

Priesthood of Believers – The Body of Christ

- † A study of the New Testament reveals that all Christians are priests: (Think Old Testament, not Catholic church)
- † Peter said, “You also, as living stones, are being built up a spiritual house, *a holy priesthood*, to offer up spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ.” (1 Peter 2:5)
- † Peter continued, “But you are a chosen generation, *a royal priesthood*, a holy nation, His own special people, that you may proclaim the praises of Him who called you out of darkness into His marvelous light.” (1 Peter 2:9)
- † Revelation 1:5-6 (along with 20:4-6) says, “To Him who loved us and washed us from our sins in His own blood, and has made us kings and *priests to His God* and Father, to Him be glory and dominion forever and ever.”
- † Revelation 5:10 says, “And have made us kings and *priests to our God*; And we shall reign on the earth.”
- † The New Testament *repeatedly* teaches that all Christians are priests.
- † When one obeys the Gospel of Christ, he is added to the Body of Christ and is thereby part of God’s holy priesthood.
- † Since all Christians are of that holy priesthood, each can offer spiritual sacrifices to God.
- † This is significant because one of the primary responsibilities of the OT priests was to offer sacrifices.
- † New Testament priests are no different. Notice the Priestly, Temple Terms used to describe the function of our priesthood:

TEMPLE TERMS

- † Romans 12:1 “I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that you *present your bodies* a *living sacrifice*, holy, *acceptable to God*, which is your reasonable service.”
- † Philippians 2:17 “Yes, and if I am being *poured out as a drink offering* on the sacrifice and service of your faith, I am glad and rejoice with you all.”
- † Philippians 4:18 “Indeed I have all and abound. I am full, having received from Epaphroditus the things sent from you, a *sweet-smelling aroma*, an *acceptable sacrifice*, *well pleasing to God*.”
- † Hebrews 13:15 “Therefore by Him let us *continually offer* the *sacrifice* of praise to God, that is, the fruit of our lips, giving thanks to His name.”
- † 1 Peter 2:5 states, “You also, as living stones, are being built up a spiritual house, *a holy priesthood*, *to offer up spiritual sacrifices* acceptable to God through Jesus Christ.”

CHRIST IS OUR HIGH PRIEST

- † A sacrificing priesthood of men was appointed under the Law of Moses, but the animal sacrifices offered by those priests were mere types and shadows of the one sacrifice made by Christ. (Hebrews 8:5; 10:1; 12)
- † By the one sacrifice made by Jesus, He put an end both to the Levitical priesthood and the Old Testament law. (See Hebrews 7:18-25; 8:7-13; 10:9; Colossians 2:14-17).
- † Jesus is now at the right hand of God and ever lives to make intercession for His people (Hebrews 7:25; 9:24).
- † Through the one sacrifice of Himself, Jesus became the sole mediator through which men have access to God. (1 Timothy 2:5; Hebrews 7:26-27; 9:24-28; Ephesians 2:18).

- † The Old Testament typology points us to the fact that unlike OT priests under the Law who had access to God only once a year, and then only if he were the High Priest, ALL Christians, as priests, can come boldly into the presence of God through Jesus Christ, our High Priest. (Leviticus 16:1-34; Hebrews 4:14-16)
- † Hebrews 10:19-22 says, “Therefore, brethren, having boldness to enter the Holiest by the blood of Jesus, by a new and living way which He consecrated for us, through the veil, that is, His flesh, and having a High Priest over the house of God, let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience and our bodies washed with pure water.”
- † Christ is our High Priest AND is the Head of The Church (His Body).

THE BODY OF CHRIST – HIS PRIESTS

- † The phrase “the Body of Christ” is a common New Testament term for the Church (all those who are truly saved). The Church is called “one body in Christ” in Romans 12:5, “one body” in 1 Corinthians 10:17, “the body of Christ” in 1 Corinthians 12:27 and Ephesians 4:12, and “the body” in Hebrews 13:3.
- † The Church is clearly equated with “the body” of Christ in Ephesians 5:23 and Colossians 1:24.
- † Jesus is using His Body (The Church-His Priests) to work out His plan and program until He takes the scroll from the Father and begins to orchestrate His plan personally and bodily (this will take place at the Tribulation).
- † After the Tribulation, Jesus makes His glorious return when we will rule and reign with Him as kings and priests. (Revelation 1:6; 4-5; 5:10; 20:4-6)
- † The key to understanding what Christ is doing right now is understanding how He is using His Body, The Church:

CHRIST IS USING HIS BODY OF PRIESTS

- † Notice the Great Commission: Matthew 28:18-20 Jesus said, “All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth.” **Jesus has ALL AUTHORITY**
- † Jesus then commands us to “Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.” **We do this under HIS authority and in HIS name.**
- † Jesus further commands that we teach “them to observe all things that” He commanded.
- † This command is being carried out by His Body, The Church:
- † When Christ entered our world, He took on a physical body “prepared” for Him (Hebrews 10:5; Philippians 2:7).
- † Through His physical body, Jesus demonstrated the love of God clearly, tangibly, and boldly—especially through His sacrificial death on the cross (Romans 5:8).
- † After His bodily ascension, Christ continues His work in the world through those He has redeemed—the Church now demonstrates the love of God clearly, tangibly, and boldly.
- † In this way, the Church functions as “the Body of Christ.”
- † The Church may be called the Body of Christ because of these facts:
 1. Members of the Body of Christ are joined to Christ in salvation (Ephesians 4:11-16).
 2. Members of the Body of Christ follow Christ as their Head (Ephesians 1:22-23).

3. Members of the Body of Christ are the physical representation of Christ in this world. The Church is the organism through which Christ manifests His life AND message to the world today. (Matthew 16:18; Acts 15:14-17; Romans 9:25; Colossians 1:24-26; 1 Peter 2:9-10)
4. Members of the Body of Christ are indwelt by the Holy Spirit of Christ (1 Corinthians 12:13; 2 Corinthians 1:21-22; Galatians 4:6; 1 John 4:13).
5. Members of the Body of Christ possess a diversity of gifts suited to particular functions to carry out Jesus' plan (1 Corinthians 12:4-31). 1 Corinthians 12:12 "For as the body is one and has many members, but all the members of that one body, being many, are one body, so also is Christ."
6. Members of the Body of Christ share a common bond with all other Christians, regardless of background, race, or ministry. 1 Corinthians 12:25 "that there should be no schism in the body, but that the members should have the same care for one another."
7. Members of the Body of Christ are secure in their salvation (John 10:28-30). For a Christian to lose his salvation, God would have to perform an "amputation" on the Body of Christ!
8. Members of the Body of Christ partake of Christ's death and resurrection (Colossians 2:12).
9. Members of the Body of Christ share in Christ's inheritance (Romans 8:17).
10. Members of the Body of Christ receive the gift of Christ's righteousness (Romans 5:17).

FINALLY, AS A PRIEST, EVERY BELIEVER IS RESPONSIBLE AND ACCOUNTABLE TO INTERPRET THE SCRIPTURES FOR HIMSELF.

† Notice the Admonitions:

- † 2 Timothy 2:15 "Be diligent to present yourself approved to God, a worker who does not need to be ashamed, **rightly dividing the word of truth.**"
- † Matthew 12:3-5 "But He said to them, '**Have you not read** what David did when he was hungry, he and those who were with him: how he entered the house of God and ate the showbread which was not lawful for him to eat, nor for those who were with him, but only for the priests? Or **have you not read in the law** that on the Sabbath the priests in the temple profane the Sabbath, and are blameless?'"
- † Matthew 19:4 "And He answered and said to them, '**Have you not read** that He who made them at the beginning 'made them male and female,'"
- † Matthew 22:31 "But concerning the resurrection of the dead, **have you not read** what was spoken to you by God, saying,"
- † Mark 12:10 "**Have you not even read this Scripture:** 'The stone which the builders rejected Has become the chief cornerstone.'"
- † John 3:10 "Jesus answered and said to him, 'Are you the teacher of Israel, and do not know these things?'"
- † Hebrews 5:12 "For though by this time you ought to be teachers, you need someone to teach you again the first principles of the oracles of God; and you have come to need milk and not solid food."