

A KINGDOM OF PRIESTS *Part 2*

We introduced a new series last week entitled, “A Kingdom Of Priests”. This series is taken from the fact that God’s *original* plan for Israel was that they be a nation (or a kingdom) of priests unto Him.

Exodus 19:6

⁶ And ye shall be unto me a kingdom of priests, and an holy nation. These are the words which thou shalt speak unto the children of Israel.

What’s interesting is that God has the SAME plan for the Church!

1 Peter 2:5

⁵ Ye also, as lively stones, are built up a spiritual house, an holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God by Jesus Christ.

As priests, we’re expected to offer up *spiritual* sacrifices “by Jesus Christ.”

Why *spiritual* sacrifices? Because the sacrifices we offer are not your typical sacrifices (animals, grain, etc). We offer up sacrifices of praise, thanksgiving, and even our own bodies!

Why are they *by* Christ Jesus? They are *by* Christ Jesus because His blood (redemption) is the reason we’re able to offer sacrifices that are acceptable and well pleasing to God. In fact, redemption is the basis for our COMING to God!

1 Peter 2:4

⁴ To whom coming, as unto a living stone, disallowed indeed of men, but chosen of God, and precious,

Notice how Peter emphasizes our *coming* to God in this verse.

1 Peter 2:5

⁵ Ye also, as lively stones, are built up a spiritual house, an holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God by Jesus Christ.

Although it’s not obvious in the King James Version, Peter actually continues to describe our *coming* in this verse!

1 Peter 2:5 Good News Bible

⁵ Come as living stones, and let yourselves be used in building the spiritual temple, where you will serve as holy priests to offer spiritual and acceptable sacrifices to God through Jesus Christ.

Notice, the reason we come to God is NOT for redemption, even though redemption is certainly what we have in Jesus Christ.

1 Peter 1:18–19

18 Forasmuch as ye know that ye were not redeemed with corruptible things, as silver and gold, from your vain conversation received by tradition from your fathers; 19 But with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot:

Redemption (the forgiveness of sins) is the basis for our coming. In fact, it's the reason we're able to be admitted into the priesthood. Still, redemption is not the reason for our coming. The REASON for our coming is to offer sacrifices!

Hebrews 9:14

14 How much more shall the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered himself without spot to God, purge your conscience from dead works to serve the living God?

Notice, the blood of Jesus purges our conscience SO THAT we might serve the living God!

Romans 12:1

1 I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service.

Again, we don't present our bodies as living sacrifices TO receive mercy. We present our bodies as living sacrifices BECAUSE we have received mercy. Thus, receiving mercy is not the END POINT. It's the STARTING POINT!

This is what many of us are missing. We see redemption (cleansing, forgiveness) as an end point rather than the starting point. As a result, we're coming to God as PETITIONERS rather than as PRIESTS. Our coming to God should not terminate in forgiveness. It should terminate in spiritual service!

Thus, there needs to be a change in our approach. I believe this change is best illustrated by the change that took place with the house of God in the OT.

Most of us are familiar with how the house of God changed from a *tabernacle* under Moses, to a *temple* under King Solomon. However, that was a very *minor* change. The only difference between the temple Solomon built and the tabernacle erected by Moses was one was a *permanent* structure, while the other was a *temporary* dwelling.

The more radical and substantial change was found in the tabernacle of David. The tabernacle of David was erected BEFORE Solomon built his temple, and it actually existed alongside and at the same time as the tabernacle of Moses.

2 Samuel 6:17

17 And they brought in the ark of the Lord, and set it in his place, in the midst of the tabernacle that David had pitched for it...

David's tabernacle was very different from that of Moses. It was different in that it had only ONE room and only one piece of furniture—the ark.

This is significant because the *Church* is compared to the tabernacle of David!

Acts 15:15–16

15 And to this agree the words of the prophets; as it is written, 16 After this I will return, and will build again the tabernacle of David, which is fallen down; and I will build again the ruins thereof, and I will set it up:

Notice, God did NOT say that He would rebuild the temple of Solomon. Nor did He say that He would rebuild the tabernacle of Moses. Instead, He said that He would rebuild the TABERNACLE OF DAVID. Why? Two reasons.

First, the tabernacle of David would be for ALL men.

Acts 15:17

17 That the residue of men might seek after the Lord, and all the Gentiles, upon whom my name is called, saith the Lord, who doeth all these things.

The Gentiles would seek the Lord in the tabernacle of David. The distinctions that we see emphasized in the tabernacle of Moses (priests vs. people, clean vs. unclean), are removed in David's tabernacle. There are no "divisions" in David's tabernacle. There's just ONE room. This is a picture of the Church ("One Lord, one faith, one baptism").

Second, the focus in David's tabernacle isn't, "How do I gain access to God?" Instead, the focus in David's tabernacle is, "What do I do with this access?" We might say that David's tabernacle emphasizes *how* do we minister before the Lord's presence, NOT how do we gain access to His presence!

1 Chronicles 16:1–4

1 So they brought the ark of God, and set it in the midst of the tent that David had pitched for it: and they offered burnt sacrifices and peace offerings before God. 2 And when David had made an end of offering the burnt offerings and the peace offerings, he blessed the people in the name of the Lord. 3 And he dealt to every one of Israel, both man and woman, to every one a loaf of bread, and a good piece of flesh, and a flagon of wine. 4 And he appointed certain of the Levites to minister before the ark of the Lord, and to record, and to thank and praise the Lord God of Israel:

Notice, once the ark was placed in David's tabernacle, and offerings were made to God, David made an END of offerings. After this, He blessed the people, gave them gifts (a meal), and he appointed Levites to minister before the Lord continually. Why?

Apparently, David's tabernacle would be known, not by its *continual offerings*, but by its *continual ministry*! The order would no longer be—'Come, let's go to the house of God to receive mercy.' The order would be—'Come, let's go to the house of God to do service (ministry)!'

It seems we've made coming to the house of God all about enjoying God's presence or receiving something (redemption, cleansing, forgiveness) in His presence. Yet, if the Church is the *new tabernacle of David*, the defining activity should not be enjoying God's presence. It should instead be, ministering before His presence! There should be CONTINUAL ministry in the house of God.

1 Chronicles 16:37

37 So he left there before the ark of the covenant of the Lord Asaph and his brethren, to minister before the ark continually, as every day's work required:

Notice, there was specific work (ministry) assigned for the priests to perform EACH DAY. Apparently, although David made an end of offerings, he did not make an end of ministering before the Lord!