

## **We Are Kings And Priests**

‘You shall be to Me a Kingdom of priests, a holy nation’ (Exodus 19:6).

‘Jesus our Messiah, the Faithful Witness, the Firstborn of the dead and the Prince and Ruler of the kings on the earth; to Him Who ever loves us and has once and for all, freed us from our sins by His own blood, and formed us into a Kingdom, a royal race, priests to His God and Father – to Him be the glory and the power and the majesty and the dominion throughout the ages forever and ever, Amen, and so it will be’ (Revelation 1:5 & 6).

‘You (Lord) have made them a Kingdom, a royal race and priests to our God and they shall reign as kings over all the earth’ (Revelation 5:10).

‘Jesus holds His priesthood unchangeably because He lives on forever. Therefore, He is able to save to the uttermost, those who come to God through Him, since He is always living to make petition to God and intercede for us’ (Hebrews 7:24 & 25).

‘Who is there to condemn us? Will our Messiah Who died, Who was raised from the dead, Who is at the right hand of the Father as He intercedes for us?’ (Romans 8:34).

Intercession is one ministry of the New Testament priesthood. Jesus had 30 years of perfect family life then 3½ years of intense public ministry then about 2,000 years of intercession. Realising that would give us a different perspective on ministry. Within the body of Christ, we are all called to be priests, to offer praise and worship, and there is a specific calling to be intercessors. Modern church leaders need to give a much greater priority to intercession, and more recognition to intercessors. Every point of outreach will only be as successful as the intercessory prayer behind them.

Look at the priestly tribe of Levi. The victories that Israel won were due to intercession and worship. Two such events were Jericho (Joshua chapter 6) and in the time of King Jehosaphat (2 Chronicles 20:1 to 32). In each case, there were no casualties and Israel hardly had to fight but the battles were won by intercessory prayer and fasting. The emphasis; the essential ingredient in the victory was the ministry of those priests. Insofar as we can understand and thus release the ministry of the priests, that is how far we will experience total victory. Most churches are not giving sufficient recognition to their priests (intercessors) or the ministry of worship. Worship and intercession are two major weapons in our warfare.

Church leaders make plans and do what they are accustomed to, and then ask somebody to pray for them. A lot of church leaders are uncomfortable with change and they back away from enthusiastic newcomers, who unwittingly show up their staid, boring, crusty old ideas, revealing their spiritual arrogance. Some Charismatic churches think that if they praise God loud enough and long enough they will get whatever they want. The story in 1st Chronicles 13:7 to 10 proves that theory wrong. They were praising God with many loud instruments, but because of disobedience, all they got was a disaster. King David realised there was a lesson to be learned from the death of Uzza, and when David had learned the lesson, he went back. In 1 Chronicles 15:1 to 3, David shares the lesson the Lord wanted to teach the people of Israel; their mistake of disobedience. They hadn’t given the Levites – the priests – their God appointed job. They substituted a new cart for the shoulders of the Levites. It was the job of the Levites to carry the ark on their shoulders, and it is the job of the intercessors to carry prayer on their shoulders. Then in verses 11 to

16, David called for the priests and explained the problem to them and what the proper order should have been. Further on in verse 26, they got it right.

Some of us get things around the wrong way. Most of us don't want to do what God wants but we expect God to go along with our plans. By these scriptures we can see that victory is won; not by how much noise we make, but by obedience, worship and intercession. The Levitical ministry in the church is the ministry of intercessors. God is telling us to give a totally different priority to intercession in our congregations and in the church of God as a whole. The Levites were people set apart for this service. They were honoured by the people, but that is not usually found in churches. As always, there are exceptions, but as a rule, intercessors are largely ignored. We need to restore the honour of intercessors to correspond with the ministry of the Levites.

Church leadership need to find out who has been called by God to be intercessors, lay hands upon them, pray for them and set them apart for the ministry for which God has called them. Without the ministry of intercession, the church will operate on the lesser, 'new cart' principle. We cannot say to God, "Here are our plans, now bless them." We need to operate on the principle of: "What are Your plans Lord, that we may do them." We can only thank God for His mercy that we don't suffer the same fate as Uzza. We need to be very reserved about any church plan or program until we are sure it has been initiated by God and prayed through by the intercessors. Church programs can sound very good and look like they accomplish things we think God wants done, but if God hasn't initiated them, then the only things they will produce are wood, hay and straw (1 Corinthians 3:12 to 15).

If God initiates something, somewhere in it, will be at a supernatural level. It will not just be a result of us getting together and making plans. By doing that we dishonour the Lord because that is not giving Him His rightful position as Head of the church. There may even be church leaders who would resent Jesus taking his place, or telling him where he is going wrong, because it would upset the carefully planned church program. The only way we can discover God's program and flow in it, is through prayer, intercession and waiting on God. We don't need more activities. Look at how Jesus rebuked Martha for serving so much she couldn't hear a word He was saying, yet Mary who stopped serving, sat and listened – which was the best part (Luke 10:41 & 42). Many people are like that. They are so busy serving God, they have no time to really serve God – and they don't take any notice when they are told to stop and listen. The main problem in the ministry of leadership is not doing too little, it is doing too much unworthy work. Abraham's mistake was not doing less than God required, it was doing more than God required and the result of that dreadful mistake was Ishmael. Ishmael has been the number one problem for Isaac's family for around 4,000 years. If there ever was a warning to us, not to try to run ahead of God, it is that example. Ishmael was born of good intentions, but he was not from God. Isaac was from God. We need to take the time to seek Him for His program. A lot of church leaders don't think they have a need for the humble quiet people in the church who don't seem to be doing very much; often they have to pray and intercede in secret – because their ministries are not recognised and honoured, yet we are so desperately dependent on them.

This is the direction God wants the church to go in: for intercessors to minister as priests like the Levites did. As we read earlier, Jews were called to be a holy nation – Christians are called to be a royal race, a holy priesthood. Many people do not comprehend that the reality of genuine Christianity, really is building a Kingdom. It is more than just believing, we are part of God's royal family. God has called us to be more than just a bunch of

friendly, smiling people; we are a Kingdom of priests. There are many scriptures that refer to that, throughout the Bible. In other words, if you want to be in the Kingdom, you have to be a priest. For example, if we wanted to belong in a society of artists, we would have to be an artist. If we wanted to be in the society of giants, we would have to be a giant; and so on. God talks about being in a Kingdom of priests, then to belong, we have to be priests.

What then is the distinctive ministry of a priest? Sacrifice! Paul says we are to offer spiritual sacrifices such as praise, worship and thanksgiving; we are to help the needy, share what we have and do good (Hebrews 13:15 & 16). We are not called to offer animal sacrifices like the old covenant priests had to offer on behalf of the people, but we are called to offer sacrifices nonetheless. We are to be living sacrifices, holy and well pleasing to God (Romans 12:1).

We have looked at what we are to do as priests, but what about kings? We are to reign as kings over all the earth (Revelation 5:10), so how do we do that? We reign through prayer (Ephesians 6:18); we are to reign by taking authority over the forces of darkness (Ephesians 6:11 to 17); we are to reign by taking authority over evil governments (Proverbs 28:2); we reign by having dominion over animals and wildlife (Genesis 1:26); we are to reign by being humble servants (Mark 10:43 & 44). We are kings and will inherit the earth – not by force but by being meek and mild (Psalm 37:11; Matthew 5:5).

Amen and God bless you.

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