

THE PRIESTHOOD OF ALL BELIEVERS

(Part 13 – series on Baptist Distinctives)

TEXT: 1 Peter 2:5, 9-10
Revelation 1:6; 5:10
Matthew 23:8-10

INTRODUCTION: Many Protestants hold with Baptists the truth that every believer has been made a “*king and priest unto God.*” Martin Luther loved 1 Peter 2:9 and cited it against the abusive and corrupt Roman Catholic priesthood. Baptists, however, tend to stress this belief more distinctively and contend for its consistent practice. Spurgeon, the late Baptist pastor of London, did not hide his contempt for the use of the word “priest” in the *Book of Common Prayer* of the Church of England.

Because Christ is the only Mediator between God and man (1 Tim. 2:5), every believer has both the privilege of direct access to God and the duty of intercession for saved and lost alike. It seems that no one denies the priesthood of believers, but few are willing to avail themselves of the power of that office!

OUTLINE: A true understanding of this doctrine will influence our other beliefs and our practice.

- I. **The Meaning of New Testament Priesthood**
- II. **The Qualifications of a New Testament Priest**
(Leviticus 8)
 - A. Cleansing
 1. The once-only bath (Isa. 1:18; Jn. 13:10)
 2. The frequent foot-washing (1 Jn. 1:9)
 - B. Clothing
 1. Coat (imputed righteousness)
 2. Girdle (faithfulness)
 3. “Bonnet” (“*for glory and for beauty*”)
 - C. Anointing (Ps. 133:2)
 - D. Consecrating (Lev. 8:24)
- III. **The Responsibilities of a Believer-Priest**
 - A. To offer “spiritual sacrifices” (1 Pet. 2:5)
 1. Our physical bodies (Rom. 12:1,2)
 2. Giving of ourselves for others (Phil. 2:17)

3. Our proclaiming of the Gospel (Rom. 15:16)
 4. The sacrificial giving of our means (Phil. 4:15-19; Heb. 13:16).
 5. Our praising God with our lips (Heb. 13:15; Hos. 14:2)
- B.** To boldly intercede (Heb. 4:14-16; 10:19-22)

IV. The Repudiation of Unscriptural Hierarchy

- A.** The two extremes
1. The error and doctrine of the Nicolaitans (Rev. 2:6,15)
 2. Laodicean rule
- B.** The disastrous results
1. Confession to human priest
 2. Priestly absolution (forgiveness)
 3. Transubstantiation
 4. The “infallibility” of the Pope (Matt. 23:8,9)
- C.** The biblical view of ordination

V. The Implications of New Testament Priesthood

- A.** Congregational polity
- B.** Unified mission
- C.** Related matters, cautions
1. Soul competency vs. “right of private interpretation”
 2. Soul liberty

CONCLUSION: We glory in both the finished work of Christ and His ongoing work of intercession. We cannot add to His finished work of propitiation and expiation, but He appeals to us to “watch” with Him for souls (Matt. 26:40) and “*fill up that which is behind [lacking] of the sufferings of Christ*” (Col. 1:24). Will we embrace the glorious privilege that is ours of drawing near to God and representing others to Him? The way of access has been cleared!

