

Priesthood Tape 1 4/5/07

“Ye also as living stones are built up, a spiritual house, a holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God by Jesus Christ....But ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people of his own, that you should show forth the praises of him, who have called you out of darkness, into his marvelous light.”

(1 Peter 2:5 & 9)

“And from Jesus Christ, who is the faithful witness and the first begotten of the dead, and the prince of the kings of the earth, unto him that loveth us and washed us from our sins in his own blood and made us a kingdom of priests unto God and his Father, to him be glory and dominion forever and ever Amen.”

(Revelation 1:5-6)

“...has made us unto our God a kingdom of priests which will reign on the earth.”

(Revelation 5:10)

These scriptures are pretty much the basic verses in the New Testament that speak concerning priesthood, other than the book of Hebrews. What we are going to do is examine these scriptures in order to orient our minds and our spirit to the real meaning of priesthood as to how God views the subject.

Let us first examine 1 Peter 2, verse 5. It sounds like a fairly simple scripture that anybody could understand. However, let us make it clear from the very beginning that what the priesthood was to God, in the Old Testament, was those people whose lives were set aside to give God what was acceptable to Him. Therefore the subject of priesthood is not applicable to just anyone. To function as a priest there had to be an understanding of what it entailed and a commitment to its reason for existence.

What is it that the priests gave to God that satisfied Him? What the priests gave to God were sacrifices. However, they did not just give God any sacrifice. They did not simply offer random items to God such as their CD collection or any bad habits they wanted to get rid of. God is not particularly interested in our CD collection. What truly satisfied Him had nothing to do with material possessions; what pleases Him is His Son (Mat. 3:?).

Now consider that every Old Testament sacrifice and every sacrifice given on any day at any time represented the offering up of Christ. Those sacrifices were only shadows of the true sacrifice -- Christ crucified. So it was as if every priest was continually giving Christ to God, and this alone made the priests valuable to Him.

It is important to realize that what God was after was not simply that the priests live sacrificially or that anything they offered to God would be accepted by Him because it came by sacrifice. It is clear that ONLY the sacrifices that were without spot or blemish were accepted. Therefore, the bodily form of the sacrifice, whether it be a bullock, which

was a young bull, or a pigeon or a lamb, was not the issue but was it without spot or blemish? Therefore, no matter how prized or valuable the sacrifice, if it represented anything other than Christ, it was rejected. He is the only offering that has ever truly been without spot or blemish.

Therefore, any attempt on our part to give ourselves to God apart from oneness with Christ is foolish. We have more spots and blemishes than we really want to enumerate. Out of all of Israel, I am sure the priests were the cream of the crop. But if Jesus is the only acceptable sacrifice, then even the very cream of the crop is unacceptable. What does this mean? There is not one single sacrifice that God accepted that He did not say, "In your heart, through faith, you are offering me the Son because if you are not, I will not accept it. If you are simply giving up things in an attempt to look holy, I will not accept you." Let us make this clear from the on-set: going the extra mile is not a work you accomplish in order to gain God's acceptance. Going the extra mile is a RESULT of the acceptable sacrifice's nature(Christ) being already formed in you. His Life goes the extra mile. Any attempt on our part of copying the actions of the spotless Lamb would still be done by one who is spotted and blemished. It is not the action that gains God's pleasure but the Life. We come to fully realize that it is we who are rejected at the cross and only accepted IN the Beloved. Does it not say that in Ephesians? He is the beloved of God. and we are not.

If you understand the cross correctly, you realize that I (we) am crucified with Christ because I am the part that is not acceptable. Only Jesus is accepted. The work of Christ in resurrection was not to make us acceptable but to make us one with the only Person who is accepted by God, thereby gaining acceptance. We are not accepted by the Beloved, but the scriptures say we are accepted *in Him*. That means that we are in union with the One God loves. The designation of being "in Christ" does not just refer to location. It means to be so in union with the True Vine that His vine life flows through my slim little branch. But it is the life of Jesus that is acceptable. We are included in that acceptance as long as we are not the source, but function as the vessel or vehicle of the Acceptable One

Now, remember that we are still addressing the subject of priesthood. We are laying the foundation for the daily life of a priest. The primary duty of a priest is to offering to God what it is He wants, which is Christ, the acceptable sacrifice. Being fully persuaded that Christ is the only acceptable sacrifice, now let us see if the following New Testament scripture might be seen in a different light. "*Ye also as living stones are built up, a spiritual house, a holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God by Jesus Christ.*" (I Peter 2:5) If a person thought that simply living sacrificially was what God wanted instead of offering Christ, he might have a tendency to read that verse in this manner. "You are God's priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices that would be acceptable to God." However, that particular reading left one thing out. It left out the words "BY Jesus Christ". Only what comes by Jesus is acceptable.

The whole point of the New Covenant was to impart to us the Life of Christ within so that all we do could be accomplished BY JESUS CHRIST. Now we are not

simply attempting to do the right thing so that God will be happy with us. There is the assumption on the part of some that as long as they are trying to do the right thing, then they are accepted by God. Any New Testament saint that believe in this manner has failed to see that present day priesthood is meant to be the FULFILLMENT of what the Old Testament only foreshadowed.

So for the Jews, the only way that they could even recognize that there was a need for a New Covenant was not to blame the covenant but to see the weakness of the flesh. "There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit. For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law of sin and death. For what the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh..." (Rom 8:1-3). Human flesh is where the real problem lies. We are not just talking about flesh that fails or sins but unacceptable flesh. Anything that is not Christ is unacceptable flesh no matter how good it may appear outwardly. According to the verse we just quoted, the only way to gain a place of "no condemnation" is to be found in union with Christ, the only acceptable One.

Each priest must come to clarity concerning the issue of what is acceptable to God or he will eventually end up offering strange fire. Therefore if a rich priest came in and could offer a young calf without spot or blemish, he had better be thinking in terms of, "What I offer to God here does not represent me. The sacrifice that I give on this altar is God's substitute that has given me a right to even stand here." If the Substitute, which is Christ, is not the pre-eminent thing that is being given to God, then the offerer will die." If we stand before God on our own merits, we are rejected, whether rich or poor. And if a poor person came in and all they had to offer were two turtle doves, and were not rich enough to give a bullock, it must still represents Christ. God is no respecter of persons but, as seen in the case of Cain and Abel, He does have respect unto what sacrifice you bring Him (Gen. 4:?). The point is not the material value, in the sense of the magnitude of the offering; the point is that each and every person recognize that Christ is all that is accepted by God and nothing else. As a priest, it is imperative that, wherever you are or whatever you do, you are always aware that it is not I, but Christ (Gal. 2:20).

That is the basis of priesthood. The priesthood only exists because those who are part of it have committed their lives to seeing that God gets what pleases Him. There is no need to claim to be a New Testament priest if these things are not foremost in the way that you proceed in life. When Paul said, "*I am crucified with Christ...*" he was showing God that he had clarity as to what part of the sacrifice was rejected flesh. However, that was not the end of it: "*...nevertheless I live, but not I, but Christ liveth in me*" (Gal 2:20). With those words Paul identified the acceptable offering, which is Christ. Notice that, to Paul, offering Christ unto God was not confined to the events of the cross but had to do with living a crucified life so that all that proceeded from him found acceptance by Christ's life within. It was as if a continual burnt offering was ascending up to the Father by his life.

In the Old Testament shadow, the priests offered the Lamb periodically in the temple but that was only a faint picture of the greater reality that was to come by means of the New

Testament. What God always intended was that we be His temple in which, throughout our daily walk, Christ would be what we offer Him. This is now our priestly responsibility.

Anything that ascends out of this temple (us) must first pass through the fires of the altar of crucifixion with Christ. That includes our daily attitudes as well as how we treat one another. Jesus is the only one who is not self-centered. It is for this reason that Christ must be formed in each and every one of us (Gal. 4:19). It is the preciousness of the nature of Christ with which God is so very pleased. Certainly Christians hold Christ as precious but it is usually tainted with some form of selfishness. For example, He is precious to us based on Him saving us from going to hell, from eternal damnation. He is precious to us because He bought and paid the ticket for our salvation. But, to the Father, it is not simply the deeds that Jesus performs that He holds as precious but the spirit and nature that is within which produced that actions in the first place. This preciousness of him to the Father and THIS is what God will find acceptable in us.

With that said then we must come to the conclusion that Jesus is far more than just acceptable to the Father. He is more than acceptable, He outright satisfies God. Even during our best days we do not satisfy God like that, regardless of how hard we try. And this is the point the Jews had to come to also. Israel eventually would have to come to the fact that, regardless of all their commitment and zeal it seemed that God was seeking for something from them that was far beyond them.

Imagine if you were a priest in those days seeking to be maintained on right footing with God. And every day you would enter the tabernacle and offer a sacrifice. The fire would fall and God would accept the lamb you gave Him. And, though you would not particularly enjoy the smell of burnt flesh, it was a sweet savor unto the Father and you sensed His pleasure. When finished, you would walk away from there completely absolved of all failures. But in the back of your mind you know that you are going to fail again and again and have to repeat this process. Have to do it again because God wants that sacrifice. After a while you suddenly realize, "I am a continual failure and the only thing that really seems to make God happy is this lamb." You conclude that this lamb you keep giving Him is what He really wants and that it is the only reason why God keeps putting up with me. God wants to awaken even Christians to the fact that He has always had something beyond that He desires from us and that we are to eventually realize the high place this Lamb of God holds in His heart.

Interestingly enough, when it comes to the subject of salvation, most Christians really do believe that Jesus is the only one God will accept. We know that if we try to save ourselves by our own merits, we are doomed. We are convinced that earning our own salvation is impossible. We know better because God only accepts Jesus. But what we do not realize is that we walk away from that reality once we begin our Christian walk. We immediately lose sight of the acceptable sacrifice and set forth to become acceptable to God by the things we do and the gifts we offer. We read in the Bible how we are now New Testament priests but set about to give Him what He has never accepted. Our priesthood becomes tainted. It is a foreign priesthood based on foreign

principles. Even the priests who followed after the shadow had a better idea of what God really wanted than we do. Though we are supposed to be living the fulfillment of what those priests foreshadowed, we have removed the Lamb of God from our offerings. This new but perverted priesthood that we have invented is our attempt to be humble and lamb-like, as we give up a few material things for God. It is the equivalent of taking an old blemished lamb that has his leg turned out with deformed ears, having blemishes all over, and dragging him through the mud of our lives to throw it up on an altar expecting God to be over-joyed with it. And we keep waiting for the fire of God to fall on what we do but God is silent and we are empty from the experience.

God takes a look at our broken, blemished, spotted, bloody mess and thinks, "I am sure that this is your best, but it is not the One I want. So even if you could improve the looks of what you offer me, it would still be unacceptable." The Pharisees looked way better than the average faltering sinner but God asks, "Where is my beloved Son in whom I am well pleased?"

Many Christians refer to themselves as priests based on scriptures they have read but do they truly comprehend what it means to be a New Testament priest? Even as seen in the shadow, the priesthood was not a once a week involvement. The priesthood was every day, all the time. They were constantly offering up the acceptable sacrifice. There were burnt offerings in the morning, and burnt offerings in the evening sacrifice. There were sin offerings being given and trespass offerings. A multiplicity of different offerings were offered every day. The brazen altar was being utilized at all times.

Today's Christian might say, "I am here on Sunday to give my offering". For some, the offerings and sacrifices that were such a major part of Jewish life have been reduced down to a few dollars a week. The sacrifices were never about us, it is about Him. And it is not about Jesus on the day of our salvation or on Sunday morning, it is always about Him.

In the Old Testament offerings there was meant to be an intimate interchange between God and offerer. You looked into the face of God as you brought Him the prescribed sacrifice. How much more should it be today? However, a lot of times, we are just living down here serving a God who is far away. Our God almost seems further away than the Jews God who was right there with them in the camp. And when we offer, we do not see the Father's face. We are just going through the motions, hoping that there is a God up there that accepts what we do. In a very real way, many are simply doing a good deed with no thought of priestly work or of the Lamb. No real thought is given to really finding out what we might offer the Father that would bring Him complete satisfaction.

Four thousand years of history before Jesus came, you never had the heavens open up in the sense that you heard the Father breaking in to our world because of His jubilation over something down here. That is because all we had to offer Him was based solely on a shadow of the One He loved and not the very Person. He had His Son with Him during those times. But when what He has always desired appears in the earth, He

rolls back the heavens and shouts to everyone within hearing distance, "This! This one is my Beloved, the one in whom I find extreme pleasure" (Mat 3:?). It is done in such a manner one gets the distinct feeling God is trying to reach those who really care with a declaration of what it is that He is really interested in. Prior to this moment, He had no reason to break into our world for He has nothing to say until He sees Jesus. But when He sees Jesus, then He just wants to open everything up. It is an incredible moment for the Father because it is an incredible reality in His heart. It is the key, the secret. The Father's heart longs for His Son. Once realized, you begin to fall in love with giving the Son to Him. But, as in all sacrifice, to give Him the son will result in loss to you. "He must increase but I must decrease" (John 3:30). Never forget that you are a New Testament priest!

Have you ever been urged to give to something that will benefit needy children? They tell you to do so and you will feel good. Certain organizations come on the television and say, "Give your used clothes. You will feel good". The whole concept of that is simply that you will feel good about giving something, so that you will no longer feel that you are so selfish. But the reality is, you *are* so selfish. You are even selfish to want to have feelings that you are good. Your motivation for doing it is so that you will get something from doing it; even if you feel humble. However, when you give the Father the Son, there is something going on that has nothing to do with personal gain.

When you offer up the Son, the Father is not involved with complimenting the offerer. He is consumed with the sacrifice. He is so enthralled with Jesus, for He alone fills His heart. Therefore it is easy for Him to identify a false priest from a true priest. He has a template in His heart that is after the pattern of Christ. It is a mold, a Jesus shaped mold in his heart and in his eyes. When he looks, it is like a cookie cutter mold of Christ and he is comparing everything to Christ. "*The eyes of the Lord run to and fro over all the earth looking....* " Also the attitude of the offerer will give away if he is a false priest or true. If the offerer give the acceptable sacrifice with no thought of himself but only wants to satisfy the Father, he is a true priest. A false priest will seek to direct the Father's attention from other things unto himself as to how good he is to bring such a nice sacrifice.

When the heavens rolled back and the Father finally expressed openly concerning the thing that He most wanted in the earth, did anybody grasp the significance of it? Was it a revelation to anyone as to how important this moment was? At a similar event later on, when the Father spoke again from heaven concerning His Son, many never heard it. They thought that it thundered. If a person's primary goal is not the good pleasure of God, he will miss it. It will just be another event in a wandering life that is trying to be touched by God instead of touching God. They are looking just to have another experience instead of living in union with the One that pleases God. They fail to realize that God has given us the most incredible position; that of being His priests.

The response of the Father at Jesus' baptism shows that, to the Father He is more than just acceptable. The Son is exactly what He wants. However, the concept of being "accepted" is monumental to us. But that acceptance is only because we are in the Beloved. From this we can see that there is a striking difference between how the Father perceives us and how He perceives Christ. God said that you are accepted, He did not say He is overjoyed and thrilled with you. But with Jesus, He said, "This is my beloved Son in whom I am well pleased." When was the last time heaven broke open over God's joy at seeing you? Once we realize how precious Jesus is to the Father, it will make us much more appreciative of the honor He gave us by putting us in Christ.

So the wording of I Peter 2:5 is very simple when it says, "...spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God by Jesus Christ". But these words also carry much profundity as they communicate the only means by which our spiritual sacrifices are acceptable. This verse seeks to communicate two things. The first is that the Father is really after His Son through us. The second is that you and me are not what this is all about. If you can comprehend these two things, then your goal becomes real clear as a priest.

Then you are able to realize that no Bible subject or Christian activity in itself has any value to the Father. The activities of religion such as prayer, family matter, evangelism,. Could just as well be carried out by a Buddhist if Christ is not the fulfillment. Any prayer that that we offer that is not made acceptable by Christ is just words. Any Bible reading that we do that is not made acceptable by Christ could be nothing more than the activity of a Pharisee. Any ministry I am involved with that does not offer the Father His Son is just religion. If a person is carrying on all these religious activities with sincerity but not as a New Testament priest then he has missed one of the greater reasons for God establishing a New Covenant.

If these things do not flow from the priesthood then it is just a thing of human works to find acceptability. If that is the case, why not simply stay with the Old Covenant? If God will accept you totally on what you do, and how consecrated you are, then you do not need a priesthood at all, everyone just needs to be good. Sadly, that is the way many people approach Christianity. At salvation they were totally convinced that they were unacceptable but believed that Christ was their sufficiency and hope. But once they got saved all the rules changed and now they look to their own holiness, commitment, etc. Whereas Jesus was everything at the beginning now His only place is to assist us in become everything God ever wanted. Youth groups and camp meetings are full of emphasis upon stirring up their flesh to be more consecrated to God, thinking that is what He wants. But it is not. He is looking for the life of Christ. The life of the Son will be about His Father's business. That same life is within us now ready to be offered to the Father. Do you think anyone had to talk Jesus into being more consecrated?

We are the body of Christ. Is not the life of Christ supposed to be the motivating factor in the body of Christ? Then why are we talking to Jesus in His body) about consecration? We should be talking to people about Jesus being their life! If Christ is formed in you as life, Jesus will do what He does. That is the hope for the church. He is still the hope, even for us. There are times we look at ourselves and think, "I know Jesus

is my hope because I am hopeless in myself. I will fail. I know I need Jesus.” That is good, but again, the problem with it is that we are looking at ourselves in relation to what we have to give or what we do not have to give. The real question is, What is it the Father wants? The real point is not that we need to live by Christ's life so we do not constantly fail but, as priests, we want to give unto the Father the thing that satisfies Him. It is a thing of bringing joy instead of being committed. Your joy is to give the Father the Son.

I attended Bible School in my early twenties. I remember being feverish with passion, wanting to please God. Regardless of where the other students stood in their commitment, I was going to please the Father. When anyone said, “In everything give thanks, for this is the will of God in Christ concerning you,” I would immediately set about thanking Him for everything. Even in the finest details I would be sure and give thanks. I wanted to please God so I was committed to it. However, it ran me ragged because soon after, someone would bring up that we are to “Pray without ceasing....” So my life was full of “Thank you Jesus, thank you Jesus....” and with praying, praying, praying. But I noticed that as soon as I stopped praying and say, “Thank you Jesus,” I was no longer praying without ceasing. And as soon as you start praying without ceasing, you are no longer giving thanks in all things.

I started going a little crazy. I said to the Lord, “Jesus, I really want to please you, but I am not doing a very good job. How can I ever keep up with all this?” So I decided to get in to the scriptures and look up what literally pleases him. I found New Testament references as to what really was pleasing to God. One of them was a verse we have already been making reference to: “This is my beloved Son in whom I am well pleased” (**Mat:?**). Another one stated, “It pleased the Father to reveal His Son in me” (**Gal 1:?**). I became awakened to a whole different way of pleasing God and it did not include me. I started seeing that it was Christ that pleased the Father and if my heart of gratitude or prayers did not spring from the One who was well pleasing to God then I was simply wearing myself out trying to be religious.

A huge weight fell off my shoulders because I was already being confronted with my inadequacy. Since then I have continued to see that Christ pleases the Father and my goal is not about myself but about giving Him the Son. That is the first step in being a priest. You begin to offer the Son everyday as a continual burnt offering. There was never a time when the burnt offering was not being offered to God. That is why it was called a "continual" burnt offering. It was only a shadow of the fact that Christ is continually given to the Father.

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Again, the purpose for wanting Christ to live in us is not just so that we will not sin; that would be a sin offering. Every priest understood that there were two different types of offerings. There were sweet smelling offerings that were a sweet savor, and sin offerings which were for trespasses and sins. The burnt offerings went on constantly, not because there were sins all the time, but because the Father wanted the Son all the time. That is

why the continual burnt offering was not a sin offering but was a sweet savor offering. Our motivation in continually giving the Father Christ is not just about removing sin but about pleasing the Father with Christ.

In other words, if sin were not a problem in your life at all, as a priest you still need to offer the Father His acceptable sacrifice because, you still are not the one He is after. These are not Old Testament issues but are clearly spoken of in the New Testament We give God Christ, which is a sweet savor. He is the sweet savior. As a priest, (*tape ran out*) [check online?](#)

He is getting the son. I want him to have the son. When it becomes an issue of our life, if the thing really is our life, then there is struggle. Because then we are thinking, "I do not know if I want to give that." Whatever you are giving probably is not Jesus then. It makes no difference whether you give it or do without, if it is not Christ. We think God honors it because it was given sacrificially. However, the word sacrificial comes from the word 'sacrifice' and remember, the only acceptable sacrifice is Christ. When the scriptures declare that we are to be living sacrifices, what do you think that means? It is not promoting the concept of being sacrificial. People can sacrifice anything they want to God but the only sacrifice that ever had significance to Him is that which was or represented Christ. To function as a living sacrifice is when we lay down our life that Christ may come forth and the Father may receive that which is well pleasing to Him. Our goal is pleasing the Father, not pleasing men or ourselves by being "sacrificial".

These scriptures are incredible when you begin to realize that our purpose is to offer up spiritual sacrifices. In other words, you are not offering up a lamb or a goat, shedding the blood of them and sprinkling it on an altar. Instead, you are one with Jesus. What does that mean in terms of this? Jesus was both priest and sacrifice, and so are you. That means that our life is all wrapped up with sacrifice but never living sacrificially apart from Christ. Always honoring the Father, not with what we do or give or do not do, but with giving Him the Son. Then you are a priest in tune with the Father. Then you are bringing glory to Him.

The spiritual sacrifices are daily and they are moment by moment. The circumstance under which we offer may be many and varied but the sacrifice is one. Unlike Israel who offered up a bullock for this situation and a goat for that but strangely enough, the bottom line is that you do not have to memorize all the offerings to be a good priest. It is real simple. There is only one sacrifice that honors the Father. You give Him Jesus continually at the expense of you being burned up. *"I am crucified with Christ. Nevertheless I live, yet not I, Christ liveth in me"* (Galatians 2:20). That is the testimony of a royal priest, of a kingdom priest. ***