

"THE HIGH PRIEST AND THE KINGDOM OF PRIESTS"

I. SOME OF THE THINGS ILLUSTRATED IN THIS METAPHOR OF THE CHURCH

A. This metaphor illustrates the ministry that the Lord Jesus had to propitiate for sin and redeem sinners (I Jn.2:2)

1. As our High Priest His ministry differed from the order of the Aaronic priests of the O.T.
 - a. The Aaronic priests were called of God to offer sacrifices for sins but they had to offer for their own sins and when one died there was need to choose another (Heb. 5:3; 7:23).
 - b. Our high priest on the other hand is a priest after the order of Melchizedek in that He was presented "having neither beginning of days nor end of life". And unlike the Aaronic priests He had no need to offer up sacrifices for His own sin (Heb. 7:3; 17,23-27).
2. Notice secondly as our High Priest, His ministry differed from the offering of the O.T. priests.
 - a. The Aaronic high priest offered the blood of a sacrificial animal in the holy of holies of the tabernacle once a year for himself and for the sins of the people. But these offerings only atoned or covered sin. Every year another sacrifice was needed and their work was never finished (Heb. 9:6:10:3,4,11).
 - b. Our High Priest on the other hand offered Himself as a perfect sacrifice to God for our sins and entering the Holy place of heaven with His own blood He put away sin, finished the work of salvation and obtained eternal redemption for us (Heb. 9:12? 24-26; 10:12,14).

B. This metaphor illustrates the present ministry that the Lord Jesus has for His people who make up the Church.

1. As our High Priest Christ becomes our Advocate and intercedes for us when we sin, and on the

basis of His all sufficient sacrifice, restores us to fellowship when we confess (I Jn. 2:1,2; 1:9; Heb. 7:25; Rom. 8:34).

2. As our High Priest Christ represents us and mediates for us before the Father (I Tim. 2:5; Heb. 4:14-16).
3. As our High Priest Christ prays for us and is the basis upon which we receive the petitions we ask (Jas. 16:23,26).

C. This metaphor illustrates the ministry that Church saints have in this world and by whose authority they serve.

1. We notice in the O.T, that the priesthood was a hierarchy which ruled over the whole nation of Israel but because of rebellion against God and rejection of the Saviour these has been set aside during this age and the Church Saints have become the mediatorial people of God (Ex. 19:16 } I Pet. 2:9).
2. In the O.T. priesthood we find that the priests who ministered did so under the authority of the High Priest. In this respect then we see that the Church Saints which are Kingdom of priests serve under the authority of the Lord Jesus and one day they will reign with Him (Rev. 1:6).

II. SOME OF THE THINGS INVOLVED IN THIS RELATIONSHIP AS BELIEVERS

A. This relationship involves certain areas of sanctification.

1. The first thing we see about this priesthood of believers is how they are set apart - it is through "coming to Christ" (I Pet. 2:4-5).
2. Secondly we notice there is a washing and cleansing that take place.
 - a. In the O.T, when an individual entered the office of the priesthood he was washed once with a whole bathing which was administered to him by another (Ex.

29:4). This is a type of washing once for all of believers by the Holy Spirit which consecrates us to God (I Cor. 6:11; Titus 3:5; Jn. 15:3).

- b. We note also in the O.T. rites that after the priest had been wholly bathed he still required repeated cleansing or partial bathing at the laver before performing any priestly service (Ex. 30:17-21; 40:6,7).

Here we see a type of cleansing through confession that is needed in the life of believer-priests before they can be consecrated for service (I Jn. 1:9; Jn. 13:10).

B. This relationship involves certain areas of service.

1. The first area of service for believer-priests is that of sacrifice. The O.T. priests offered sacrifices which typified the once for all sacrifice that Christ has offered for sin. But while there are no sacrifices for sin to be made by believer-priests there are a number of sacrifices that are involved in our priestly service.

- a. The first sacrifice of the believer-priest is that of himself to God (Rom. 12:1,2). This is only reasonable service in the light of God's mercies and it involves a definite act of offering one's self. As a result of this offering a gradual transformation begins within the person and it continues through out his life (Rom.12i2).

- b. A second sacrifice that believer-priests have to offer is that of praise (Heb.13:15). This sacrifice should be a daily and continual offering to God for His goodness and mercies.

- c. A third sacrifice is that of being kind to others and sharing with those in need (Heb. 13:16). This is illustrated by the Philippians who shared with the Apostle Paul (Phil. 4:13).

- d. Finally believer-priests may offer up new converts to God which are the fruits of evangelism (Rom. 15:16).

2. The believer-priests have a second area of service which involves witnessing in this world. In the O.T. the priests were the messengers of the Lord (Mal. 2:7). In the N.T. we are the ambassadors of Christ (II Cor. 5:20). Our witness should involve three areas:

- a. First, our witness should involve a holy manner of life demonstrating good works which will glorify God (I Pet. 2:12; Matt. 5:16).
 - b. A second area of witness is that of suffering for righteousness sake for the glory of Christ (I Pet. 2:20).
 - c. Our witness to the world as believer-priests should also involve giving out the gospel message (Acts. 1:8; 5:32).
3. A third area of service for the believer-priests is that of intercession.
- a. We notice this area of service involves church saints praying for the needs of one another. This may be for physical needs (Acts 12:5,12) as well as spiritual (Acts 13:3; 14:23; Eph. 1:16-23).
 - b. This service covers also those outside the household of faith (Rom. 10:1; I Tim. 2:1,2).
4. Finally a fourth area of service involves that of worship. Although this is closely associated with the area of the sacrifice of praise, it involves more than that.
- a. We notice in the O.T, the priests were not to offer either strange incense (Ex. 30:9) or strange fire (Lev.10:1).
 - b. In the N. T. believer-priests then are not to offer what these two things typify. One speaks of mere formality and not from the heart. The other speaks of the things of the flesh rather than the things of the Spirit. The latter is seen in I Cor.1:11-13.

III. SOME OF THE THINGS IMPLIED FOR US TO DO BASED UPON THIS RELATIONSHIP

- A. We should rest upon the finished work of redemption wrought by Christ when He offered Himself once for our sin.
- B. We should offer ourselves to God and be cleansed for service.
- C. We should be involved in the areas of service such as offering sacrifices and witnessing to others.

D. We should have an intercessory ministry for one another and for those outside of Christ.