

TITLE: A Royal Priesthood (Part 1)

PASSAGE: 1 Peter 2:4

THEME: The Believer's Priesthood

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Read Passage

This Passage Speaks of the Believer's Priesthood

An entire theol. concept that's central to t/Xn life, yet that is so neglected today. Few Xns realize that they are individual priests before God, serving in a spiritual temple known as t/CH.

Wasn't something new as far as God's people were concerned. Can go back to t/O.T. economy – early on – only 3 mo. after the Exodus of Israel from Egyptian bondage. Israel camps in t/wilderness of Sinai in front of Mt. Sinai. Moses goes up t/mountain and God/YHWH calls to him from the mountain, saying,

“Thus you shall say to the house of Jacob and tell the sons of Israel: 4 ‘You yourselves have seen what I did to the Egyptians, and how I bore you on eagles’ wings, and brought you to Myself.5 ‘Now then, if you will indeed obey My voice and keep My covenant, then you shall be My own possession among all the peoples, for all the earth is Mine;6 and you shall be to Me a kingdom of priests and a holy nation.’ These are the words that you shall speak to the sons of Israel.” [Exodus 19:4-6]

So Moses goes down and calls the people together, he tells them what God commanded, and all the people answer saying, “All that the Lord has spoken we will do!”

Of course, they didn't. Spent 40 years in t/wilderness as punishment for their sin.

But it was within t/prerogative of God to make t/entire nation of Israel a nation of believer-priests. That wasn't in t/plan of God; was a promise was ultimately fulfilled in t/NT CH as we see in 1 Peter 2 (cf. v. 9).

That was a familiar New Testament theme . . .

Every Xn is a priest before God. Every Xn can go directly to God in prayer, to confess their sin, to fellowship & worship. You no longer need a priestly class to mediate between common man & God. Reason is because we have a great High Priest, JC.

This is one of the great themes of the book of Hebrews

Hebrews is replete with references to Jesus' High priestly ministry on our behalf, a ministry that makes us priests before our God.

2:14-18

{Read vv. 14-15} - The way to defeat Satan was to rob him of his #1 weapon: death. God's very nature demanded t/penalty of death for sin. Satan knew that & used it to rob men of t/joy of eternal life. Death is one certainty in life & t/No. 1 fear of men. Fear of death enslaves men. Victory of X meant that the sting of death is no more. Phil. 1:21; 1 Cor. 15:55

{Read v. 16} - X didn't come to redeem fallen angels; if He had He would have taken on a nature such as they had. He came to redeem fallen men & so took on himself their nature. Why? ==>

{Read v. 17} - Propitiation = satisfaction of God's wrath.

{Read v. 18}

4:14 - 5:10

Melch. (who is a type of X or some think a Xophany) appears in Gen. 14:18 where he is called King of Salem & a priest of the most High God. Melch. was a priest centuries before Aaron held t/High Priesthood. He was a King (Aaronic priesthood was not a kingly priesthood); He was a priest perpetually, whereas Aaronic priesthood was temporary. Plus X was not born of t/tribe of Levi, but t/tribe of Judah, so his priesthood had to be different from that of Aaron.

7:22-28

9:1-22

10:11-14

High Priesthood of X has made it possible for us to be individual priests before God. ==>

10:19-25

All of this was a feeble attempt to show you how essential t/ministry of JC is as our High Priest and how as a result of his ministry, we are a kingdom of priests before God.

Revelation 1:6 and He has made us to be a kingdom, priests to His God and Father; to Him be the glory and the dominion forever and ever. Amen.

Do you know who you are? You are a K.D. of Priests!

Aren't you grateful that you don't have to report to a "grand poobah priest" so that he can offer sacrifices on your behalf (sac. that couldn't remove sin anyway)? // you can pray to God directly (don't have to pray through mediators like saints, or human agents like church leaders) // The barrier between you and God (your sin) has been payed for at t/cross.

These wonderful truths were quickly lost in the rubble of early church history

Shortly after t/death of t/last Apostle, men such as Ignatius of Antioch (2d c.), & other early CH leaders such as Cyprian in t/3rd c. began to teach that a single pastor or bishop had ultimate authority in t/CH.

Men love power & as t/saying goes "power corrupts & absolute power corrupts absolutely"

Wasn't long afterward that a baptism or communion service couldn't be held w/o t/presence of a single bishop who was in authority over many CHs.

Over t/centuries that degenerated into 100s years of darkness led by blind, professional clergymen who knew more about political CH dogma than they did about t/Bible.

Problem was that t/people, t/working class, knew nothing about t/Bible. All they knew was that t/CH & t/professional priesthood was in absolute authority over them & even their souls.

One can even think of t/word "Pontiff" which comes from the Latin "pontifex" which meant "priest" or, more literally, "a bridge builder." It was believed that a priest/pope was needed to bridge the gap between men and God. That was something that mere man could never do. It took t/God-Man to do it.

1 Timothy 2:5 For there is one God, and one mediator also between God and men, the man Christ Jesus,

This was a time of great darkness

Some of you may have heard of the Latin phrase that describes the 16th c. reformation: "*Post Tenebras Lux*" (after darkness, light). God delivered us, delivered t/CH from t/damning darkness of men & restored unto us t/saving truths of t/light.

Sola Scriptura/Fide/Gratia; Solus Christus; Soli Deo Gloria ==> t/light was rising w/the ministry of such men as Wycliffe, Hus, Luther, Tyndale, Calvin. "*Post Tenebras Lux*"

All of these men and those who followed them were persecuted; some of them were martyred. Huss was burned to death under the decree of the Rom. Cath. CH (died singing a hymn). Wycliffe's bones were dug up several decades after his death; they were burned to powder & thrown into t/Swift river. Tyndale was condemned, strangled, and burned at t/stake. His last words were: "Lord, Open the King of England's Eyes." "*Post Tenebras Lux*"

They not only died for *Sola Scriptura/Fide/Gratia*. They died for upholding t/Priesthood of t/individual believer as against t/formal priesthood of t/Institutional CH. They knew that those doctrines {cite} would be meaningless apart from the fact that a humble believer could come to God on his own.

Taking his stand on Scripture, Martin Luther declared that

"All Christians are altogether priests, and let it be anathema to assert there is any other priest than he who is Christian; for it will be asserted without the Word of God, on no authority but the sayings of men, or the antiquity of custom, or the multitude of those that think so. . . Every shoemaker can be a priest of God."

Luther saw from this very passage in 1 Peter, that all believers are priests, not just the Roman Catholic "priesthood."

"Not only are we the freest of kings, we are also priests forever, which is far more excellent than being kings, for as priests we are worthy to appear before God to pray for others and to teach one another divine things." ["Martin Luther--The Early Years," Christian History, no. 34]

Through JC, our H.P. we have access to God. We may enter the holy of holies! Why writer to Hebrews says,

4:16 Let us therefore draw near with confidence to the throne of grace, that we may receive mercy and may find grace to help in time of need.

10:19 Since therefore, brethren, we have confidence to enter the holy place by the blood of Jesus,

Bring you back to our text . . .

This is a section of Script. filled w/quotes from and allusions to t/OT. Direct quotes in vv. 6,7,8,9,10.

Passage that parallels t/theme of God's sovereignty in t/salvation of sinners, much as does Romans 9.

In fact, some of t/O.T. quotes that Peter uses here, Paul also uses there (quotes from Hosea and Isaiah).

Key Verse/Central Idea of the Passage = v. 5.

With that central idea in mind ==>

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

Three main points in this section

A. Established in the Living Stone (4)

B. Erected as a Spiritual Temple (5)

C. Elected as the People of God (6-10)

All three of these points relate to our main point {cite} as well as the key verse in t/passage (v. 5).

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 - the source of our priesthood as believers is the Living Stone of t/CH (JC - what we saw in Hebrews).

1. We could put it this way: Christ is Our Life (4a)

That is t/truth of t/Xn life. JC is t/believer's life. We belong to Him.

Colossians 3:3-4 **For you have died and your life is hidden with Christ in God. When Christ, who is our life, is revealed, then you also will be revealed with Him in glory.**

That's what we see here in v. 4==>

And coming to Him as the Living Stone . . .

The idea of "coming to Him" encompasses all that is our salvation. From the verb ==>

a. προσερχόμαι (pres. ptcp)

This takes the regular word "to come" in Gk. (ερχομαι) and adds t/prep. προς to it. This intensifies t/idea. This isn't any run of t/mill coming to X (approaching him for a favor or an autograph - imagine what that would sell for on Ebay - a genuine autograph of t/eternal SOG!).

No, this is drawing near to Christ in intimate fellowship, passionate worship. This is another reference to their salvation. We come to Christ who is the living stone because He alone can give life.

Drawing near to Christ for intimacy, growth, fellowship.

Word that's used t/o Hebrews for "drawing near in worship" (Heb. 4:16, 7:25, 10:1, 10:22, 11:6, 12:18, 22). It's an initial coming followed by a continual coming. It's justification and sanctification & perseverance.

b. We come to him as the Living Stone

Clearly there a ref. to the Res. of X. He lives. What He said to t/disciples He says to us ==>

JOH 14:19 ". . . because I live, you shall live also."

See the same thing in 1:3 ==>

Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who according to His great mercy has caused us to be born again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead,

He is the living stone by virtue of his resurrection from the dead.

c. BTW - a λιθος (word translated "stone")

most generally refers to a building stone. A stone that is perfectly cut, designed, shaped, to be a cornerstone. We see this t/o t/passage where X is ref. to as a "Living Stone" (v. 4); a "Chosen Stone" and a "Precious Cornerstone" (v. 6); "The Stone" and "Chief Corner" (v. 7); "A Stone of stumbling and a Rock of offense" (v. 8). Common theme!

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

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

1. Christ is Our Life (4a)

2. He is Our High Priest (4b)

Saw that in our Jet-Tour of t/book of Hebrews earlier.

And coming to Him as the Living Stone, having been rejected by men—but chosen by God and precious [to Him].

a. His Rejection by Men (4b)

The fact that t/messiah would be rejected by men was no secret. As we saw in 1:11, t/OT prophets predicted His suffering. Much of that suffering came at t/hands of sinful men.

Grammatically, the idea is that He was examined, scrutinized if you will, and then rejected or considered as worthless.

(1) The Jewish leaders rejected Him

They were looking for t/Messiah. Jesus claimed to be t/Christ. Problem was that He didn't fit their expectations. He broke t/Sabbath in their minds anyway (they didn't realize that He was the God of t/Sabbath!); He received tax-gatherers and sinners; He criticized their religion! (can't do that; c'mon, where's your tolerance!).

So they rejected him & along w/the masses they traded Him in for a worthless thief named Barabbas. They delivered t/sinless Lamb of God to the Romans to be slaughtered as a common criminal.

Yet, all of this was part of the predestined plan of God. He had to be rejected in order to be crucified and die for t/sin of t/world!

Did that make the rejection any less of a sin? No! They were still accountable for their sin, even though God used that sin to accomplish His purposes.

Acts 2:22-23 22 “Men of Israel, listen to these words: Jesus the Nazarene, a man attested to you by God with miracles and wonders and signs which God performed through Him in your midst, just as you yourselves know—23 this Man, delivered up by the predetermined plan and foreknowledge of God, you nailed to a cross by the hands of godless men and put Him to death.

Acts 4:27-28 27 “For truly in this city there were gathered together against Thy holy servant Jesus, whom Thou didst anoint, both Herod and Pontius Pilate, along with the Gentiles and the peoples of Israel,28 to do whatever Thy hand and Thy purpose predestined to occur.

(2) That rejection continues throughout history

When Peter says as he does in v. 4 that Christ is ==>

... **the Living Stone, rejected by men . . .**

He includes the fact that men continue to reject Him. Look at vv. 7 & 8.

He is, for those who don't believe in Him {read vv. 7-8}

b. His Reception by God (4b)

. . . having been rejected by men—but chosen by God and precious [to Him].

Contrast: Christ was rejected by men, but chosen by God. Men said "no" God, the Father, said "yes!"

(1) He was chosen by the Father

Saying the same thing we saw in 1:20 {read}. He was the chosen instrument of our salvation. Part of God's eternal plan. Not like the Godhead got together & said, we're bored, lets create some men and let them fall so that we can redeem them." The plan was eternal (God was always a Savior).

Prophet Isaiah calls Him God's "chosen one"

ISA 42:1 "Behold, My Servant, whom I uphold; My chosen one {in whom} My soul delights. I have put My Spirit upon Him; He will bring forth justice to the nations.

MIC 5:2 "But as for you, Bethlehem Ephrathah, {Too} little to be among the clans of Judah, From you One will go forth for Me to be ruler in Israel. His goings forth are from long ago, From the days of eternity."

That which was planned in all eternity came to pass in time ==>
GAL 4:4 **But when the fulness of the time came, God sent forth His Son, born of a woman, born under the Law,**

... having been rejected by men—but chosen by God and precious [to Him].

(2) He's not only chosen but He's precious (ΕΥΤΙΜΟΣ)

"Of great value"

If I can make some connections here by way of application; let me bring you 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

1. Christ is Our Life (4a)

(2) Our Rejection by Men and Reception by God

I believe Peter adds this here not only to exalt X, but to encourage his readers. You may be experiencing the pain of rejection because of your faith in X.

How many men & women are rejected by unbelieving spouses?

Coworkers will reject you; friends will reject you; schoolmates will reject you; neighbors will reject you; strangers will reject you; family members will reject you.

What did Jesus say?

John 15:18 **"If the world hates you, you know that it has hated Me before it hated you."**

If JC was and is rejected by men, should we not expect any less?

Matthew 5:10-12 10 “Blessed are those who have been persecuted for the sake of righteousness, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.11 “Blessed are you when men cast insults at you, and persecute you, and say all kinds of evil against you falsely, on account of Me.12 “Rejoice, and be glad, for your reward in heaven is great, for so they persecuted the prophets who were before you.

There will always be those who reject us because of what we, as believers, stand for. They will reject us because we proclaim the gospel (good news). For those whom God calls, that gospel will be received and we will be received. But the rest will reject it and us, but that's okay.

{read vv. 7-8}

Men may and will reject us & reject what we stand for. But we are chosen in God's sight & precious to Him. Better to be chosen by God and rejected by men than chosen by men and rejected by God.

We've just set the stage for this chapter

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A. Established in the Living Stone (4)

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