

We Are Kings And Priests To Our God

'If you obey My voice and keep My covenant, then you will be My own possession from among all peoples, for the whole earth is Mine. You will be to Me a Kingdom of priests, a holy nation' (Exodus 19:5 & 6).

'You as living stones, are built up as a spiritual house to be a holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus ... You are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for God's own possession so you may proclaim the excellence of Him Who called you out of darkness into His marvelous Light' (1 Peter 2:5 & 9).

'Jesus our Messiah, the Faithful Witness, the Firstborn of the dead and the Prince and Ruler of the kings on earth. To Him Who loves us and has washed us from our sins by His own blood, and formed us into a Kingdom, priests to His God and Father – to Him be the glory and the dominion forever and ever, Amen' (Revelation 1:5 & 6).

'You (Lord) have made us kings and priests to our God and we will reign over the earth' (Revelation 5:10).

'Jesus holds His priesthood unchanged because He lives forever. He is able to save those who draw near to God through Him, since He intercedes 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 this ministry. As believers in Jesus, we are all called to be kings and priests, to offer prayer, praise and worship, but there is a specific calling for some people to be intercessors. The victories that Israel won were due to intercession and worship led by the priestly tribe of Levi and included the whole congregation of Israel. Two victorious 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, fasting, humility, obedience and worship. 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 (intercessors), that is how far we will experience total victory.

Most churches are not giving sufficient recognition to their priests or the ministry of worship. Worship and intercession are two major weapons in our warfare. 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 it, and then only if the outreach is in the will of God. Many dedicated pastors have been terribly disappointed when their wonderful outreach failed to produce the outcome they expected. Church leaders make plans and do what they are accustomed to, and then ask somebody to pray for them. Some Charismatic churches think that if they praise God loud enough and long enough they will get whatever they want. The scriptures prove that theory wrong.

Israel, during King David's time were gathered together, praising God with many loud instruments but because of disobedience, all they got was a disaster. Uzza suddenly died because he reached out his hand to steady the Ark of the Covenant (1 Chronicles 13:1 to 14). David realised there was a lesson to be learned from the death of Uzza. The people had not given the Levites – the priests – their God appointed task. 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. David called for the priests and explained their disobedience, and what the proper order should have been, then later on they carried the Ark correctly (1 Chronicles 15:1 to 28). Some of us hear the divine command correctly but have the order of things around the wrong way. Many people do not do what God wants but expect God to go along with their plans. We can see by the above scriptures, victory is won, not by how much noise we make or how much effort we put into our ideas, 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 (priests) to correspond with the ministry of the Levite priests.

Church leadership need to find out who has been called by God to be intercessors, lay hands on 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 divine principle of humility. “What are Your plans Lord, that we may do them.” Joshua lay prostrate and worshipped the Lord and asked, “What does my Lord say to His servant?” (Joshua 5:14). We can only thank God for His mercy and grace, we do not 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 works we think God wants done, but if God has not initiated them, then the only results they will produce are wood, hay and straw – and extreme disappointment. ‘If anyone builds on a foundation with gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay or straw, each person’s work will be revealed. Judgement Day will declare it because it is revealed in fire and the fire itself will test what sort of work each person’s work is. If any person’s work remains which they built, they will receive a reward. If any person’s work is burned, they will suffer loss, but they themselves will be saved, but only as through fire’ (1 Corinthians 3:12 to 15).

If God initiates a ministry, somewhere in the ministry there will be a supernatural occurrence. It will not be a result of our 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 their place, or telling them where they are 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 do not need more activities, we need more people to listen to God. Look at how Jesus rebuked Martha for serving so much, she could not 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 serve God doing what He wants – and they do not 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 do not think they have a need for the humble quiet people in the church who do not 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. He wants 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 holy and royal priesthood, working to increase the Kingdom of God. Many people do not comprehend that the reality of genuine Christianity, really is building a holy Kingdom. It is more than just believing, we are part of God’s royal family. God has called us to be more than a bunch of friendly, smiling people. We are a Kingdom of priests. There are many scriptures that refer to that throughout the Bible. If we want to be in the Kingdom, we 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.

Sacrifice is the distinctive ministry of a priest. The Bible 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). As believers, we are to reign as kings and priests to God, all over the earth (Revelation 5:10) in several different ways. Through prayer (Ephesians 6:18), by taking authority over the forces of darkness (Ephesians 6:11 to 17), by taking authority over evil governments (Proverbs 28:2 & 5), by having dominion over all wildlife (Genesis 1:26), by being humble servants (Mark 10:43 & 44) and by intercession. We are priests and kings to God and we will inherit the earth – not by force but by being meek and humble (Psalm 37:11; Matthew 5:5).

Amen and God bless you.

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