

REVISITING THE BELIEVER'S POSITIONAL RICHES IN CHRIST

Part XVIII: Applying The Truth That ALL Believers Are Partakers Of A Holy And Royal Priesthood

I. Introduction

- A. The Roman Catholic Church puts a sharp distinction between its priesthood and its laity, stating in the Council of Trent, "The priest is . . . the minister of God . . . holding as they do among us the power and authority of the immortal God." (Lorraine Boettner, Roman Catholicism, 1978, p. 51) A Roman Catholic book, carrying the "imprimatur of the Archbishop of Ottawa, Canada," asserts: "The priest holds the place of God," Ibid.
- B. However, one of the 33 positional truths that **EVERY** believer possesses the instant he trusts in Christ as his Savior is that he is a member of a holy and a royal priesthood. (Lewis S. Chafer, Systematic Theology, vol. III, "Soteriology," p. 251) Applying this truth causes the believer to live above all errant, man-made distinctions between a human priesthood and laity and to have an invaluable ministry with great eternal value (as follows):

II. Applying The Truth That ALL Believers Are Partakers Of A Holy And Royal Priesthood.

- A. Peter taught that **all** believers in Christ (1 Peter 1:1) are part of a holy (2:5) and a royal (2:9) priesthood.
- B. To understand what this claim meant to Peter's Hebrew Christian readers (1 Peter 1:1 where *diaspora* rendered "scattered" (KJV) referred to believing Jews scattered among the Gentiles, Arndt & Gingrich, A Grk.-Eng. Lex. of the N. T., 1967, p. 187), and noting that Peter was an apostle primarily to his fellow Hebrew countrymen, Galatians 2:9], we trace the development of the priesthood in Scriptural history as follows:
 1. Abraham, the father of the Hebrew nation, paid tithes to his **superior**, Melchizedek, a **priest** whose **name means** "king of righteousness," Genesis 14:18-20; Hebrews 7:6-7. Melchizedek was thus a king-priest.
 2. God then set up a priesthood from Abraham's seed of the line of Levi, and Levi's seed ministered in behalf of Israel's other tribes as inferior to the order of Melchizedek seen by the fact that all Hebrews in Abraham were inferior to Melchizedek since Abraham paid tithes to him, Numbers 3:6-10; Hebrews 7:4-11.
 3. The Lord then promised that if Israel heeded Him, He would make her a **kingdom of priests**, Ex. 19:5-6.
 4. Israel failed to heed the Lord as she ought, so the nation failed to be able to approach God individually without the mediation of the priests in the Aaronic priesthood, Hebrews 7:5.
 5. However, in vastly superior contrast to the order Israel had with God under the Law, when Christ died on the cross, He forged a new relationship for those who would believe on Him in the Church so that, by **grace, EVERY believer** would be part of a **kingdom of priests**, what Israel **failed** to attain, 1 Peter 2:5, 9!
 6. In addition, **Christ** became the **Ultimate King-Priest** after the **order of Melchizedek**, Hebrews 6:20-8:13.
 7. Thus, **EVERY believer** in the **Church** needs no other mortal mediator before God except his Great High Priest (Heb. 4:14) and Ultimate King-Priest, the Lord Jesus Christ Himself! (1 Timothy 2:5)
- C. This royal priesthood provides priceless opportunities for eternally valuable, lasting service (as follows):
 1. As a **member** of the Ultimate King-Priest's **holy priesthood**, **every** believer may go to God in prayer in behalf of man's needs (1 Thess. 5:17; Rom. 5:2) as well as testify to others on God's behalf. (Rom. 15:16)
 2. As a **member** of the Ultimate King-Priest's **holy priesthood**, **every** believer may offer up acceptable sacrifices of praise from his lips by testimony, prayer and song, Hebrews 13:15; Ephesians 5:18-19.
 3. As a **member** of the Ultimate King Priest's **holy priesthood**, **every** believer may offer up his body as a living sacrifice, exercising his spiritual gift to serve God with eternal results, Rom. 12:1-3; 1 John 2:15-17.
 4. As a **member** of the Ultimate King-Priest's **royal priesthood**, **every** believer will rule forever with Christ beginning with Christ's Millennial Kingdom and stretching into eternity, Revelation 1:6; 5:10 with 22:3c.

Lesson: (1) *Unlike believers under the Mosaic Law, we who trust in Christ today need no other mortal but our Mediator Jesus Christ to interact on our behalf before God, but we are each members of a kingdom of priests who may intercede in prayer to God for men and speak to men in God's behalf with eternally lasting results.* (2) *We each function as priests by witnessing the Gospel, testifying the truth, praying, singing and using our spiritual gifts to edify fellow believers.* (3) *As royal priests, we will each one day rule with our Lord Jesus Christ!*

Application: (1) *May we NOT make an artificial, man-made distinction between a special "priesthood class" and a "laity class" in the Church, but view ourselves as believers as ALL belonging to God's royal priesthood with ONE Mediator between us and God, the Lord Jesus Christ.* (2) *May ALL of us believers as priests (a) minister to God in man's behalf via intercessory prayer and (b) minister to men in God's behalf by witnessing, testifying, singing and using our spiritual gifts to reach the lost and edifying fellow believers in Christ.* (3) *May ALL of us believers as royal priests anticipate our one day ruling with our Lord Jesus Christ at His Millennial Kingdom!*