

“Thy Kingdom Come”
The priests of the kingdom
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Introduction: What does it mean to be a priest?

- A. It means you are fulfilling a high and important work in God’s kingdom.
 - 1. God reminded them of this tremendous privilege when he sought to restore a fallen nation. **(Mal 2:4-7)**
 - a. How sad that they once had this privileged position and then left it!
 - b. What a merciful God that graciously invited them back.
 - 2. Both what he was and the work he did showed how much God blessed His priests.
 - a. They were given life, peace, fear and reverence.
 - b. He spoke God’s truth and controlled his tongue.
 - c. He always sought out the way of peace and fairness.
 - d. In this he was able to turn people from iniquity.
 - 3. Have you ever met a priest?
 - B. God has always wanted a “kingdom of priests.” **(Ex 19:3-6)**
 - 1. God wanted these people to see how important they were to Him! Where did He bring them from and how did He do it?
 - 2. He wanted to win the hearts of this people. They in turn had to respond by keeping God’s word.
 - C. We too have gone from a rejected people to being priests to our God.
(1 Pt 2:4-5, 9-10)
 - 1. Remember that Jesus too was rejected by the world.
 - 2. What is the purpose of our priesthood? It is to “proclaim the praises of Him who called you out of darkness into His marvelous light.” **(1 Pt 2:9)**
 - 3. How are we to be priests? What are we to do?
- I. We look to and learn from Jesus as our high priest***
- A. We are to look to and learn from our High Priest. **(Heb 3:1)**
 - 1. How do we learn to do a new job? We look to the one with experience!
 - 2. This is an exhortation to faithfulness. **(Heb 3:1-2,6)**
 - B. Jesus is a **holy** high priest. **(Heb 7:26)**
 - 1. No one can approach God without being holy.
 - 2. The defeat of Satan is shown in God’s providing forgiveness for man. Now we can approach God. **(Zech 3:1-10)**
 - C. Jesus has **access** to God. **(Heb 8:1-2)**
 - D. Jesus offers an **acceptable sacrifice** to God. **(Heb 7:26-27; 9:25-26; 10:11-12)**
 - 1. When God is pleased it is often describes as a sweet-smelling aroma.”
(Eph 5:2)
 - 2. Not just any sacrifice will please God!
 - E. Jesus continues to **teach and help** those who come to Him.
 - 1. He acts as our intercessor. **(Heb 7:23-25)**
 - 2. He pleads with us to bring our burdens to Him. **(Heb 2:17-18; 4:14-15)**

3. Do you understand your role as a priest?

II. Priests must know how to approach God

A. We must learn how to be holy. **(1 Pt 1:15-16; Heb 12:14)**

1. The root idea of holy is to be “set apart” with the idea of perfection and purity.
2. God is the standard of holiness.

“Holy is the way God is. To be holy he does not conform to a standard. He is that standard. He is absolutely holy with an infinite, incomprehensible fullness of purity that is incapable of being other than it is. Because he is holy, all his attributes are holy; that is, whatever we think of as belonging to God must be thought of as holy.” - A. W. Tozer

3. Our holiness is a result of justification. We then seek to live a holy life because we maintain a living faith.

B. We must find and keep a good conscience. **(Heb 9:14; 10:21-22; 1 Pt 3:21)**

1. We find a good conscience when “our bodies are washed with pure water.”
2. What approach do we take to our daily decisions when we are determined to keep a good conscience? **(Acts 24:16)**

a. The word "exercise" means: " take pains, labour, strive. Old word in Homer to work as raw materials, to adorn by art, then to drill. Our word ascetic comes from this root, one who seeks to gain piety by rules and severe hardship." - Robertson's Word Pictures.

b. Notice the time element: "always." A good conscience is often lost by the "small" compromises!

C. We must approach God through our High Priest. **(Heb 7:25; Eph 2:18; Col 3:17)**

III. Priests must have acceptable sacrifices (1 Pt 2:5)

A. Our entire life is to be a sacrifice. **(Rom 12:1-2)**

1. It must however be a “holy” one.
2. In a sense we offer ourselves as a sacrifice to God. **(Phil 2:17-18)**
3. This is a sacrifice of joy!

B. We carefully walk in the word the high priest has given. We show reverence to Him!

1. We do not want to offer sacrifices like Nadab and Abihu! **(Lev 10:1-3)**
2. This is why we must become a “people of the book!”

C. Our very worship is viewed as an offering made in the presence of God.

1. Our singing and prayer is viewed this way. **(Heb 13:15; Acts 10:4)**
2. Are we offering an acceptable sacrifice? What kind of priest are you?

D. Our serving others in their needs is an acceptable sacrifice.

1. Remember how Paul described his life. **(Phil 2:17-18)**
2. Our support of men as they teach the gospel is a sacrifice to God! **(Phil 4:18)**
3. How do you view your efforts to help others? **(Heb 13:16)**

Conclusion: As priests we can draw near to God with assurance. **(Heb 10:21-22)**

A. Do you now see the importance our assemblies? **(Heb 10:23-25)**

1. Those who remember where they came from do.
2. Those who want to offer God acceptable sacrifices do.

B. Does your life “proclaim the praises of Him who called you out of darkness into His marvelous light.” **(1 Pt 2:9)**

Questions for Lesson 8
The priests of the kingdom

1. What did God intend for priests to be and do according to Mal 2:4-7?

2. How did God make Israel a ‘kingdom of priests?’ (Ex 19:3-6)

3. How can we best learn how to be priests?

4. Why must a priest be holy?

5. What kind of sacrifice must a priest offer?

6. How does Jesus describe Himself as our high priest that makes us want to approach Him?

7. How do we find and maintain “holiness?”

8. How do we find and maintain a “good conscience?”

9. What sacrifices do we make as priests?

10. How does your work as a priest make you closer to God?

Two Men React To Teaching On Morals
Bill Hall

Two men listen to lessons on practical Christian living, but their attitudes differ greatly.

The first man views all such teaching as arbitrary "church" rules. Warnings concerning dancing, mixed swimming, general immodesty, divorce for every cause, drinking, etc. are all looked upon as "Church of Christ" standards, traditions being sustained by the old-timers of the church who are out of touch with more up-to-date thinking on morals.

The second man is brought to understand that all such teaching is an outgrowth of genuine respect for the Bible; that warnings concerning the evils mentioned above are based on such scriptures as **Matthew 5:27, 28; Gal. 5:19-21; I Tim. 2:9; Matt. 19:9; and Rom. 13:12-14**; that they, therefore, are not arbitrary church rules, but are indeed a true picture of God's will for His people.

The first man hates this teaching. Of course he does! Doesn't he have just as much moral perception as another? Why should he allow some other man to decide what's right or what's wrong for him? He'll do what he pleases. Nobody will bind his thinking on him.

The second man, recognizing that the standards under consideration are God's and not man's, gladly complies. Jesus Christ is his Lord and King. He will live whatever life his Lord wants him to live. He will make every sacrifice his Lord wants him to make. His conformity grows out of a desire to please God, not man.

The first man may take the form of a teenager rebelling against parental authority; or the form of a man "raised in the church," whose church loyalty is beginning to wane; or the form of a new convert who is having difficulty defining modesty, decency, and lasciviousness in practical terms. The fault may lie within the person himself. He may be wanting to break away from all restrictions, thus refusing to view objectively Bible principles behind the teaching he is rejecting. Or the fault in some cases may lie in those who teach. They may be guilty of "establishing" their points along these lines through pulpit beating and foot stomping, rather than through sound reasoning from the scriptures; of unconsciously seeking for "church" loyalty or "preacher" loyalty rather than loyalty to the Lord. Either way, we are concerned for our first man's soul, for he is wrong in his thinking.

Let no one misunderstand. We strongly oppose every evil mentioned above. But the truth is--no man is obligated to bow to anything we teach because we teach it; but, on the other hand, he is obligated to live by every principle that is truly established upon the word of God. It is the duty of every teacher, then, to warn of these evils, not on the basis of his own authority, but on the basis of God's authority. It is the duty of every hearer to consider them in the light of scripture. Greater God-consciousness--on the part of both teacher and hearer--is the need.