

Biblical Themes - Priesthood

Class Outline:

1. The Priesthood Outlined
2. The Priesthood Patterned
3. The Priesthood Legislated
4. The Priesthood (Com)Promised & Anticipated
5. The Priesthood Fulfilled
6. The Priesthood Today
7. The Priesthood Applied

1. The Priesthood Outlined

- a. What is a priest?
 - i. Priests are consecrated mediators between God and his covenant people, who stand to serve at God's altar (1) sanctifying God's Holy Place, (2) sacrificing God's offerings, and (3) speaking God's covenant.
Hebrews 5:1-4
 - ii. The Levitical Priesthood... Specifically, the order of Aaron.
Hebrews 7:11
 - iii. Royal Priesthood was always the goal. We were meant to be "King Priests".
Exodus 19:6, 1 Peter 2:9

2. The Priesthood Patterned

- a. Evidence for the First Priest.
 - i. Adam is placed in a garden sanctuary.
Isaiah 51:3
 - ii. Being an "Image Bearer" necessitates "Priesthood". It does not necessitate "Holy Priesthood".
Genesis 1:26-28
 - iii. Adam is given a priestly commission to work/serve & keep/guard.
Genesis 2:15, Numbers 8:25-26

- iv. The rest of the Bible presents Adam as a priest.
Ezekiel 28:11-14
- b. Echoes of Eden: Priesthood in the Patriarchs.
 - i. Noah is represented as a King Priest by his building/sacrificing on an altar & blessing he offers.
Genesis 8:20-21, 9:26-27
 - ii. Abraham is represented as a King Priest by his intercession before God for Sodom & his (near) sacrifice of Isaac.
Genesis 18:22-26 & Genesis 22:10
- c. The Enigma of the Priesthood: A Priest Like Melchizedek.
Genesis 14:17-24

*And Melchizedek king of Salem brought out bread and wine. (He was priest of God Most High.)
And he blessed him and said,*

*“Blessed be Abram by God Most High,
Possessor of heaven and earth;
and blessed be God Most High,
who has delivered your enemies into your hand!”*

And Abram gave him a tenth of everything.

- i. Abraham honors Melchizedek by eating and drinking with him, blesses Melchizedek’s God, and tithes to Melchizedek.

“Melchizedek provides a glimpse of what Adam might have been, what Israel was meant to be(come), and what Jesus Christ would ultimately be—a glorious royal priesthood.” ~ David Schrock

3. The Priesthood Legislated

- a. The Storyline of Priesthood in Israel.
 - i. Israel is defined as a kingdom of priests. *Exodus 19:5-6*
 - ii. Israel’s firstborn sons serve as priestly assistants. *Numbers 3:12-13*
 - iii. Aaron and his sons are chosen as priests. *Numbers 3*
 - iv. Moses serves as a priest. *Exodus 24:4-6, 32:11-14, v30*
 - v. The firstborn sons of Israel are replaced by the Levites. *Exodus 32:26-29*
 - vi. The priests are given instructions for the house of God. *Leviticus*
 - vii. The Levites are given to the priests. *Numbers 3:6-10*
 - viii. The Levites are denied access to the altar. *Numbers 16, 18:1-7*

- ix. God makes a covenant with the priests and Levites. *Numbers 25:1-13*
- x. The high priest is established in Israel. *Numbers 35:9-34*
- xi. The priests and Levites are given cities in the land. *Numbers 35:9-34*
- xii. The Levitical priesthood is established. *Deuteronomy 18:1-8*

b. The Shape of the Priesthood.

- i. Priests stand to serve in God's presence.
Leviticus 9:7, Numbers 18:20
- ii. Priests guard God's house.
Numbers 3:5-8, v38
- iii. Priests offer sacrifices on the altar.
Leviticus 4:13-20
- iv. Priests teach the covenant to God's people.
Leviticus 10:10-11, Numbers 6:24-26, Deuteronomy 33:10
- v. Priests intercede for the people.
Exodus 32:11-14, Numbers 16:46-48

4. The Priesthood (Com)Promised & Anticipated

a. The Promise of the Levitical Priesthood.

- i. The priests enable God's people to draw near to God.
Joshua 3-4, 6:12, 21:1-2
- ii. The Levitical priests facilitate worship for God's people.
Joshua 3:3-4, 8:30-35, 18:1-10

b. The Compromise of the Levitical Priesthood.

- i. Failure to Obey the Law.
Judges 2:10-11, 17:10-11, 1 Samuel 2:12-35
- ii. Failure to Guard God's Holy Dwelling.
1 Kings 12-13
- iii. Failure to Instruct the People.
Hosea 4:6, Jeremiah 2:8
- iv. Failure to Offer Holy Sacrifices on God's Altar.
1 Kings 12:26-29, Amos 5:21-22

c. The Better Promise & Anticipation of a Royal Priesthood.

- i. Kings with Priestly Devotion.
1 Chronicles 15:25-28, 1 Kings 6:1

- ii. The Promise of a Royal Priest.
Jeremiah 30:21, Zechariah 6:12-14
- iii. A New Royal Priesthood.
Isaiah 66:18-24
- iv. Preparing the Way for a Royal Priest.
Malachi 3:1-4
- v. A Royal Priest like Melchizedek.
Psalms 110

The Lord says to my Lord: "Sit at my right hand, until I make your enemies your footstool." The Lord sends forth from Zion your mighty scepter. Rule in the midst of your enemies! Your people will offer themselves freely on the day of your power, in holy garments; from the womb of the morning, the dew of your youth will be yours. The Lord has sworn and will not change his mind, "You are a priest forever after the order of Melchizedek." The Lord is at your right hand; he will shatter kings on the day of his wrath. He will execute judgment among the nations, filling them with corpses; he will shatter chiefs over the wide earth. He will drink from the brook by the way; therefore he will lift up his head.

5. The Priesthood Fulfilled

- a. Jesus' Birth and Baptism Introduce Us to Jesus the Priest.
 - i. Jesus eclipses John and his priestly house.
Luke 2:23, Malachi 4:5
 - ii. Jesus's baptism identifies his priestly service.
Exodus 29:4
 - iii. Luke highlights Jesus's priesthood in his genealogy and his likeness to Adam.
Luke 3:23-38
 - iv. Jesus's arrival promises to fulfill the words of the prophets.
John 1:43-51
- b. Jesus Acts like a Priest.
 - i. Jesus's teaching points to his priesthood.
Luke 4:17-19
 - ii. Jesus's ministry of healing is a priestly activity.
Matthew 8:1-4
 - iii. Jesus is able to purify the temple.
Matthew 21:12-17
 - iv. Jesus's authority to forgive sin demonstrates his priesthood.
Mark 2:1-12

- v. Jesus prays for his people.
John 17:1-26

- c. Jesus Makes an Efficacious Sacrifice.
Isaiah 53, Matthew, Mark, Luke, John, Romans, & Hebrews.

6. The Priesthood Today

- a. The Priesthood Inaugurated in Acts.

- i. Gentiles receiving the Spirit is a sign that the kingdom of priests has come.
Isaiah 66:19-21, Acts 10:44-48
- ii. Acts shows how priests and Levites are added to the church.
Acts 4:32-37, 6:7

- b. The Priesthood Expanded in Paul and Peter.

- i. The Church Sanctifies the House of God.
Romans 12:1-2, 1 Corinthians 5:11-13, Ephesians 4:1-16
Personal Purification, Corporate Purification, Corporate Unification
- ii. The Church Speaks the Words of God.
1 Thessalonians 5:17 & 25, 2 Timothy 3:16-17, 1 Peter 2:9
Pray, Teach, Proclaim
- iii. The Church Offers Spiritual Sacrifices.
Romans 12:3-21, Colossians 1:24, 1 Corinthians 11:23-32
Works, Suffering, Sacraments

- c. The Priesthood Explained in Hebrews.

- i. Priestly Identification.
Hebrews 2:17-18

Therefore he had to be made like his brothers in every respect, so that he might become a merciful and faithful high priest in the service of God, to make propitiation for the sins of the people. For because he himself has suffered when tempted, he is able to help those who are being tempted.

1. Jesus & Moses.
Hebrews 3:1-6
2. Jesus & Joshua.
Hebrews 4:1-13
3. Christ is supreme.
Hebrews 4:14-16

4. Christ after Melchizedek.
Hebrews 5-7
 5. Superior Sacrifice.
Hebrews 8:1-10:18
 6. Final invitation.
Hebrews 10:19-22
- ii. Priestly Qualifications.
1. God chooses Jesus.
Hebrews 5:1-5
 2. Jesus was holy.
Hebrews 5:7-9
 3. Jesus is a forever priest.
Hebrews 7:16, 24-25, 28
 4. Jesus exceeds the levitical priesthood.
Hebrews 7:26-28
- iii. Priestly Actions.
1. Jesus sanctifies God's Holy Place.
Hebrews 9:6-14, 24
 2. Christ prays for and speaks to his people.
John 17:1-26
- iv. Sacrificing for God's People.
1. Jesus's sacrificial offering...
 - a. Makes a way for us to approach God.
Hebrews 4:14-16, 10:19-22
 - b. Redeems God's people from the curse of the law.
Hebrews 9:15
 - c. Inaugurates a new covenant.
Hebrews 8:8-13
 - d. Cleanses the conscience.
Hebrews 9:13-14
 - e. Makes God's people a kingdom of priests in their own right.
Hebrews 13:1-19
- d. The Priesthood Everlasting in Revelation.
- i. The kingdom of priests is created by the sacrifice of Christ.
Revelation 1:4-7

- ii. Christ is a royal priest who radiates the glory of God.
Revelation 1:12-20, Numbers 8:1-4
- iii. God's royal priests engage in worship and warfare.
Revelation 19:11-16

7. The Priesthood Applied

See Section 6, Subsection b

1 Peter 2:1-12

So put away all malice and all deceit and hypocrisy and envy and all slander. Like newborn infants, long for the pure spiritual milk, that by it you may grow up into salvation—if indeed you have tasted that the Lord is good.

As you come to him, a living stone rejected by men but in the sight of God chosen and precious, you yourselves like living stones are being built up as a spiritual house, to be a holy priesthood, to offer spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ. For it stands in Scripture:

*“Behold, I am laying in Zion a stone,
a cornerstone chosen and precious,
and whoever believes in him will not be put to shame.”*

So the honor is for you who believe, but for those who do not believe,

*“The stone that the builders rejected
has become the cornerstone,”*

and

*“A stone of stumbling,
and a rock of offense.”*

They stumble because they disobey the word, as they were destined to do.

But you are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for his own possession, that you may proclaim the excellencies of him who called you out of darkness into his marvelous light. Once you were not a people, but now you are God's people; once you had not received mercy, but now you have received mercy.

Beloved, I urge you as sojourners and exiles to abstain from the passions of the flesh, which wage war against your soul. Keep your conduct among the Gentiles honorable, so that when they speak against you as evildoers, they may see your good deeds and glorify God on the day of visitation.

Resources:

The Royal Priesthood and the Glory of God by David S. Schrock