

Study 16 - A Dominion of Kings and Priests

“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.” (1 Peter 2:9)

Introduction

As citizens of God’s kingdom, we are not just residents of His realm—we are kings and priests under the authority of Christ, our King and High Priest. (See Revelation 1:5–6; 5:9–10.) Our twofold role delineates our God-given dominion on earth. God has always intended for His people to develop a close, intimate relationship with Him while carrying out their purpose as His chosen instruments of kingdom expansion in the world. In this study, we will discover how God wants us to fulfil our ministries of king and priest in the here and now.

Study Questions

Part I: The Covenant-Kingdom Connection

- (a) What did God tell the Israelites they would be to Him if they obeyed His voice and kept His covenant? (Exodus 19:5b-6a)

(b) In the New Testament, what similar statement is made in reference to the church, due to Jesus’ sacrifice on the cross and the blood of the new covenant? Complete the following:

Revelation 1:5b-6a: “To Him who loved us and washed us from our sins in His own blood, and _____

_____”

- If we live in obedience to God and under the shelter of the new covenant in Christ, what will be our spiritual position? (Deuteronomy 28:13a)

Part II: The Priestly Ministry of Christ

We cannot effectively rule as kings until we have first learned to serve as priests. To do this, we must understand that our priestly ministry mirror Christ’s.

- What did the writer of Hebrews call Jesus Christ? Complete the following:

Hebrews 3:1: “... consider the _____ and _____ of our confession, Christ Jesus.”

- In the Old Testament, the priests functioned according to the order of Aaron, the first high priest under the law, and his descendants and successors. Yet the new covenant in Christ necessitated a new order of priesthood. According to what order is Jesus Christ’s eternal priesthood? (Hebrews 5:6b)

KEY DEFINITION: *Melchizedek* comes from the Hebrew name *Malkiy-Tsedeq*, which means “king of right” (STRONG, G3198, H4442), or king of “rightness,” or “righteousness” (NASC, H6664). In the Old Testament, Melchizedek was the “king of Salem” and “priest of God Most High” to whom Abraham gave a tithe of everything he had. (See Genesis 14:18-19).

REFLECTIONS ON THE PRIESTHOOD OF CHRIST

Melchizedek was a type, or foreshadower, of Jesus Christ, the righteous King who is also our High Priest. The two offices, which had operated together in Melchizedek, were separated in Israel under the law of

Moses: the kingship was given to the tribe of Judah, and the priesthood was bestowed on the tribe of Levi.

In Jesus Christ, the kingship and priesthood were united once again. Jesus served as King and Priest on earth, and He was highly exalted by God the Father as King of Kings and Lord of Lords after His resurrection and ascension. On the basis of His priesthood, Jesus offered bread and wine during the Last Supper with His disciples as a symbol of His body and blood, which would be presented to God as a living sacrifice. (See, for example, Matthew 26:26-29.) He offered prayers, intercession, and His very self (see Hebrews 5:7; 9:14) to His heavenly Father by means of the Holy Spirit, constituting Himself both as the Priest who ministered the sacrifice and the Sacrifice itself. After making atonement for us, He entered the Holy of Holies in heaven on our behalf and as our predecessor (see Hebrews 6:19-20), so that we can now enter God's presence, also.

The Old Testament high priest was the mediator between God and man. Jesus has been mediating for the church as its High Priest for more than two thousand years – and He is our High Priest today. His work continues in force because no one can approach, communicate with, or bring offerings to God without the mediation of the High Priest. Therefore, we depend totally on Christ. (See Hebrews 7:24-25; 8:6.)

Part III: The Role of Priest in God's Kingdom in the Now

The roles of priest and king are always interconnected. Believers who rule and exercise dominion on earth have learned to serve as priests of almighty God. This sacred ministry operates in God's presence – the heavenly Holy of Holies – where His throne is located. We are members of God's spiritual priesthood, and our responsibilities centre on our offering up “*spiritual sacrifices*” (1 Peter 2:5) to Him. Let us look at some acts of spiritual sacrifice that we are fulfil as priests in God's kingdom.

▽ **Present Our Bodies as Living Sacrifices**

5. (a) What kind of living sacrifices should we be? Complete the following:

Romans 12:1: “... *present your bodies a living sacrifice*, _____, _____
_____, *which is your reasonable service.*”

(b) Through whom must we offer up our sacrifices so that they may be acceptable to God? (1Peter 2:5b)

(c) What are we to do in conjunction with offering ourselves to God as living sacrifices? (Romans 12:2a)

(d) When we do so, what will we “*prove*”? (Verse 12b)

The New Testament concept of a priest is someone who presents spiritual sacrifices to God

REFLECTIONS ON BEING A LIVING SACRIFICE

Since Jesus' sacrifice was complete when He offered His body on the cross, and since He already did the work of redemption, reconciliation, and restoration, the only thing left for us to do is to offer our bodies as a living sacrifice to God. The altar on which we sacrifice is not an object; rather, it is our heart – and the sacrifice is ourselves.

Presenting our bodies to God is a simple and practical act; there is nothing mystical about it. It means that from this day forward, we will no longer follow what the old nature or “self” wants, feels, or thinks. Rather, we will surrender our bodies to God's service. We will no longer offer our bodies to drugs, illicit sex, or selfish carnal pleasures, but we will live for eternal purposes as we do God's good and perfect will. This means that one of the benefits of presenting our bodies to the Lord and having our minds renewed is God carrying out His will in our lives.

▽ **Offer Sacrifices of Praise and Worship**

6. (a) Why should we give praise to God? (Psalm 145:3a NIV)

(b) Through Christ, how often are we to offer the sacrifice of praise to God? (Hebrews 13:15a)

If we worship God only according to our feelings, we have not learned to praise Him.

▽ **Do Good and Share with Others**

7. (a) What did Jesus say about how we are to treat other people? (Luke 6:35a)

(b) What will happen if we give to others in various ways? (Verse 38a)

(c) Hebrews 13:16 refers to doing good and sharing as being “sacrifices” with which “God is well pleased.” What will happen to the person who is generous toward others? What will happen to the person who “refreshes” others? (Proverbs 11:25 NIV)

God will empower us in the areas in which we surrender to Him

▽ **Present Physical Gifts and Offerings to God**

8. (a) The high priest under the law of Moses presented both sacrifices and gifts to God on behalf of the people, which the people themselves had provided out of their own resources. (See Hebrews 5:1.) What are some material sacrifices and gifts that we should present to God, which are His due? (Malachi 3:8b)

(b) Once, when Jesus was in the temple, He noticed a poor widow putting two mites, or small coins, into the treasury. What statement did He make about her contribution, compared to the contributions of those who were rich? (Luke 21:3-4)

(c) What guidelines for giving did the apostle Paul provide for us? (2 Corinthians 9:7a)

(d) What kind of “giver” does God love (Verse 7b)

Monetary offerings presented by believers are sacrifices of worship to God.

▽ **Offer Prayer and Intercession**

9. (a) Christ’s present ministry in heaven as High Priest included making intercession on our behalf. (See Hebrews 7:25b). likewise, as we fulfill our ministry as priests unto God, what types of requests and remembrances are we to make on behalf of “all men,” including national leaders and all who are in authority? (1 Timothy 2:1)

(b) In Matthew 6:9-13, Jesus taught His disciples to pray by giving them a prayer “template” that included essential elements of prayer. The words “our” and “us” in this prayer indicate that we are to pray these petitions in conjunction with other believers, and not just for our own lives. Record what we are to corporately ask for, following the example below:

Verse 9: that people would “hallow,” or reverence, God’s name

Verse 10: _____

Verse 11: _____

Verse 12: _____

Verse 13a: _____

10. What four designations did Peter use in referring to believers, reflecting our priestly ministry unto God? (1 Peter 2:9a)

Intercessors rule on earth from the spirit realm.

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