



Want to be a Priest?... You Are!

Therefore...Put your priestly garments on. Get ready to be the link (the bridge) between others and the mediator, Jesus, the Christ!

1 Peter 2:9, "But you are not like that, for you are a chosen people. You are royal priests, a holy nation, God's very own possession. As a result, you can show others the goodness of God, for he called you out of the darkness into his wonderful light."

1 Peter 2:4-5, "As you come to him, the living Stone—rejected by humans but chosen by God and precious to him—⁵ you also, like living stones, are being built into a spiritual house to be a holy priesthood, offering spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ."

Revelation 1:4-6, "May you have grace and peace from God who is, and was, and is to come; and from the sevenfold Spirit* before his throne; ⁵ and from Jesus Christ who faithfully reveals all truth to us. He was the first to rise from death, to die no more. He is far greater than any king in all the earth. All praise to him who always loves us and who set us free from our sins by pouring out his lifeblood for us. ⁶ He has gathered us into his Kingdom and made us priests of God his Father. Give to him everlasting glory! He rules forever! Amen!"

This New Living Translation version reflects the Protestant view, as the universal "royal priesthood" from the Bible.

In ancient Israel, priests acted as mediators between God and people. They ministered according to God's instruction, and they offered sacrifices to God on behalf of the people. Once a year, the high priest would enter the holiest part of the temple and offer a sacrifice for the sins of all the people, including all the priests.

Most Protestants today recognize only Christ as a mediator between themselves and God (1 Timothy 2:5). The Epistle to the Hebrews calls Jesus the supreme "high priest," who offered himself as a perfect sacrifice (Hebrews 7:23-28).

- Protestants believe that through Christ they have been given direct access to God, just like a priest; thus, the doctrine is called the ***priesthood of all believers.***
- God is equally accessible to all the faithful, and every Christian has equal potential to minister for God.

The Doctrine of the High Priesthood of Jesus Christ.

Hebrews 5:1-10, “Every high priest is selected from among the people and is appointed to represent the people in matters related to God, to offer gifts and sacrifices for sins. ² He is able to deal gently with those who are ignorant and are going astray, since he himself is subject to weakness. ³ This is why he has to offer sacrifices for his own sins, as well as for the sins of the people. ⁴ And no one takes this honor on himself, but he receives it when called by God, just as Aaron was. ⁵ In the same way, Christ did not take on himself the glory of becoming a high priest. But God said to him, “You are my Son; today I have become your Father.” ⁶ And he says in another place, “You are a priest forever, in the order of Melchizedek.” ⁷ During the days of Jesus’ life on earth, he offered up prayers and petitions with fervent cries and tears to the one who could save him from death, and he was heard because of his reverent submission. ⁸ Son though he was, he learned obedience from what he suffered ⁹ and, once made perfect, he became the source of eternal salvation for all who obey him ¹⁰ and was designated by God to be high priest in the order of Melchizedek.”

The passage gives three (3) essential qualifications of the priest for the Israelites...and for us today.

1. Priests are appointed on behalf of others to deal with the things concerning God.

- The priest is the link (the bridge) between God and the world.
- In Israel, the priest had one special function—to offer sacrifice for the sins of the people. Sin breaks the relationship which should exist between men and women and God...and puts a barrier between them.

The sacrifice was initiated by God and is meant to restore that relationship and remove the barrier.

The priest existed to open for sinners the way back to God—as long as they wanted to come back (free-will).

Note: The way back must be through true repentance. An unrepentant heart cannot be forgiven...it can only become more calloused. These are people that are spoken about in Romans 1.

2. Priests must be at one with others.

They must have gone through the same experiences and must be in full sympathy with others. It is a gentle spirit...but yet a spirit in which one can deal with others legitimately and justifiably.

Sin cannot be tolerated; yet the sinner can be forgiven. The priest must be willing to ask God to forgive when there is a willing participant of genuine personal accountability for one’s sin. The

participant must be willing to turn from his or her sin and head in the other direction from that sin.

The difference between an earthly priest and the high priest found in Jesus, the Christ, is that the earthly priest has to assume one's genuineness in repentance ...and Jesus knows without a doubt one's sincerity when asking for forgiveness.

This is a wake-up call for the Christian!

3. People do not appoint themselves to the priesthood; their appointment is from God.

- In other words...the priesthood is not an office which is taken; it is a privilege and a glory to which people are called.
- The ministry of God is neither a job nor a career but a calling.

Those who are called to the ministry ought to be able to look back and say, "God chose me and gave me this work to do."

Jesus Christ fulfills the great conditions of the priesthood.

1. **Jesus did not choose His task; God chose Him for it.**
2. **Jesus has gone through the bitterest of human experiences and understands what it is to be human with all its strength and weakness.**

Note: Jesus in Gethsemane (prayers and tears...and his cry)

Jesus learned from all His experiences because he met them all with reverence. Learning comes from agony and suffering. It is the quickest way to learn...but the most challenging to accept.

3. **Jesus met every requirement as to purpose for, purpose in, and purpose in meeting his designed goal:**

- **His purpose for coming...a sacrifice once and for all**
- **His purpose in coming...that all might have full relationship with the Father**
- **His purpose in meeting his designed goal...to bring back his most prized possession...which is to take back what he originally designed in the first place.**

To the Greeks...something was perfect (teleios) if it perfectly carried out the purpose for which it was designed. In human terms...Jesus was "teleios" because He not only carried out the purpose in which Salvation was designed...but He was the Designer of the designed. A perfect plan...carried out to perfection.

Christians Need to Heed to God's Word.

Hebrews 5:11-14, “We have much to say about this, but it is hard to make it clear to you because you no longer try to understand.¹² In fact, though by this time you ought to be teachers, you need someone to teach you the elementary truths of God’s word all over again. You need milk, not solid food!¹³ Anyone who lives on milk, being still an infant, is not acquainted with the teaching about righteousness.¹⁴ But solid food is for the mature, who by constant use have trained themselves to distinguish good from evil.”

Corrective Words Spoken Here! ...When People Refuse to Grow Up...to Mature in the Faith!

Remember...when you were told that the words listen, hear, and pay attention? Those words were found over 200 times in the Word of God.

“Slow to learn”..NIV... “ears have become dull” (NRSV)

“Nothros”...Greek, means:

Slow moving in mind, sluggish in understanding, dull of hearing, stupidly forgetful...or lazy and lethargic in completing tasks or goals.

Enthusiasm is not evident...and a teacher must know and understand before he can teach others.

The Hebrews to whom the writer was writing...had not only failed to grow...but failed in “wanting/desiring” to grow.

When a Christian cannot distinguish between what is good and what is evil, then that Christian either needs to readdress his/her salvation experience or retune to the right channel for the right instructions in what Christianity is all about!

“But solid food is for the mature...who by constant use have trained themselves to distinguish good from evil” (Hebrews 5:14, NIV).

The Mature Christian is:

Genuine...not a show; not a hypocrite; actions that

Reflect that of a “born again” person.

Repentant... has been forgiven and lives the life that exemplifies a Christ-like spirit and an appreciation of God’s forgiveness.

Obedient ...tries with all heart and soul to give God due credit and Lives life reflective of this quality.

Watching...and anxiously waiting for God’s instructions as to how To live today (You get through by reading the Word of God).

The challenge for us today....Be steadfast and consistent in reading and doing God’s Word.