their common priesthood by being involved in the life of the Church.

The clergy should also develop a leadership style that is oriented towards empowering the congregation. The clergy should act as role models and facilitators who guide and accompany

the congregation of the Church. in the work of service and proclamation of the Gospel in accordance with their general priestly calling.

#### **5.2.4 For the Believers (Laypeople)**

The faithful should be truly aware of the function of their common priesthood received as a baptismal grace. This awareness becomes an important foundation for the active involvement of every member of the Church in all aspects of their lives. By understanding the role of the common priesthood, every member is expected to not only be a recipient of blessings, but also an agent of Christ's love and truth in the midst of the Church community and society. In addition, the experience of the common priesthood should be realized through real living testimony in the world. In accordance with their respective professions and callings, the Church's people are called to radiate the values of the Gospel in every action and interaction. Thus, the presence of the faithful in various areas of life becomes an effective means of proclaiming the good news and bringing the Kingdom of God into society.

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