

Old Union Baptist Ministers' School

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"The Priesthood of Believers"

By

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Lesson Scripture - 1 Peter 2:5-10

The Biblical History of Priest - Before the Mosaic economy was established, heads of families, and tribes, carried out the priestly functions of building altars, and offering sacrifices to God in behalf of their people. Some of these came to be known as Patriarchs. This is true with of Abraham (Hebrews 7:4); his twelve sons (Acts 7:8-9), David (Acts 2:29), and others. Job was a good example of this priestly function. (Job 1:5)

Following the exodus from Egypt, God called Moses up into Mount Sinai where he showed him the pattern for the Tabernacle. It was to represent the place where God meets man. I don't think there was a physical building in heaven, from which the tabernacle was copied. But there did exist in heaven something, **or rather someone**, with real substance, which the tabernacle would fore-shadow. **That tabernacle represented the Lord Jesus.** In Him God meets man! He is the mercy seat that covers the broken law of God, the place where **"Grace" and "Mercy"** are found, and where sinners can make peace with God. (Colossians 1:20-22)

God's plan included the establishment of the Priesthood for maintaining the ministry of the tabernacle, because there were many services to be performed. It must be set up, and carried forth. Many different duties were associated with the ordinances of divine services, and the things they represented. Sacrifices were required continually.

Levites - The Sons of Levi

The three sons of Levi were Gershom, Kohath, and Merari. Have you ever wondered why the sons of Levi were chosen to minister in things pertaining to the tabernacle? In **my opinion** it is because God knew they would be **loyal to the covenant**, as they proved following the golden calf apostasy. Moses asked, ***"Who is on the Lord's side, let him come unto me. And all the sons of Levi gathered themselves unto him."*** (Ex. 32:26-29) The tribe of Levi was chosen to keep the charge of the Tabernacle. All three families of this tribe had special duties in connection with the tabernacle. (Numbers 3:21-37)

The Tribe of Levi received no territorial inheritance of land, as did the other tribes, when the conquered land was divided. Instead, they were given 48 cities to live in, with a little ground for their animals. (Num. 35:1-8 and Joshua 21:1-42) They were also allotted the tithe from the other eleven tribes as a means to sustain their livelihood. (Num. 18:20-24)

The Family of Kohath - Aaron and His sons

The Family of Kohath was especially honored, most likely, because that is the family to which Moses and Aaron belonged. (Ex. 28:1) Aaron and his sons were to minister in the priest's office; Aaron was the first High Priest, and his sons served as lower-priest.

Aaron sons, as Priests, could minister in and around the tabernacle, in whatever capacity was needed, except in the Most Holy Place, and they did so by course. (Hebrews 9:1-6) **It was essential that they be consecrated and clothed in holy garments.**

Aaron, as High Priest was a type of Christ. He, and he alone, could enter within the veil into the Most Holy Place; once each year; and he must have **"the Blood of a Sacrificed Lamb"**, to make atonement for himself and all the people. (Hebrews 9:7-28) ***"But in those sacrifices there is a remembrance again made of sins every year. For it is not possible that the blood of bulls and goats should take away sin."*** (Heb.10:3-4) The Levitical Priesthood was imperfect and the sacrifices which they offered were imperfect.

The dispensation of the "Law" ended when ***"Jesus... cried ... with a loud voice, and yielded up the ghost. And, behold, the veil of the temple was rent in twain from the top to the bottom...."*** (Mt. 27:50-51) And with the death of Jesus the Levitical Priesthood ended. Although it was imperfect and temporary it had served its purpose very well.

The New Testament Priesthood - A Royal Priesthood

The beginning of the dispensation of "Grace" marked also the beginning of a New Priesthood. **It is a "Royal" Priesthood.** Unlike Aaron, Jesus Christ, Our Great High Priest, came from the tribe of Judah, The Royal Tribe. (Ge. 49:10) Jesus was made a High Priest, by the oath of God, ***"The Lord swear, and will not repent, Thou art a priest forever after the order of Melchisedec"***. (Heb. 7:20-21)

Who was Melchisedec? He was "King of Salem" which is "King of Peace" and he was "Priest of the Most High God". Melchisedec was not a priest by succession, nor by the law of a carnal commandment, and neither was Jesus. Jesus is the **"King of Kings"**, and the **"Lord of Lords"** (1 Tim. 6:15). Prophecy refers to Jesus as the **"Prince of Peace"**. (Is. 9:6), and Jesus himself said, ***"Peace I leave with you, My peace I give unto you: not as the world giveth, give I unto you...."*** (Jn. 14:27)

This man [Jesus] because he continueth ever, hath an unchangeable priesthood. He is able to save to the uttermost (totally & Completely) all that will come to him. Our High Priest is holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners and made higher than the heavens. Who needeth not daily to offer up sacrifices, first for his own sins, and then for the people; for this he did once when he offered up himself. (Please read the entire 7th chapter of Hebrews)

The Priesthood of Believers

After referring to Jesus as “...a *Living Stone, disallowed indeed of men, but chosen of God, and precious*” Peter says, “*Ye also, as lively [living] stones are built up a spiritual house, [the church] an holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God by Jesus Christ.*” (1 Pet. 2:5) We are not “High Priests”; Jesus is the only “High Priest” We are his seed, the children of the Great High Priest, and as such we too are priests, but of the lower order. When I say “we” I’m not talking about ministers or deacons only. I mean all who are born again believers. It is not a calling to preach that makes one a “Priest unto God” nor is it the “laying on of hands”. (ordination)

Charles Spurgeon said, “Every Mary and John, every peasant girl and every laborer who puts his hand to the plow, every servant of God, in every capacity, is a member of this Holy Priesthood”. I believe that statement is true.

B. H. Carroll said, “Every member of God’s true flock is a priest without regard to age or sex. They are all priest - a spiritual priesthood..... **In the New Testament God’s people constitute a kingdom of priests.**” (Rev. 1:5-6 and Rev. 5:9-10)

The Levitical priest offered material sacrifices, which were symbolic; they were figures and served as pictures of the coming ministry of Jesus Christ. (Hebrews 9:9-10 and 10:1-4) **Christ, as High Priest, made one sacrifice for sin, once and for all.** (Heb. 10:12) **and there is no other sacrifice that can be made that will atone for sin.** (Heb. 10:26)

But as the other priest offered other kinds of sacrifices and service in the tabernacle & temple, it is clear that God has chosen “Christian Believers” to offer up “*Spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God by Jesus Christ*”. (1 Pet. 1:5-9) As believers, we are a “Spiritual House“, a “holy priesthood“, a “Chosen generation“, a “royal priesthood” a “holy nation“, a “peculiar people“, **to offer spiritual sacrifices that will show forth the praises of him who hath called us out of darkness into his marvelous light.** (1 Pet:5-9)

As “Believer Priest” we have direct access to God through Jesus. (Rom. 5:1-2, Heb. 10:19, & Eph. 2:18) We reach God through Jesus because, **“...there is one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus”** 1 Tim. 2:5) One and only one!

What Are The Sacrifices We Are To Offer?

1. The sacrifice of self. Our bodies, a living sacrifice, a reasonable service. (Rom. 12:1-2)
2. The sacrifice of prayer. (1 Tim. 2:1-4 and Rev. 8:3)
3. The sacrifice of Praise. (Heb. 13:15)
4. The sacrifice of giving. (Phil. 4:18)
5. The sacrifice of Witness. (Lu. 24:46-48 and Acts 1:8)
6. The sacrifice of maintenance. (Phil. 2:14-18, 1 Tim. 3:14-15 and Jude 3)