

Who Are These Priests of the Lord?

We are talking about the priesthood of all believers. The priesthood of *all* believers? Yes. And this vital point must not be forgotten. *All* believers. That's what the Bible speaks of. The priesthood of *all* believers.

Let me prove it. I have already quoted the passage, but it bears repeating. Peter, when he wrote his first letter, told his readers:

You also... are being built up a spiritual house, a holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ... You are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood (1 Pet. 2:4-10).

To whom was the apostle writing? Believers. But he was not only addressing believers of his own day. He was speaking to all believers then – and ever since. That is, he was addressing all who are members of the new covenant. *All* of them, I stress. No special class. Certainly not ministers or preachers or pastors (in the commonly-received way of using the words today). Just believers. Nevertheless, *all* believers. Not *some* believers, super-saints. *All* believers. According to Peter, all believers, the moment they are converted, become priests of the Lord in the new covenant. And every believer is as much a priest as any other. And each and every believer has all the qualifications and responsibilities of every aspect of the priesthood of all believers.

How do we know that? Well, to whom, precisely, does Peter address his letter? He tells us. I am writing, he says, to God's elect, those sanctified by the Spirit, those who are obedient to Christ and sprinkled by his blood; the regenerate; those who have tasted God's grace, who love Christ, who believe in him, and are saved, and find him precious; the called; the redeemed by Christ's blood; those who rejoice in Christ and have spiritual hope; those who have obeyed the truth; those who have a heavenly inheritance, who are being kept by God's power through faith for everlasting salvation; those who are the children of God (1 Pet. 1:1-25; 2:1-8).

Now *all* this is true of *all* believers, *all* the children of God. And it is as true today, as it was the day Peter wrote his letter. There is no exception; not one believer is left out. These are the

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people to whom Peter writes – the true children of God. And Peter tells all of them that *they* are the priests of God. So then, all the children of God, all believers – all of them – are ‘a chosen generation, a royal priesthood’. In short, all who have been freed from their sins by the blood of Christ are made into ‘a kingdom and priests to serve his God and Father’ (Rev. 1:6; see also 5:10; 20:6, all NIV).

So, reader, if you are a believer in the sense I have set out, you are a priest of God. You are one of whom it can be said: ‘Our great God and Saviour Jesus Christ... gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from every lawless deed and purify for himself his own special people, zealous for good works’ (Tit. 2:13-14). And one way of describing this ‘special-ness’, this ‘zealousness for good works’, is to say that believers are the Lord’s priests. *You* are a priest!

‘I believe in the priesthood of all believers’. Yet again, good! Christians should. It is a biblical doctrine. All Christians are these priests. But what of the practical outworking of it? Has ‘the priesthood of all believers’ made any real difference to your understanding of the Christian life and its daily experience? How has it affected you? If you are a believer, you are a priest of God – as much as any believer ever has been, is or ever will be. Can you point to anything in your life as a consequence of it? Do you know what it means to be a priest? What does it mean to *you*?

Let us see what the Bible tells us about it. In what follows, I admit you will find some repetition of previous points. I return to these matters, not only because of their importance, but, as far as possible, to let each section stand on its own.