

Message Twelve

A Kingdom of Priests

Scripture Reading: Exo. 19:4-6a;
1 Pet. 2:5, 9; Rev. 1:6; 5:10

I. “You shall be to Me a kingdom of priests”—Exo. 19:6a:

- A. God chose the Israelites to be a kingdom of priests; He wanted the whole nation to be priests, and His salvation was to obtain a kingdom of priests—v. 4:
 - 1. The Lord brought the children of Israel out of Egypt in order to make them a kingdom of priests, a kingdom in which everyone would be a priest, one who serves God; hence, God’s goal was to have a priestly nation—v. 6a:
 - a. This nation was to be different from all other nations on earth, for all the people of this nation would be priests—those who live solely for God’s interests and serve Him.
 - b. Every person in the nation would have one unique occupation—serving God.
 - 2. The priests wait on God and follow God, and their job is to serve God; the whole nation of Israel was to be a nation of priests serving God; everyone in this kingdom was to serve God alone—v. 6a; Rom. 1:9.
- B. What is depicted in the Old Testament is merely a picture; in the New Testament we have the reality—1 Pet. 2:5, 9:
 - 1. God’s intention toward the church today is for everyone to be a priest; we are a kingdom of priests—Rev. 5:10.
 - 2. The Lord Jesus, the Priest, brought us into the priesthood through His redemption, and the whole church should now be the priesthood—1:5-6.
 - 3. All the saved ones are called to be priests; as to our person, we are sons of God (Eph. 1:5; Heb. 2:10), and as to our spiritual occupation, we are priests of God (Rev. 1:6; 5:10).
 - 4. Since we are priests, we should be serving God all day long in whatever we do—Rom. 1:9.

II. In order to realize what a priest is, we need to see God’s eternal plan—Eph. 3:11; Gen. 1:26:

- A. God’s plan is to work Himself into a group of people in order that He might be their life and that they might be His expression—Eph. 3:16-17a, 21; Col. 3:4.

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- B. From the beginning to the end of the Bible, God wants to gain a priesthood; all the glorious things in the Bible are related to the priesthood—Rev. 21:11; 22:3b.
- C. Man was destined and created to receive God, to be filled, saturated, and permeated with God, and to have God flow out of him so that he might be a living expression of God; this is a brief definition of a priest.

III. As one who serves God continually, a priest is a particular kind of person:

- A. A priest is a person who serves God by enjoying God in Christ—Rom. 1:9; Gal. 5:22.
- B. A priest is a person who serves God through Christ as the reality of the offerings—1 Pet. 2:5.
- C. A genuine priest of God is one who serves God with Christ, through Christ, and by Christ—Phil. 1:8; Col. 1:27-28; 2:9-10.
- D. A priest is a person who enjoys Christ—Phil. 3:1; Eph. 3:8.
- E. A priest is a person who lives by Christ; his eating, clothing, and dwelling are Christ—John 6:57b; Gal. 3:27; John 15:4.
- F. A priest is a person who contacts God in the mingling with God—1 Cor. 6:17.
- G. A priest is one who is absolutely and thoroughly mingled with God—John 14:20.
- H. A priest is one who becomes a part of God's dwelling, God's house—1 Pet. 2:5.
- I. A priest is a person who bears the testimony of God—Rev. 1:2, 9.
- J. A priest is a person who ministers Christ to others—Rom. 15:16; 2 Cor. 4:5.
- K. A priest is one who brings man into fellowship with God and brings God into fellowship with man—1 John 1:3.
- L. A priest is a person who builds up the dwelling place of God—Eph. 2:21-22.
- M. A priest is a person who is a laboring priest of the gospel of God—Rom. 15:16.

IV. To be a priest is not mainly to do something for the Lord but to be taken over by Him—Eph. 3:17a:

- A. The main function of a priest is not to work but to spend time

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in the presence of the Lord until he is one with Him in spirit—
2 Cor. 3:18; 1 Cor. 6:17.

- B. The Lord's intention is for us to open ourselves to Him and let Him come into us to fill us, saturate us, and be one with us; then He will do something through us, and whatever He does will flow out of Himself—Rev. 22:1-2.
- C. The priesthood that God desires to have is a corporate man who is saturated and permeated with Himself—Eph. 3:17a; 4:23-24; 5:18b:
 - 1. If we are saturated and permeated with the glory of the Lord, we will be one with Him and one with one another in Him—2 Cor. 3:18; John 17:22, 24.
 - 2. If we realize the desire of God's heart, we will be fully open to Him so that He may flood us with Himself—Eph. 1:5, 9; 3:17a.
 - 3. All Christian work and service must issue out of this priesthood—Acts 13:1-2.

V. As a kingdom of priests, we are both a holy priesthood and a royal priesthood—Rev. 5:10; 1 Pet. 2:5, 9:

- A. The holy priesthood is typified by the order of Aaron, and the royal priesthood is typified by the order of Melchizedek—Exo. 29:1, 4; Gen. 14:18; Heb. 2:17; 6:20.
- B. The order of Aaron is the holy order—1 Pet. 2:5:
 - 1. To be holy is to be separated from the worldly things unto God—1:16.
 - 2. The holy order is an order separated from common things unto the divine things and unto the use of the Lord.
 - 3. The holy priests are those who are separated to go to God to represent God's people—2:5.
- C. The order of Melchizedek is the royal order—v. 9; Gen. 14:18:
 - 1. Melchizedek was a king, and he was a kingly priest—Heb. 7:1.
 - 2. The kingly priests come from God to care for God's people, just as Melchizedek came from God to meet Abraham to minister bread and wine to him—Gen. 14:18-19.
- D. On the one hand, we are the holy priests, going to God to represent God's people; on the other hand, we are the royal priests, coming from God to the people to represent God—1 Pet. 2:5, 9:

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1. The holy priesthood offers spiritual sacrifices to God (v. 5), and the kingly priesthood tells out the virtues of God (v. 9).
2. The holy priests offer something to God for the sake of the people, and the royal priests declare the things of God to people.
3. We are the holy priests and the kingly priests, going and coming in two directions.

VI. The building of God's house is related to the priesthood and depends on the priesthood—Exo. 19:6a; 25:8-9; Zech. 6:12-13; 1 Pet. 2:5:

- A. The building of God as the dwelling place of God is the priesthood; the holy priesthood is the spiritual house—Eph. 2:21-22; 1 Pet. 2:5.
- B. The priesthood upholds the building of the church; without the priesthood it is impossible to build up the church.
- C. The building of the church depends on whether or not the saints will bear the priesthood before God—Heb. 3:6; 6:20; 7:26; 8:1; 10:19.
- D. If we are willing to come forward to God, fellowship with God, live before God, and allow God to flow through us, we will enjoy the riches of Christ and express the glory of Christ in a full way; in this way we will bear the testimony of the church, and the building of the church will be realized among us—11:6; 1 John 1:3; Eph. 3:8; 2:21-22.
- E. In order to recover the building of God, God must first recover the priesthood—Ezra 1:1-4; 7:1-7.

VII. The Lord's recovery is the recovery of the priesthood—Zech. 3:1-5; 6:12-13; Hag. 1:8, 12, 14:

- A. What the Lord needs today is a group of people who are brought into His presence and even into the Lord Himself until they are one with Him—Heb. 10:19; 2 Cor. 3:18; John 17:22, 24.
- B. When the Lord has such a priesthood—a kingdom of priests—He will have the freedom to flow out and work out His will for the fulfillment of His eternal purpose—Eph. 1:5, 9, 11; Phil. 2:13; Rev. 4:11.