

The Church, A Royal Priesthood

The Divine Coronation

1 Pet. 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 marvellous light.*

Levi is retired, but Judah reigns.

Jesus did not join Levi's order.

He abolished it, annulling the former commandment. You do not need Levi's blood again to become priest. You need Christ's blood.

Acts 20:28 *Therefore take heed to yourselves and to all the flock, among which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers, to shepherd the church of God which He purchased with His own blood.*

Rom. 2:2 *And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God.*

You do not need a human mediator, but one mediator – Christ.

1 Tim. 2:5 *For there is one God and one Mediator between God and men, the Man Christ Jesus.*

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The adjective ‘royal’, used in 1 Pet. 2:9 to modify the noun ‘priesthood’, has to do with or relates to the status of a king or queen or member of their family. Therefore, the noun ‘priesthood’ is the type that functions in the court of a king or queen.

Priests are persons who are authorized to administer certain sacraments having been ordained to the priesthood. In our lead text above, the Holy Spirit through Apostle Peter is addressing the Christian audience as God’s chosen race, the King’s priests as well as a holy nation.

Before now, God ordained priests for His service from the Aaronic tribe of Levi – a closed priesthood (see Heb. 7:11). If the Church is a nation as Peter posits in his inspired writing, then, there should be a king over it who should have priests or chaplains in his private chapel or regiment.

In God’s arrangement shown in His old plan of worship, the one high priest and other priests serving with him had to come from the tribe of Levi. So, before we ever talk of anybody serving under Him through the current High Priest

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(Jesus, Christ – Heb. 3:1), let us ask, “Is Jesus from the tribe of Judah qualified to be High Priest? Under which law or order is that permissible?” Actually, God changed His first will (Testament, Covenant) that had limited the priesthood to the tribe of Levi in order to permit Jesus from the tribe of Judah (David) to emerge an eternal High Priest as recorded in Heb. 7:12-14. It is now knowledgeable, therefore, to say that, according to the Scripture, the new Covenant has permitted Jesus, Christ to lead all other priests to offer sacrifices to God, God having changed the older order.

As the new order permitted Jesus as High Priest, not emerging from the tribe of Levi, even so, we are permitted from every tribe, language, nation and race both to serve our God and to reign on earth (see Rev. 5:9-20 (NIV)). No wonder, the veil of the ‘shadow temple’ fell on its own immediately after Jesus died on a tree (Matt. 27:50-51). It served to show that anyone who believes in Christ will go to God and offer acceptable sacrifices without necessarily consulting with anybody. It was not so from the beginning. Before Christ’s regime, anyone chosen by God can be a prophet even without

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believing in God. Perhaps, like Jeremiah, one can be selected as a prophet even before birth. On the contrary, now, nobody can speak to God without believing, first of all, to receive the Holy Spirit (the Spirit of Christ) – consider Rom. 8:9, and Acts 5:32, 10:38. Furthermore, when God authorized the priests to offer sacrifices as stipulated in the Levitical order, He was not perfunctory or without an aim: He sought to show mercy to the poor and needy because all were not burnt offerings (Matt. 12:6-7).

In conclusion, God has made us, believers in Christ, a Kingdom and Priesthood to serve to meet the needs of fellow persons. We know God cannot be hungry, lack clothes and shelter unless humans that He made in His likeness lack them. Beloved, is your priesthood with Jesus radiating mercy in all your sacrifices these many years as a Christian? Can you beat your chest and say, “After all, I am not a waste in God’s world; if Jesus were here where I am, it would make no difference to the way in which His life would benefit my neighbourhood?”

Evaluation Questions & Answers

1. When God stipulated varieties of sacrifices in the old order, what was His aim according to Matt. 12:6-7?
 - * Mercy: “I desire mercy and not sacrifice.” (Matt. 12:7, Hos. 6:6)
 - * Aim: Show mercy to the poor and needy. Not all were burnt offerings – peace offerings, sin offerings fed the priests and the poor (Lev. 7:15-16, Deut. 14:28-29). God used ritual to teach relationship.
 - * If your ‘sacrifice’ does not feed the hungry, it is Cain’s offering (Gen. 4:5; 1 John 3:12).
2. God can choose anybody today like Jeremiah of old even though he does not believe in the Gospel of Christ as His priest and prophet. True or False? Why?
 - * False. “If anyone does not have the Spirit of Christ, he is not His.” (Rom. 8:9)
“The Holy Spirit, whom God has given to those who obey Him.” (Acts 10:38)
“God anointed Jesus... with the Holy Spirit.”
 - * In the Old Testament, Prophet = office. Balaam spoke for God (Num. 24:2), but was lost (2 Pet. 2:15).

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- * In the New Testament, Priest = identity. No one speaks for God without the Spirit of God. “No one can say Jesus is Lord except by the Holy Spirit.” (1 Cor. 12:3)
Jeremiah was born a prophet (Jer. 1:5). We are born again priests (1 Pet. 2:5). No Spirit, no priesthood.
3. If the rich of this world give gifts to fellow rich ones, their gifts do not show mercy because mercy is shown to the needy. True or False? Why?
- * True. “If you do good to those who do good to you, what credit is that? Even sinners do the same. If you lend to those from whom you hope to receive back, what credit is that?” (See Luke 6:32-35)
 - * Mercy = unmerited compassion to the needy. See the Good Samaritan (Luke 10:33-37).
 - * Giving to the rich is investment, reciprocity, politics.
 - * Giving to the poor is ministry, mercy, Christ (Matt. 25:40). If it returns with interest, it was not mercy, it was business.

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4. According to Prov. 19:17 and Matt. 25:31-40, if we ignore the poor because they will not make a return giving and instead we give to the rich, it is not God that we seek to reward us but men. True or False? Why?

* True. “He who has pity on the poor lends to the Lord, and He will pay back...” (Prov. 19:17).

“Inasmuch as you did it to one of the least... you did it to Me.” (Matt. 25:31-40)

“When you give a feast, invite the poor... you will be repaid at the resurrection.” (Luke 14:13-14)

* Why? God identifies with the poor (Prov. 14:31). The rich can repay (Luke 6:34). If you give to the rich, your reward is their applause (Matt. 6:2). If you give to the poor, your reward is His “well done” (Matt 25:21). Choose.

5. According to Rev. 5:9-10, all Christians are priests. True or False? Why?

* True. “You have made them to be a kingdom and priests to serve our God.” (Rev. 5:9-10 (NIV)). “A royal priesthood” (1 Pet. 2:9), “a holy nation, to offer up spiritual sacrifices” (1 Pet. 2:5).

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- * Why? Veil torn (Matt. 27:51) = access for all. Spirit given to all (Acts 2:17-18). No 'layman', only priests.
- * If you believe in Christ, you are ordained. "Sacrifice of praise... to do good and to share" (Heb. 13:15-16).
Not some. All. "Made us kings and priests" (Rev. 1:6).

Prayer

Dear Father, help me to know that I am a minister in the King's court and reigning on earth; that such does not happen by tribe but by blood, and that Your office speaks mercy for us. Amen.