

## Foundations

### The New Has Come! (Part 6)

One of the most insidious evils to infect the Church is **clericalism**: the notion that professional pastors, etc., are a special class of Christians who are called to serve as “priests” on behalf of the more common “laity”.

*“But you (all Christians) are a chosen race, a **royal priesthood**, a holy nation, a people for his own possession, that **you may proclaim the excellencies of him** who called you out of darkness into his marvelous light.” 1 Peter 2:9*

#### NEW PRIVILEGE:

Every Christ follower is a member of new humanity (“a holy *ethnos*”) God is creating in Christ for his own glory; each one having the status of **royalty**, serving as holy **priests** and **prophets** in God’s kingdom.

- Spiritual **Authority** (kings/queens)

**Colossians 1:13** – *Believers have been transferred from Satan’s rule or authority to live under the gracious rule of Christ’s kingdom.*

**Ephesians 2:4-6** – *Believers are saved from the power and death of sin with the same power God used to raise Jesus from the dead and are seated with Jesus in the heavenly realms.*

**Ephesians 1:16-23** – *Jesus Christ is seated at the right hand of the Father in glory, above “every name that is named”. This is a reference to six names of pagan gods that were written on amulets or spoken in prayers by ancient pagans appealing for power to overcome a problem, an enemy, or even to win in athletic competition. The Apostle Paul is saying in the clearest terms possible for the ancient Ephesians that Jesus Christ is the King of kings and Lord of lords; he is God above all gods. AND we are seated there with him in that exalted place!*

**Luke 10:17-20** – *Jesus Christ has given his authority to believers over demonic beings.*

**Ephesians 6:11-17** – *Believers have the ability to stand strong against the schemes and assaults of the devil by putting on the armor of God—an image the Apostle Paul borrows from the Hebrew prophets, referencing the armor the Messiah would have to overcome evil when he came. It’s just another way of saying, “Put on the Lord Jesus Christ.” (Romans 13:14), Be richly indwelt with the Word (gospel) of Christ.” (Colossians 3:16), or “Put on the new self, created after the likeness of God in true righteousness and holiness.” (Ephesians 4:24)*

**James 4:7** – *The devil has no authority to control, oppress, or deceive God’s people; resist him and he will flee.*

**1 Peter 5:8-11** – *When the devil comes roaring like a lion threatening to devour, resist him, for you are under Christ’s dominion.*

**1 John 4:2-4** – *Believers have overcome the evil spirits who masqueraded themselves as counterfeit christs (antichrist; i.e., “same as” Christ)*

**Matthew 18:18-20** – *Jesus has also given his authority to believers in community when dealing with matter of church discipline. Where two or three believers are gathered together to adjudicate a matter of discipline in the local church, Christ is present among them giving wisdom and direction. Whatever is decided by that gathering, literally, “will have been” determined in heaven; i.e. Jesus gives his followers (in community) the authority to execute God’s will on earth in matters of church discipline.*

**1 Corinthians 6:2-3** – *Believers will assist Jesus in judging the angels. Surely we can make sound judgments as his people, now, in present earthly matters.*

- Spiritual **Proclamation** (prophet/ess)

**John 14:26** – *God has permanently anointed every believer with the Holy Spirit, who guides us in the truth so that we are not completely dependent on human teachers (1 John 2:26-27).*

**Acts 2:17-18** (cf. **1 Corinthians 14:5, 24, 31** - all can prophesy) *This is our NEW COMMISSION under the New Covenant – all are to go into the world to make disciples – **Matthew 28:18-20** (not like Israel who was God’s light for the world to come to); all are to witness – **Acts 1:8**; all are Spirit-anointed to proclaim good news – **Isaiah 61:1-4** (not just prophets like Isaiah)*

- Spiritual **Sacrifice** (priest/ess)

**1 Peter 2:5** – “You yourselves like living stones are being built up as a spiritual house, to be a holy priesthood, to offer spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ.” *NOTE: Peter uses three symbols, drawn from ancient Jewish sacrificial worship, and he applies them all to Christians. In one breath we are 'temples,' in the next, 'priests,' in a third, 'sacrifices.'* Christians individually and collectively are temples of God’s presence on earth. We are priests by virtue of our consecration (the Spirit’s washing and anointing us), our direct access to God, and our function of representing God to others and of bringing others to God. We are sacrifices, inasmuch as one main part of our priestly function is to offer ourselves to God.

**Hebrews 10:19-22** – All believers enjoy the same privilege (but without fear) as the Jewish high priest on one day a year (the Great Day of Atonement) to enter the Holy of Holies on behalf of Israel to sprinkle blood on the mercy seat of the Ark.

- Praise

**Hebrews 13:15** – “Through Jesus, then, let us continually offer up a sacrifice of praise to God—the fruit of lips that acknowledge his name.”

**Romans 12:1-2** (cf. **1 Corinthians 6:18-20**) – As an act of spiritual worship, we are to offer up our physical bodies as living sacrifices, starting with the spiritual transformation of our minds, so that we are able to discern and obey God’s will, rather than being conformed to the world’s will and values.

- Doing Good

**Hebrews 13:16** – Immediately following v. 15 about continually offering up the spiritual sacrifice of praise, we read: “Do not neglect to do good and to share what you have, for such sacrifices are pleasing to God.”

**Romans 12:3-6** – The first expression of a transformed mind (our thinking and evaluating) is to recognize that we are member one of another in the Body of Christ, and we each are given a measure of grace (grace gifts) to serve the good of the Body.

**1 Peter 2:9-3:7** – The Apostle Peter expands on the idea of believers being priests who offer up spiritual sacrifices to God by applying this to all of life and relationships, including times when we are treated unjustly. Responding to evil by doing good and then suffering for it is what Jesus did for us in his sinless life and sacrificial death for our salvation. When we do the same, not returning evil for evil, but instead, entrusting ourselves to God who judges justly, it is a gracious thing in the sight of God.

**2 Timothy 3:16-17** – Again, God has given us the Scriptures to equip us for every good work.

- Prayer

**Ephesians 2:18-22** – As New Covenant priests, we have access 24/7/365 to God through prayer.

**Hebrews 13:17-18** (cf. **Ephesians 6:18; Luke 18:1-8**) – On the heels of offering up praise and doing good as spiritual sacrifices, the privilege of prayer is commanded.

Pascal: “God instituted prayer in order to lend to his creatures the dignity of causality.”

- Giving

**Philippians 4:17-19** – Financial support to the work of gospel ministry is received by God as a spiritual sacrifice. Priests in Israel, upon receiving tithes from the people of Israel, gave a tenth of this to the high priest. As priests in God’s kingdom, we do the same when we give to the work of the gospel—we give to our High Priest, Jesus Christ. (cf. **1 Timothy 6:17-18; 2 Corinthians 8 & 9**)

- Faith & Death

**Philippians 2:17** – Even if I am to be poured out as a drink offering upon the sacrificial offering of your faith, I am glad and rejoice with you all. (cf. **2 Timothy 4:6-8**)

In Jewish sacrifices, often times a worshipper’s burnt offering of meat was accompanied by a drink offering of wine that was poured out over the meat offering as an acknowledgment that God was the Source of all blessings. The Apostle Paul, in a Roman prison anticipating his possible execution, saw his death as a drink offering poured out over the sacrificial offering of the Philippian’s faith. Paul rejoiced that his life was sacrificed for the cause of bringing the Philippians to faith in Christ—both of which were spiritual offerings to God’s glory! Paul fought the good fight. He finished the race, and death only meant reward and commendation before Christ.

WILL WE BE ABLE TO SAY THE SAME ABOUT OUR LIFE WHEN WE FACE DEATH? NO REGRETS, JUST JOY.