

TITLE: A Royal Priesthood (Part 3)

PASSAGE: 1 Peter 2:5

THEME: The Believer's Priesthood

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Read Passage

Part 3 ==> A Royal Priesthood

Title comes directly from v. 9 {read}. As such, this passage is ground zero for t/doctrine of the believer's priesthood.

Defined ==>

The privilege won for every Xn by X giving the believer access to God in prayer, confession, sacrifice and Word.

As indiv. believer-priests we have access to God in prayr, conf./sac./word.

Images of the priesthood bring to mind the O.T. Economy

Specifically - 3 O.T. passages that us significant parallels to N.T. doctrine of t/priesthood of the believer: Exo. 28-29; Lev. 8-9; Malachi 2. [This section from MacArthur, 108 ff.]

Several principles that can be gleaned from these three passages==>

First, the O.T. priests were chosen by God

God inaugurated t/office, as we see in Exodus 28:1 where he commanded Moses, "**Bring Aaron and his sons to minister as priests to me.**" This was initiated or inaugurated by God. Not to say that every priest of Israel was regenerate; some were apostate. But t/principle remains & is fulfilled in t/NT where we see that every believer is a priest by God's sov. choice.

What Jesus said to t/disciples is true for us ==>

John 15:16 "**You did not choose Me, but I chose you, and appointed you, that you should go and bear fruit . . .**" See t/same thing in 1 Pet. 2 {read v. 9a}

Second, Priesthood was not about the mighty, but the lowly

OT Jewish Tribe of Levi (Priestly tribe to whom t/Priesthood was entrusted) was considered one of t/least respected of Israel's tribes. According to Gen. 49, they were given a lowly status due to t/sin of Simeon and Levi.

God's choice of us follows a similar pattern. WDYMBT? Genuine Xnty has never been about t/proud or t/mighty, or the prominent. There's a reason new age religions & Scientology are popular among t/so-called elite & Xnty isn't. Part of t/reason is that these false religions allow you to keep your sin &* self-worship while enjoying some degree of misguided spirituality. Mainly, this is by God's design. God calls t/humble & t/lowly & t/common & t/nobodies like you and me.

Jesus himself said in Luke 5:32==>

“I have not come to call the righteous but sinners to repentance.”

For t/most part, t/Pharisees missed it // Sanhedrin // Politicians // Philosophers // Rulers of t/world. They were too busy admiring themselves & trying to control their little kingdoms.

No, it's like Paul wrote in 1 Corinthians 1:26-29 ==>

26 For consider your calling, brethren, that there were not many wise according to the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble;27 but God has chosen the foolish things of the world to shame the wise, and God has chosen the weak things of the world to shame the things which are strong,28 and the base things of the world and the despised, God has chosen, the things that are not, that He might nullify the things that are, [Why?"]29 that no man should boast before God.

"God chose the first priests from among particularly imperfect, cursed sinners—the tribe of Levi; and He still chooses His spiritual priesthood from among the ignoble, weak, and despised—ordinary sinners." [MacArthur, 109]

Those ordinary sinners are transformed into extraordinary trophies of His grace.

Third, O.T. Priests had to be cleansed before they were fit for service

Lev. chapt. 8 outlines this consecration process. Every part of t/ ceremony indicated that no one could enter presence of God to worship & serve him unless they had been completely cleansed from sin. So Lev. chapt. 8 gives instructions for ceremonial washings (v. 6), sin offering (vv. 14-17), burnt offering (vv. 18-21), wave offering (vv. 22-29). All of this prefigured t/cleansing from sin that only JC could accomplish.

And cleanse us He did; we are priests ceremonially cleansed, not by t/blood of bulls and goats, but by t/blood of t/Sinless Lamb of God.

We have been purchased by His blood (Acts 20:28)

Hebrews 9:11-15 11 But when Christ appeared as a high priest of the good things to come, He entered through the greater and more perfect tabernacle, not made with hands, that is to say, not of this creation; 12 and not through the blood of goats and calves, but through His own blood, He entered the holy place once for all, having obtained eternal redemption. 13 For if the blood of goats and bulls and the ashes of a heifer sprinkling those who have been defiled, sanctify for the cleansing of the flesh, 14 how much more will the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered Himself without blemish to God, cleanse your conscience from dead works to serve the living God? 15 And for this reason He is the mediator of a new covenant, in order that since a death has taken place for the redemption of the transgressions that were committed under the first covenant, those who have been called may receive the promise of the eternal inheritance.

We saw this cleansing work of Christ back in 1:2 ==>

[chosen] according to the foreknowledge of God the Father with the sanctification of the Spirit FOR OBEDIENCE TO JESUS CHRIST AND SPRINKLING WITH HIS BLOOD.

I hope you remember t/progression in this verse that we've studied so many times, it's a progression that relates to our salvation—a progression in t/outworking of God's plan.

* We are chosen (eternity past)

* We are sanctified by t/Sp. which in this context refers to t/work of t/H.S. in convicting us of our sin & need for a Savior.

* Obedience to JC. The obed. is what's called in t/NT "T/Obed. of Faith". This obedience is synonymous w/repentance & faith. Very 1st act of full-fledged, obedience that any person can render to God - to believe in t/Gospel & forsake their sin.

Don't forget t/point we're looking at ==>

Priests had to first be cleansed before they were fit for service

* Last part, We have been ==>

... [sprinkled] with His blood.

In t/OT there were 3 three occasions when a person would be sprinkled with blood. 1) When a leper had been healed (Lev. 14:1-7). 2) When priests were consecrated (Exodus 29:20-21). 3) Obedience to the Covenant (Exo. 24:3-8). Fits into what we've seen in 1 Peter (we are those healed of spiritual leprosy; consecrated as priests; bound to t/New Covt.).

First, the O.T. priests were chosen by God

Second, Priesthood was not about the mighty, but the lowly

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Fourth, in the O.T. God clothed the priests for service

God gave instruction regarding t/clothing of t/priests in Exodus 28.

40 "And for Aaron's sons you shall make tunics; you shall also make sashes for them, and you shall make caps for them, for glory and for beauty.41 "And you shall put them on Aaron your brother and on his sons with him; and you shall anoint them and ordain them and consecrate them, that they may serve Me as priests.42 "And you shall make for them linen breeches to cover their bare

flesh; they shall reach from the loins even to the thighs. 43 “And they shall be on Aaron and on his sons when they enter the tent of meeting, or when they approach the altar to minister in the holy place, so that they do not incur guilt and die. It shall be a statute forever to him and to his descendants after him.”

These "linen breeches" / undergarments symbolized the priest's sexual purity and their call to holiness.

What about us? How does this apply to us as spiritual priests? (I don't think anyone out there is wearing sacred undergarments. Instead of Fruit of t/Loom, Fruit of the Spirit?). We have been spiritually clothed in righteousness.

We are clothed with Christ (Gal. 3:27). εἰδύω (lit. to be clothed, or to sink into a garment). That's t/picture for t/NT believer.

Wasn't foreign to t/O.T. ==>

PSA 132:9 **Let Thy priests be clothed with righteousness; And let Thy godly ones sing for joy.**

PSA 132:16 **"Her priests also I will clothe with salvation; And her godly ones will sing aloud for joy.**

ISA 61:10 **I will rejoice greatly in the \Lord\, . . . For He has clothed me with garments of salvation, He has wrapped me with a robe of righteousness.**

Fifth, the Levitical priests were to be anointed for service

Leviticus 8:30 **So Moses took some of the anointing oil and some of the blood which was on the altar, and sprinkled it on Aaron, on his garments, on his sons, and on the garments of his sons with him; and he consecrated Aaron, his garments, and his sons, and the garments of his sons with him.**

This anointing signified God's power & presence; signified t/empowerment of t/H.S.

What about us as NT priests? We are New Covt. believers w/a spiritual

anointing. I know that sounds a little Charismatic (forgive me! It is a biblical concept so long as you don't try to squeeze it into every conversation like some do!).

John 7:38-39 38 “He who believes in Me, as the Scripture said, ‘From his innermost being shall flow rivers of living water.’” 39 But this He spoke of the Spirit, whom those who believed in Him were to receive . . .

1 John 2:20, 27 20 But you have an anointing from the Holy One . . . And . . . the anointing which you received from Him abides in you . . .

Sixth, God called the O.T. priests to obedient service

It was all about service, being a servant. J. "the greatest = t/servant"

Malachi 2:1-9 (hunting for it somewhere between Gen./Lev. Last book of OT. For you Italians out there, it's not's 'Malacci' t/prophet from Sicily!

"Malachi" means "my messenger" - he served as a spokesman for God. He writes during 2nd Temple period. About 100 yrs had passed following t/building of Zerubbabel's Temple & t/revival that characterized that period had grown cold. The Priests were especially guilty.

In chapt. 1 starting in v. 6, Malachi turns his attention to them. VV. 6-14 he reproves them for their contempt of God's sacrificial law (were bringing blemished & unclean animals to Him for sacrifice, in direct violation of God's Word).

Chapter 2 God warns them ==>

1 “And now, this commandment is for you, O priests.2 “If you do not listen, and if you do not take it to heart to give honor to My name,” says the Lord of hosts, “then I will send the curse upon you, and I will curse your blessings; and indeed, I have cursed them already, because you are not taking it to heart.

Fundamental OT concept: obedience brings blessing; disobedience brings cursing.

3 “Behold, I am going to rebuke your offspring, and I will spread refuse on your faces, the refuse of your feasts; and you will be taken away with it.

Graphic! The dung of t/sacrificial animals was to be taken o/s t/camp & burned, acc. to t/Law. Here, God says he will spread that excrement on their faces and they will be taken away w/it (o/s t/camp).

4 “Then you will know that I have sent this commandment to you, that My covenant may continue with Levi,” says the Lord of hosts.

What does a "covt. w/Levi" have to do w/anything? Rem. t/priests had to be from what tribe? God made a covt. w/the Levites (Num. chapt. 3 & 18; Deut. 33). Was a covt. of mutual responsibility - God was to be worshiped & t/priests, if obed. in leading in that worship, would receive life and peace. Priests of Malachi's day wanted t/Live & Peace, but not t/obed.

To put it in contemp. terms, they wanted "cheap grace." Like t/false teachers of today who claim that someone can have X as Savior while rejecting him as Lord. Not only a violation of t/New Covt., it's also a violation of these OT principles. True believer is one who renders faithful, albeit imperfect, obedience. These Priests, like many in t/CH today (even so-called Xn leaders), weren't regenerate in t/first place.

5 “My covenant with him [Levi and the Levites] was one of life and peace, and I gave them to him as an object of reverence; so he revered Me, and stood in awe of My name [faithful worship]. 6 “True instruction was in his mouth [That is, he knew, loved, and kept God's Word and he taught that Word accurately to others], and unrighteousness was not found on his lips; [his speech indicated a clean heart] he walked with Me in peace and uprightness [not only his speech, but all of his life was characterized by faithfulness], and he turned many back from iniquity [Wonderful testimony. You can't turn others away from their sin when you're steeped in it yourself!].

7 “For the lips of a priest should preserve knowledge, and men should seek instruction from his mouth; for he is the messenger of the Lord of hosts.

8 “But as for you,

Note t/rest of v. 8 & compare it to vv. 6-7 ==>

you have turned aside from the way; you have caused many to stumble by the instruction; you have corrupted the covenant of Levi,” says the Lord of hosts.

You've not kept My Law // turned many back from iniquity // kept My Covt. w/Levi. Obedience brings blessing, disobedience brings cursing, so verse 9==>

9 “So I also have made you despised and abased before all the people, just as you are not keeping My ways, but are showing partiality in the instruction.

Sixth, God called the O.T. priests to obedient service

Five points that come right out of this passage in Malachi. A Priest, not unlike any who knew YHWH, had to have ==>

- 1) A life of personal holiness (obedience)
- 2) High regard for God's Word (love & respect for Scripture)
- 3) A Passion for God's Worship (innate hunger to see Him glorified)
- 4) A Desire to Proclaim the supremacy of God to all people (Evangelism)
- 5) A Desire to serve God & His people (heart of a servant)

Turn back to 1 Peter

I'm not done w/Malachi. I want you to rethink those 5 points in light of 1 Peter chapters 1-2 & in t/context of you being an indiv. Priest before Gd.

1st point from Malachi as to what was to characterize an obed. priest ==>

- 1) A life of personal holiness (cf. 1:14-16)
- 2) High esteem for God's Word (1:22-25)
- 3) A passion for God's Worship (2:5, cf. 4:11)
- 4) A desire to spread the supremacy of God (2:9)
- 5) A desire to serve God & His people (1:22 - one aspect of serving one another; entirety of chapter 2 expands on that theme of service, to God & men.)

Let me bring this all back to our main point ==>

I. The Church As A Royal Priesthood (vv. 4-10)

A. Established in the Living Stone (4) *This is the Source of our Priesthood*

IOW - t/source of our priesthood as believers is t/Living Stone of t/CH.
And coming to Him as the Living Stone, having been rejected by men—but chosen by God and precious [to Him].

B. Erected as a Spiritual Temple (5) *This is the Structure of our Priesthood*

3 Ideas in this v. 1) The Nature of the Temple; The Paradox of the Temple; The Service of the Temple.

1. The Nature of the Temple: We are Living Stones

IOW - we are t/stones that make up this spiritual Temple of God.
You also, as living stones, are being built up as a spiritual house for a holy priesthood . . .

a. This is all metaphorical or spiritual

Not talking about literal stones // literal house/temple // literal priesthood.
We are living stones sovereignly chosen out of t/quarry of sin, t/rock pile of humanity, we are made alive by The Living Stone (v. 4). He made us alive with Him (that's Eph. 2:5). God shaped you & placed you in t/unique spot he had for you in His spiritual temple, t/CH. He made you a holy, sanctified, set-apart priest, fit for serving & worshipping Him.

"Saints likewise are compared to stones; they lie in the same quarry, and are the same by nature as the rest of mankind, till dug out and separated from thence by the powerful and efficacious grace of God, when they are hewn, and made fit for the spiritual building; where both for their ornament, beauty, and strength, which they receive from Christ, they are compared to stones, and are

lasting and durable, and will never perish, nor be removed out of the building: and because of that life which they derive from him, and have in him, they are called “lively”, or “living stones”; the spirit of life having entered into them, a principle of life being implanted in them, and coming to Christ, the living stone, they live upon him, and he lives in them; and his grace in them is a well of living water, springing up into eternal life." [Gill]

2. The Paradox of the Temple: We are both a Spiritual House and a Holy Priesthood

Some commentators have said that we can't be both. We can't possibly be t/Temple AND t/Priests that minister in t/Temple. Why not? We're talking about spiritual imagery.

Maybe a bit of a paradox, but no more so that the paradox of JC being both t/Lamb that was slain as a perfect sacrifice & t/great H.P. offering t/sacrifice. Hey, if He can be both t/sacrificer & t/sacrificee we can be both t/Temple & t/Priests. Could look at it this way, X is also pictured as the Great High priest (Hebrews) & here he's pictured as t/Cornerstone of t/Temple.

You also, as living stones, are being built up as a spiritual house for a holy priesthood . . . [You are t/living stones that make up t/spiritual house, and that for t/purpose of serving as holy priests before Him]

That's our third point under this verse. The first was ==>

1. The Nature of the Temple: We are Living Stones

2. The Paradox of the Temple: We are both a Spiritual House and a Holy Priesthood

3. The Service of the Temple: We are to offer Spiritual Sacrifices

a. Here's the purpose (note the purpose clause)

You also, as living stones, are being built up as a spiritual house for a holy priesthood [why? to what end? for what reason?] to offer up spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ.

(1) We offer spiritual sacrifices

Think about t/O.T. priesthood. Primary purpose of t/Priests was to intercede between t/people & God; they offered animal sacrifices typifying coming Lamb of God.

(a) On Yom Kippur (DOA) . . .

DOA served as a reminder that daily, weekly, monthly sacrifices made at t/altar of burnt offering were not sufficient to atone for sin. On this day, t/H.P. dressed in a simple white garment (purity) & offered sacr. for him & t/people. A bull & a goat were sacrificed. Then t/priest took a live goat, laying his hands on it's head he confessed over it t/sin of Israel. That goat was taken & driven out into t/wilderness symbolizing t/removal of t/sins of Israel. (escape goat ==> scape goat).

H.P. priest had to offer sin offerings ea. year for his own sins & t/sins of the people. This annual repetition served as a reminder that perfect atonement had not yet been provided.

(b) Our escape goat was not a goat at all, but a Lamb

Book of Hebrews interprets t/DOA as a type of t/work of X. His sacrifice was perfect; He did what t/blood of bulls & goats could never do. In t/OT, t/H.P. entered t/holy of holies w/the blood of t/sacrifice. JC, our great H.P. entered heaven itself as t/Lamb slain for His people.

The bloody repetitious sacrifices of t/OT economy were rendered unnecessary under t/New Covt. X fulfilled all of those "shadows" (Colossians 2:17).

This side of t/cross we are priests, not offering animal sacrifices; we offer up spiritual sacrifices. (Spiritual sacrifices corresponds to spiritual house; sacrifices are spiritual, just as t/P.H. is spiritual).

b. BTW - Note "to offer up"

This is t/usual OT term (LXX) for "offering up" a sacrifice. It is lit. to "bring up to" t/altar of sacrifice. Altars were usually raised up platforms & t/person lit. offered up t/sacrifice. Same imagery used here, only these are "spiritual sacrifices."

(2) You say, "What are "spiritual sacrifices?"

Glad you asked! 7 Ideas . . . (keep it brief; ea. could be a sermon in itself).

(1) Prayers of the saints (A Life of Prayer)

Rem. John's vision in t/book of Rev. In chapter 5:8 -

And when He had taken the book, the four living creatures and the twenty-four elders fell down before the Lamb, having each one a harp, and golden bowls full of incense, which are the prayers of the saints.

Psalm 141:2 May my prayer be counted as incense before Thee;
The lifting up of my hands as the evening offering.

(2) Reverence for God (A Life of Worship)

Psalm 50:14-15,23 14 "Offer to God a sacrifice of thanksgiving, And pay your vows to the Most High; 15 And call upon Me in the day of trouble; I shall rescue you, and you will honor Me." 23 "He who offers a sacrifice of thanksgiving honors Me; And to him who orders his way aright I shall show the salvation of God."

Hebrews 13:15 Through Him then, let us continually offer up a sacrifice of praise to God, that is, the fruit of lips that give thanks to His name.

1 Peter 4:11 Whoever speaks, let him speak, as it were, the utterances of God; whoever serves, let him do so as by the strength which God supplies; so that in all things God may be glorified through Jesus Christ, to whom belongs the glory and dominion forever and ever. Amen.

(3) Intense love for one another (A Life of Love)

Saw that in 1 Peter - 1:22 {read}

1 Peter 4:8 Above all, keep fervent in your love for one another, because love covers a multitude of sins.

(4) Evangelism of the Lost (A Life of Proclamation)

See that also in 1 Peter - 2:9 {read}

(5) Spirit of humility (A Life of Brokenness)

Psalm 51:17 The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit; A broken and a contrite heart, O God, Thou wilt not despise.

"Nothing sets a person so much out of the devil's reach as humility...Real humiliation is what all the most glorious hypocrites, who make the most splendid show of mortification to the world, and high religious affection, grossly fail in...Pure Christian humility disposes a person to take notice of every thing that is good in others, and to make the best of it, and to diminish their failings..." -Jonathan Edwards.

"We may easily be too big for God to use, but never too small." [D.L. Moody]

(6) Totality of our Lives (A Life of Sacrifice)

Romans 12:1-2 1 I urge you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies a living and holy sacrifice, acceptable to God, which is your spiritual service of worship.2 And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what the will of God is, that which is good and acceptable and perfect.

The ancient Roman philosopher Seneca was said to have had a very poor student. And when the other students gave Seneca nice gifts, the poor student came to him ashamed saying, "I have nothing but myself to give." Seneca replied, "It is well, and I will endeavor to give you back to yourself better than I received from you." [Leighton, 88]

Isn't this true of our God? He asks that we give Him a sacrifice of our very lives. In return, we are transformed from those who are among the

scrapheap of history to those with an eternal inheritance. He takes us & makes us better than we were before.

(7) Sanctified Walk (A Life of Holiness)

1 Peter 1:14-16 {read}

Hebrews 13:16 . . . do not neglect doing good and sharing; for with such sacrifices God is pleased.

Just in case you haven't noticed, our seven points spell out the word in acrostic fashion, PRIESTS {restate}

c. Any sacrifice given to God must be acceptable

Certainly something we learn from t/O.T. Couldn't just bring anything anyway. The animals had to be w/o blemish. Had to be right. (cf. Nadab & Abihu who offered "strange fire" before t/Lord & God consumed them in his anger).

(1) So Peter adds at the end of the verse ==>

... acceptable to God through Jesus Christ.

It's always because it's "through Him" (cf. 1:21). This is t/basis for t/acceptability of our sacrifices. They are offered thru our great H.P., JC.

"There is never found in our sacrifices such purity, that they are of themselves acceptable to God; our self-denial is never entire and complete, our prayers are never so sincere as they ought to be, we are never so zealous and so diligent in doing good, but that our works are imperfect, and mingled with many vices. Nevertheless, Christ procures favor for them. . . . they are accepted, not of the merit of their own excellency, but through Christ." [John Calvin, 65-66]

In & through Him we are priests clothed w/robes of righteousness. Robes not our own, but those won for us by Him. Is He your great H.P.?