

Christ in Prophecy
Jesus in the Old Testament 10: God's Holy Priesthood (Numbers)

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Opening

Tim Moore: Welcome to Christ in Prophecy! I'm Tim Moore, the Senior Evangelist at Lamb & Lion Ministries. And I'm joined by my co-host, Nathan Jones, our Internet Evangelist. Last week we completed our review of Leviticus, focusing on God's desire to dwell with His people, and the tension that existed as the Holy and the profane were in such close proximity.

Nathan Jones: We emphasized the role of the priest as a mediator and intercessor for the people. Only priests could enter the Holy place in the Tabernacle, and later the Temple, and only the High Priest could go into the Holy of Holies, and that only once a year.

Tim Moore: We're going to turn our attention now to the book of Numbers and focus on God's Holy Priesthood. This book once again picks up a flow of narrative, still around 3,500 years ago, call it 1420 BC. As the Children of Israel wandered in the wilderness, God ongoingly cared for them, meeting all their needs but also forgiving and loving them. And, early in the book He outlined the duties of the priests and all the Levite men who would serve Him foremost.

With that brief introduction, we're excited to have a very special guest with us in the studio today, a friend who has come all the way from Israel.

Nathan Jones: Avi Mizrachi is the founder and pastor of Adonai Roi, a Messianic Congregation in Tel Aviv and Dugit Outreach Ministries. His heart for the Jewish people is demonstrated every day as he shares the Gospel, disciples his flock, and speaks internationally about the eternal promises of God and His chosen people, Israel. He and his wife Chaya are avid servants of the Most High God.

Tim Moore: Avi, we are so delighted to have you with us today on this episode of "Christ in Prophecy." Thank you for joining us.

Avi Mizrachi: Shalom.

Part 1

Nathan Jones: Well, Nahum Sokolow and his Hebrew translation of Theodor Herzl's book, "Altneuland" in German it means, "The Old New Land." What did he mean by that? The Old New Land?

Avi Mizrachi: Well, because in 1948 it was like the land of Palestine, and it was basically desolate for almost 1,900 years after the destruction of the Temple. And nobody was interested. In fact, just to throw this out, it was the Romans after they destroyed the Temple, and the City of Jerusalem, they changed the name of the land of Israel to Palestina. So, it was known as Palestine, a deserted land. Nobody wanted to go there.

Nathan Jones: After the Philistines, right?

Avi Mizrachi: Yes.

Nathan Jones: Okay.

Avi Mizrachi: And it's interesting that when they came to form this new city, the first city built by Jews that would speak Hebrew, they said we need a new name, so they called it Tel Aviv to remember the old, and now they are doing something new.

Nathan Jones: And the Hill of the Spring? Is there is a spring in Tel Aviv that it is named after?

Avi Mizrachi: Not necessarily, but it was spring for us, and it rings about springtime also, something new, fresh, after the winter has finished and now we are in springtime when everything is green.

Tim Moore: Well, speaking of names, I was interested when I was looking up some information on you, there is another Avi Mizrachi in Israel, he is a famous general in the IDF, and yet your name Avi comes from "Avraham" so, Abraham in English. And yet, you were also telling me something beautiful about the book we know of as Numbers in Hebrew it has a different name.

Avi Mizrachi: Yes, in Hebrew the name is "Bemidbar" which means in the desert. And it's beautiful because in the word bemidbar we have the word "davar" which is the Word of God. In other words, God is taking us to the desert to speak to us. So, the Israelites they entered the wilderness the desert in Exodus chapter 19, then they leave the Sinai Desert in Numbers 10.

Tim Moore: Beautiful. Well, as we look at what we call the Book of Numbers, or as you talk about in the wilderness, the obvious title, at least in English reflects the fact that God called the people to have a census to count the number of men. And at one point He said, "Count the number of first born, as opposed to the number of the Tribe of Levi." And these men from the Tribe of Levi were called to a very special role. And so, in addition to the historical narrative of this particular book there is also an emphasis on the priesthood, and on that special calling. So, from a Jewish perspective, Avi, what was the role of the priest? And who could aspire to actually serve in that special role?

Avi Mizrachi: Okay, well the priesthood, in Hebrew priest is "kohen" a priest so, he was serving unto the Lord, bringing in the sacrifices unto the Lord, and he was like the mediator between God and the people. And then you have also the Levites from the Tribe of Levi and they were serving the priests, and helping, but also they were in charge of the worship with instruments. So, it very interesting that when you study it to see how God has orchestrated all this together.

Tim Moore: Well, I'll also observe this at times the priest and the Levites were very zealous in defending the honor of the Lord, and in excising sin from the people. Other times they were not very zealous about defending the honor of the Lord. But as the people of Israel began to do what is described as playing the harlot, by marrying their sons with the daughters of Moab, and beginning to worship those false God's Aaron's grandsons, so a priest himself, Phinehas ruthlessly slayed both the Israelites and the Midianite women who had defiled the nation. And in doing so, he ended a plague that had come upon them in God's anger. That is in Numbers chapter 25. And yet, at other times the very sons of Levi were instigators of rebellion and wrongdoing, as when Korah rose up against Moses and tried to lead a rebellion against God's

chosen leader. And in that instance God brought down judgment, and the earth itself swallowed up Korah, and some of the others who had rebelled. Boy, I tell you what being a priest, even then was a heavy burden.

Avi Mizrachi: Yes, and it's in chapter 16 about the whole story of Korah, and it says there that he also took with him 250 leaders challenging Moses, and Aaron. And when you think about it, I mean, that definitely was a coup, you know, against the leadership, the anointed one that God had anointed. And then God brought His judgment, and all of them went under.

Nathan Jones: They did, yes. Numbers 22, I feel like it is an oasis in the middle of the desert of endless of counting, and numbers, because it is the story of Balaam and his talking donkey. Which is always interesting. But besides that, was it normal in the Bible for foreign entities, or foreign nations to call prophets to come and bring curses against Israel?

Avi Mizrachi: Well, in modern day, today we are used to that.

Nathan Jones: Yes.

Avi Mizrachi: Because when Israel declared independence, May 14, 1948, all our neighbors didn't say, "Ahlan Salaam," Welcome. Just the opposite; they declared war and they cursed us.

Tim Moore: Yes.

Avi Mizrachi: And they said, "We'll kill you and throw you to the sea." So, nothing has changed since then.

Nathan Jones: We are still living in Bible times.

Avi Mizrachi: But you know I would like to add with this issue of Balaam in chapter 24, by the way four times he asked Balaam to curse, Balak asked Balaam to curse Israel four times. And in chapter 24, in verse 17 it is toward the end of the time that he is blessing Israel. And then he goes, "I see him, but not now; I behold him, but not near; A star should come out of Jacob, a scepter shall rise out of Israel." Which I find it interesting because now we are talking about not just blessing Israel, but he is talking prophecy to the future, talking about King David, that he would reign over Israel. Well, not only King David, because the scepter is going to go to the son of King David, which is the Messiah.

Nathan Jones: Wow. All the way back in Numbers.

Tim Moore: I hadn't even thought about that. That is a beautiful insight, Avi. You know this book also tells us about God's indignation rising as the people alternately followed and obeyed, and then fell away and got into a cycle of grumbling and complaining. And in one instance he actually sent fiery serpents among them, and they would bite the people and many people perished. And then he told Moses to craft a bronze serpent and lift it on a pole. It seems kind of an odd practice, but anyone who looked at that bronze serpent, who trusted in God's provision would be healed, and would be protected from the fiery serpents. And not only is that bronze serpent on a pole become a symbol of modern medicine, that is what you see if you go to a doctor's office on their emblem, but Jesus cited that very incident as pointing to the Son of Man who would be lifted up, who would be raised up, and all who look to Him and put their trust in Him would be saved. And so, He said, "As Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of Man be lifted up; so that whoever believe will in Him have eternal life."

Avi Mizrachi: Amen. Amen. And it is amazing because there is another scriptures where it says, "A person who hangs on a tree is cursed." So, in Jesus' time they had to look on this person who has been crucified, cursed but He became a curse for us. So that what? We may live. He could break the curse and heal us.

Tim Moore: Yes, so the serpent who was cursed by God was the one raised up on the pole. And Christ being cursed, another analogy I hadn't even thought of, quiet frankly.

Nathan Jones: Well, it is interesting as we study this series and try to find Jesus in the Old Testament, I think we find so many instances of God we don't think of, like the Shekinah Glory of God would come down onto the tabernacle outside the door as a pillar of clouds. And He didn't tolerate sin or rebellion, clearly as we read about in Korah's rebellion. And He rebuked, but He pardoned, He wasn't just a judge, but He was also very gracious and merciful. So, in Numbers let's look at it as the way it points to our High Priest. Does Numbers, do you believe as a book, point to Jesus Christ being our High Priest and mediator between Christians and Himself?

Avi Mizrachi: Yes, definitely. We know about Melchizedek in the book of Hebrews it talks about the Messiah, He's now king and he is the king of righteousness. Melchizedek means king of righteousness. So, it is very clear that this points out to the Messiah, our high priest, king, Messiah.

Nathan Jones: So, with Jesus you've got all three; you've got King, Priest, and Prophet all wrapped up in one, right?

Avi Mizrachi: Yes.

Nathan Jones: Wow!

Tim Moore: Well, I would echo that when you look at the book of Hebrews the writer says this, "The main point is this: we have such a high priest, who has taken His seat at the right hand of the throne of the Majesty in the heavens." So, Avi on that note we all agree Jesus is our high priest. But I wanted you to come today and share because you've been called of God to serve, in essence as a priest, a minister with a flock there in Israel, and proclaiming the Gospel of Jesus Christ. So, how did you come to know Him as your great God and savior? And how did you come to understand the calling He had placed on your life to serve in a role such as this.

Avi Mizrachi: Wow, do you have an hour?

Tim Moore: I do.

Avi Mizrachi: Well, it is only by the grace of God. See I was, to make a long story short, I was born and raised in a Jewish family in Tel Aviv, Israel. My parents survived the Holocaust because they came from Europe in 1948. I finished high school and joined the Army; I was in the Israeli Air Force for four years. I was lost in sin in the world when I finished my duty to my country. I decided 35 years ago to come to America to explore America. I wanted to go to Las Vegas and gamble and become rich and all that nonsense.

Nathan Jones: You were a professional gambler, right? At that time period?

Avi Mizrachi: Well, not really but I was definitely a gambler.

Nathan Jones: So, don't play cards with you.

Avi Mizrachi: So, on my way to Las Vegas I stopped to visit my sister in Florida. And I didn't know she was a believer, she was married, and she is a believer. And she invited me to go to church. And my first reaction was, wait a minute, we are Jews! What's wrong with you? Jews don't go to church; don't you know that? What is going on here? But she challenged me in a very loving way, and said "It is beautiful, and this is what I think, and you will enjoy the music and everything, they have a choir, and a lot of single people." And I said, "I'll go check it out." And I was in shock because as a Jew when you talk to me about going to a church, I'm thinking, I'm going to a monastery. It's going to be dark. There's going to be monks and nuns, and a statue of holy Mary, and statues of all the saints which I have to bow down. Because I think that is what Christians do, they bow down and worship idols, they worship statues. So, I was in shock to come to an evangelical church and see this worship. And just watching those evangelicals Christians worshipping the Lord it provoked me to jealousy. Something happened in my heart, and I wanted to cry. Again, it's the conviction, or the power of the Holy Spirit. But I was provoked to jealousy by Christians who were worshipping God.

To make a long story short when I repented and accepted Jesus into my heart I realized that He was my Messiah. He is not somebody that came from Rome, but He is Jewish, He was born in our country and was raised in Galilee, Nazareth. He was a great prophet, a great teacher, healer, raised Lazarus from the dead. He's the anointed One, the Messiah. And He changed my life, and turned me around, and that's our message when we go to Israel and talk to the Israelis we tell them, "Wait a minute how did we miss this? He's our Messiah." And automatically Israelis respond like, "Wait a minute we thought that Jesus started a new religion in Rome." So, that is why it is so important for us to explain, and share the Jewishness of the Messiah, that He is one of us.

Tim Moore: Beautiful.

Nathan Jones: When I lived in Philadelphia, it seemed like every third person was either Catholic, speaking of Rome, or Jewish, or Protestant. So, I had a lot of Jewish friends. But we are talking about Numbers here and always found it interesting, there are about 14 million Jews in the world and now half of them live in Israel right now? I think the other half live in Philadelphia. But so, it looks like Aliyah is continuing to grow.

Avi Mizrachi: Yes.

Nathan Jones: I remember we came out to visit you maybe 10 years ago, and interviewed you, and Dr. Reagan asked you, "Where do you see Israel in the next 20 years? Will it survive?" So, then what are some of the challenges, can you share, that Israel is facing? Now that it is ten years later, and we got ten more years to that question, what are some of the blessings that you see Israel is getting, and some of the challenges that they are facing?

Avi Mizrachi: Let me just share this just to give some statistics. When Israel declared independence in 1948 there were about 600,000 Jews, about half a million Jews. When Israel declared independence all our neighbors declared war, and millions of them came and said, "Now we are going to kill the Jews, throw them to the sea." But they forgot something important; they forgot God. And my Bible says, "He that keepeth Israel shall neither slumber nor sleep." And since then you have to understand after the war was over refugees from all over the world from Europe, Jewish refugees from the out countries, came to Israel and within a couple of

years the population doubled. Can you imagine the problems it would cause if it happened here in Dallas. Every year Jews are still coming back home. In fact, right now even during the Covid, the Corona Virus that has been going on for the last year and a half or so, for the last year we have had an increase of 30% of Jews coming back home. In other words, more and more Jews have come in the last year, from America, from Russia, from France, from South Africa, and Latin America. Even during this time more and more Jews are still making Aliyah today to Israel.

Nathan Jones: And that is all in fulfillment of Ezekiel 36 and 37.

Avi Mizrachi: Exactly. We see the Scriptures still being fulfilled in our days. And more and more Jews live in Israel today than in the rest of the world.

Nathan Jones: So, that would be a big challenge then to try to integrate all those people into housing, and jobs, and things like that.

Avi Mizrachi: And coming from different countries, and different languages. Many of them have to learn Hebrew.

Tim Moore: Well, we know that today Jews want to stream to Israel, many of them are being motivated, and some of them can't even explain why. But there is an episode in Numbers that jumps out where they were reluctant to go into the land. God of course instructed Moses to send 12 spies to check out the land to kind of preview where they were going and so, the people would be ready to move forward and seize their promise. But they were discouraged when ten of the spies said, "Oh, we can't possibly conquer the land. The people are too big there. It's too difficult." And so, they rebelled against the Lord. And for their faithlessness at that moment God's anger was provoked and He said, "How long will this people spurn Me? And how long will they not believe in Me, despite all the signs which I have performed in their midst?" And eventually He pardoned their sin, but He sentenced them to wander 40 years through that wilderness you talked about. How many people today Jews and otherwise fail to seize the promises of God because they are spurning Him and they have not believed Him. They've not recognized the very promises that He is fulfilling before their very eyes, and demonstrating our own faithlessness, not just Jews but again too many Gentiles as well.

Avi Mizrachi: And it is interesting because that generation did not enter the Promise Land, it had to go to the next generation. When they came out of the wilderness in Numbers and they go to the hills of Moab and there only the next generation entered the Promise Land, because they had no faith in God.

Nathan Jones: Paul said in Romans 8:31, he says, "If God is for us, then who can be against us?"

Avi Mizrachi: Amen.

Nathan Jones: If we'd only put our faith in Him, we'd know that He is for us. I think--especially you mentioned pandemic, how frustrated people are these days, and scared, and frightened. But if we had the big picture view that Jesus Christ is coming soon, and that He is going to put all things right and set up His Kingdom of peace, righteousness, and justice I think our lives would be a lot more relaxed. Wouldn't you say?

Avi Mizrachi: Yes, I totally agree. I live in Israel, and I just came to the States just a few days ago. And the message the Lord really spoke to me to speak wherever I go into churches is trust

in the Lord, because He is faithful. Trust Him. Don't depend on the things of this world. And God will shake the world, and He will shake the Church because He wants to get rid of all those things that we depend on the world systems. He wants us to totally depend on Him. Totally depend on Him. And I believe the word is, "Trust in the Lord with all your heart, and lean not onto your own understanding, in all your ways acknowledge Him and He shall direct your path." That is our message for today.

Tim Moore: Amen. You know perhaps the greatest miracle of all, demonstrated in Numbers and continued to be demonstrated in my life, is not just the regathering of the Jews to Israel in this day and age, but the fact that God in His graciousness loved and forgave, not just the Children of Israel when they rebelled against Him time after time, but He forgave me. He forgave us who put our trust in Him. And Paul cited in Romans 3:3, their faithlessness, talking about the Jewish people, did not nullify the faithfulness of God. And those reassuring words apply to all of us. God is always faithful. So, on that note Avi, God directed Moses to provide Aaron and his sons with a very special blessing to pronounce over the sons of Israel, as contained in Numbers 6:23-26. Could you give us that blessing reciting it in English and in Hebrew today?

Avi Mizrachi: Yes, I would be glad to do that. But if I may, I'd want to throw one sentence before that if I may. You know God took them to the wilderness for 40 years, and during the day He had the cloud, and during the night He had the fire. And you say, "Well, that is nice." But let me explain to you, I don't know how many of you have really gone to the desert and slept in the desert. I have during my Army Reserve time, I had to go to the desert for practice, and we slept in the desert. So, let me tell you two important things when you are in the desert. If you don't have water you die. Secondly during the day, it is so hot, you look for a cloud because you need the shade. So, God provided during the day a cloud to give them shade.

Tim Moore: I hadn't thought about that.

Avi Mizrachi: And at night it is freezing, in the desert it is freezing. You need to be by fire to keep you warm. And what did He give them at night? Fire. In other words, God is the provider during the day, and during the night 24/7.

Tim Moore: Beautiful. That is beautiful.

Avi Mizrachi: And then later on we know the story of the rock, it didn't have water. Touch the rock, and the water came out, and for us of course the Rock is of course Yeshua, Jesus. He is the Provider. He takes care of us. Amen.

Nathan Jones: The living water.

Tim Moore: Amen.

Avi Mizrachi: So, you want me to do the Aaronic Blessing?

Tim Moore: The Aaronic Blessing.

Avi Mizrachi: I'm going to do it in Hebrew my mother tongue.

Tim Moore: Yes.

Avi Mizrachi: Amen. Y'varech'cha Adonai v'yishm'recha. Ya'eir Adonai panav eilecha vichunecha. Yisa Adonai panav eilecha v'yaseim l'cha shalom. Shalom. Shalom Yeshua Hamashiach

May the peace of the Prince of Peace be upon you, and your family, and your homes. In Jesus name, amen.

Tim Moore: Amen. Amen. Avi, thank you very much for being with us today. And Godspeed to you and your ministry.

Avi Mizrachi: My pleasure.

Tim Moore: Shalom my friend.

Avi Mizrachi: Shalom, thank you.

Part 2- Signs of the Times: Praying for Israel

Tim Moore: Well, while we have Avi Mizrachi with us here today, Avi I want you to share with me and with our audience how we can be praying for the people of Israel, for believers in Israel, and what the Lord is doing right there in the Promise Land.

Avi Mizrachi: Yes, definitely. You know the scriptures talks about praying for our government, people in authority. And I just want to encourage you to pray for our new Prime Minister Naftali Bennett. He is doing a great job, and he definitely needs our prayers with all the turmoil that is going on around us.

Tim Moore: There is certainly a lot of that.

Avi Mizrachi: And then the Scriptures says to pray for the peace of Jerusalem; "Sha'alu Shalom Yerushalayim." And we know that the only peace that a person can have is through the Messiah, Yeshua, He is the Prince of Peace. So, pray for the salvation of the nine million people who live in the land of Israel; almost seven million Jews, and almost two million Arabs who live in the land of Israel. We need, desperately need, the Savior in our lives. And also, we want to encourage you to pray for the believers in the land, the body of Christ, the body of believers in the land.

Tim Moore: Which is growing even now.

Avi Mizrachi: Yes, it is growing. And now we have about 20,000 believers in the land of Israel, being a living testimony. We meet regularly together, and we pray together. We are a small body, but we love one another, and we respect one another, and pray together often, and take communion together. So, pray for the body of believers. We have a lot of challenges, and it is not easy, but God is good. God is faithful. And I want to encourage you to connect with a local body like you do. Connect with a local body and pray for us that the kingdom of God will expand in the land of Israel.

And the third thing that I want to ask you to pray is the whole situation with Iran. We know that our enemy, Iran, and the regime there they said very openly that they want to destroy Israel from the map. Wipe Israel from the map. And they are working very hard to become nuclear. And we know that eventually somebody has to stop them. Of course, we believe in God, and He

that keepeth Israel shall not slumber nor sleep. But with this we know that somehow we will have to stop them from becoming nuclear because they will shoot the nuclear bomb against us. So, the whole situation is not a simple situation. So, we ask you to pray for us. Pray for the country of Israel, for the people of Israel, for the salvation of Israel, and pray for our Prime Minister for such a time as this.

Tim Moore: Well, we will do that. Not only for those three requests, Avi, but I will add one more. We will pray for you, and others like you who God has called to be intercessors, to be following in that line of the holy priesthood to be serving the flock there in Israel. So, for you, for the people at Dugit Outreach Ministries, for Adonai Roi that you would be blessed and the Lord would provide a great outpouring of blessing through you. And counting myself I am going to grab a hold of you like the other nine Gentiles will eventually and ask you to take me back with you to Israel. My brother, Godspeed to you as you serve the Lord mightily.

Avi Mizrachi: Amen. Thank you.

Tim Moore: Amen, sir.

Avi Mizrachi: Thank you.

Tim Moore: And Godspeed.

Part 3

Nathan Jones: Well, Tim, I love Avi's passion for the Lord and his dedication to sharing the Gospel with both the Jews and Gentiles.

Tim Moore: So, do I. And because Avi Mizrachi is such a great friend of this ministry, we want to offer a special DVD featuring him on the cover this week. For a donation of \$10 or more, we will send you a copy of *Messianic Judaism*. If you'd like to know more about the growing number of Jewish believers who are following Yeshua, Jesus, you'll want a copy of this DVD.

You know, Nathan, the Law regarding the Old Testament priests seems absolutely overwhelming.

Nathan Jones: Well, it was. Many of them failed, just like Nadab and Abihu. They could not faithfully maintain the precarious intersection of the holy and the profane. And by the time that Jesus arrived, most priests and Levites did not even have the spiritual discernment to recognize Him.

Tim Moore: The tendency to become calloused toward the things of God is evident in all of us. But all of us who are set apart to serve God have an important responsibility.

Nathan Jones: Numbers describes how most of the Jews faltered in their covenant with God. Their faith wavered just as they were poised to seize the Promise Land. And for their faithlessness, they were condemned to wander in the wilderness, or desert for 40 years.

Tim Moore: Our Key Verse this week is Numbers 14:20. As He rebuked the rebellious Children of Israel, God said, "as I live, all the earth will be filled with the glory of the LORD." He said that only Joshua and Caleb would live to enter the promised land.

Nathan Jones: The point is that the unfaithfulness of man, whether Jews or Gentiles, does not negate the faithfulness of God. He is always faithful!

Tim Moore: And because no man could serve as priest and mediator forever, Jesus Christ is our great High Priest and eternal mediator before the throne of God. He is a priest forever in the order of Melchizedek.

We pray that this series focusing on Jesus in the Old Testament has been a great blessing to you so far. There's much more to come. Next week we'll finish the Torah as we move into the book of Deuteronomy. Until then, I'm Tim Moore.

Nathan Jones: And I'm Nathan Jones, saying, "Look up, be watchful, for our great High Priest and Mediator is drawing near!"

End of Program