

# Equipping of the Saints

ChatGPT provided a [Mosaic and Royal Priesthood transcript](#)

**Scripture Readings:** 1 Peter 2:9; 1 Peter 2:4-6

## A Royal Priesthood

### Introduction

We've been talking about equipping the saints, "for the work of service," taken from Ephesians chapters 4 and 2. We discovered that we are to build a holy temple on top of the foundation that is Jesus Christ and that temple is us, we ventured that that then makes us priests (just as Peter tells us in 1 Peter 2:9) and that it would be wise for us to learn what it means for us to be priests.

So let's look at the saints from the perspective that we are a "Royal Priesthood." And that's what we'll do today.

### **First, Our Basis scripture is: Ephesians 4:11-13; 2:17-22** *The underlying support and foundation for our study*

#### **Ephesians 4:11-13 (NKJV, ESV, NASB, NIV)**

*And [Jesus] Himself gave some as apostles, some as prophets, some as evangelists, and some as [shepherds (ESV)] and teachers, <sup>12</sup> [to equip] the saints for the work of [service (NASB)], for [building up (ESV)] the body of Christ, <sup>13</sup> [until (ESV)] we all [attain (ESV)] to **the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God**, to [become mature (NIV)], to the [whole measure (NIV)] of the fullness of Christ;*

#### **And Ephesians 2:19-22 (ESV)**

*So then you are no longer strangers and aliens, but **you are fellow citizens with the saints and members of the household of God**, <sup>20</sup> **built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Christ Jesus himself being the cornerstone**, <sup>21</sup> **in whom the whole structure, being joined together, grows into a holy temple in the Lord**. <sup>22</sup> **In him you also are being built together into a dwelling place for God by the Spirit.***

### **Some key points from our scripture**

#### **Ephesians 4:11-13**

- The whole leadership is responsible to equip the saints for works of service
- for building up the body of Christ
- One goal to attain the unity of faith
- Another goal to attain the knowledge of the Son of God
- To become mature to... the fullness of Christ

## Ephesians 2:19-22

- We are fellow citizens, saints, and members of the household (house) of God
- We are built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets
- Jesus is the cornerstone in [Him] the whole structure, joined together
- Grows into a **holy temple** in the Lord
- You also are being built together into a **dwelling place** for God by the Spirit

And in investigating the construction metaphor that Paul uses in Ephesians 2, we came to the conclusion that **what** we need to build on top of the Rock, Cornerstone and Foundation that is Jesus Christ is a Holy temple.

As a reminder let's summarize the key passages regarding the saints being a holy temple of God.

- 1 Corinthians 3:16 - You are a temple of God, the Spirit of God dwells in you
- 1 Corinthians 6:19,20 - Your body is the temple of the Holy Spirit who is in you
- John 2:18-21 - Jesus speaking about the temple of his body.\_
- Colossians 2:9 - in [Jesus] dwells all the fullness of the Godhead **bodily**;
- **1 Corinthians 3:17 (NASB)** we read the warning...  
*If any man destroys the temple of God, God will destroy him, for the temple of God is holy, and that is what you are.*

And in our last lesson (8/25/2024) on equipping the saints, "Take Care How You Build," we explored the seriousness of building a temple of the Lord. It's on the Education page of our website if you care to review that.

The point of what we're doing today is to see how Christians being priests relates to us today. Are there any actionable responsibilities or obligations that apply to us as priests that we need to perform. After all, we, the saints, are being equipped for works of service. Does learning that we are priests now **define** our work of service that we are being equipped to do? What kind of service will we render? How about a priestly service.

We know already that we are:

- A temple of the Lord, a dwelling place for God by the Spirit.
- And a royal priesthood

Hebrews chapters 2-9,13 tells us that

- Jesus is our high priest
- Jesus is a priest in the order of Melchizedek

# So now, Let's look at a Royal Priesthood

We might not have learned that we are priests but for Peter telling us so in 1 Peter 2:5,9. But, notice in the context of that passage we read this:

## 1 Peter 2:4-6 (ESV)

*As you come to [Jesus], a living stone rejected by men but in the sight of God chosen and precious,<sup>5</sup> you yourselves like **living stones** are being **built up** as a **spiritual house**, to be a **holy priesthood**, to offer spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ.*

<sup>6</sup> *For it stands in Scripture:*

*"Behold, I am laying in Zion a stone,  
a cornerstone chosen and precious,  
and whoever believes in him  
will not be put to shame."*

So, look at what we're told. Peter incorporates the building metaphor also, just like Paul does. Here Peter describes us as "living stones" "being built up" as a "spiritual house" (one could say, as Paul does, a holy temple) to "be a holy priesthood"...

So **here in one place** is verification of our conclusion drawn from Paul's writings to the Ephesians, that we are to build a holy temple, a holy house on top of the foundation that is Jesus Christ AND that we are a holy priesthood. For what purpose?

Peter tells us next. One of the tasks that we will do in our priestly service is "**to offer spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God** through Jesus Christ."

We are a holy priesthood to service a holy temple to the Lord. Which also means, by-the-way, we are to service God in that holy temple and dwelling place for God by the Spirit. That is, a spiritual house and dwelling place.

## 1 Peter 2:9 (NKJV)

*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;*

Another activity we will do as priests: "**proclaim the praises/excellencies(ESV)/virtues(Strong's) of [God]...**"

There are two other passages that explicitly state that we are priests.

## Revelation 1:4-6 (NKJV)

*John, to the seven churches which are in Asia:*

*Grace to you and peace from Him who is and who was and who is to come, and from the seven Spirits who are before His throne,<sup>5</sup> and from Jesus Christ, the faithful witness, the firstborn from the dead, and the ruler over the kings of the earth.*

*To Him who loved us and washed us from our sins in His own blood,<sup>6</sup> and has made us kings and **priests** to His God and Father, to Him be glory and dominion forever and ever. Amen.*

We are called "priests" and kings BTW.

## And - Revelation 5:9-10 (NKJV)

*And they sang a new song, saying:  
"You are worthy to take the scroll,  
And to open its seals;  
For You were slain,  
And have redeemed us to God by Your blood  
Out of every tribe and tongue and people and nation,  
<sup>10</sup> And have made us kings and priests to our God;  
And we shall reign on the earth."*

Again, we are called "kings and priests"

## So what are our Priestly Roles & Responsibilities

The first two actions Peter mentioned of our priestly duties are:

- To offer **spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God** through Jesus Christ (1 Pet 2:5)
- Proclaim the praises/excellences/virtues of [God]... (1 Pet 2:9)

### *Looking at the first of our Royal Priestly Duties*

- **1. Offer Spiritual Sacrifices** *Acceptable to God*

We ask: *What might a spiritual sacrifice be?*

#### **In Romans 12:1 (NKJV) Paul says**

*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.*

Notice the connection of being a **living sacrifice** to our reasonable **service**. That is our **priestly** service evidently, to be a living sacrifice.

Still we ask: *what might such a living sacrifice be?*

#### **Paul says in Philippians 4:13-20 (ESV) And notice the context of this familiar verse**

*I can do all things through him who strengthens me.*

<sup>14</sup> *Yet it was kind of you to share my trouble.* <sup>15</sup> *And you Philippians yourselves know that in the beginning of the gospel, when I left Macedonia, no church entered into partnership with me in giving and receiving, except you only.* <sup>16</sup> *Even in Thessalonica you sent me help for my needs once and again.* <sup>17</sup> *Not that I seek the gift, but I seek the fruit that increases to your credit.* <sup>18</sup> *I have received full payment, and more. I am well supplied, having received from Epaphroditus the gifts you sent, a fragrant offering, a **sacrifice acceptable and pleasing to God.*** <sup>19</sup> *And my God will supply every need of yours according to his riches in glory in Christ Jesus.* <sup>20</sup> *To our God and Father be glory forever and ever. Amen.*

What was the **acceptable and pleasing sacrifice to God**? The Philippians **kindness to share** Paul's trouble. They **sent help** for his needs **multiple times**. Their **gifts** (and **their giving of themselves and material**) were "a sacrifice acceptable and pleasing to God."

The Hebrew writer is more direct:

**In Hebrews 13:16 (ESV) he says:**

*Do not neglect to do good and to share what you have, for such **sacrifices are pleasing to God.***

Why should we sacrifice and share? Because we are priests and that's what priests do, sacrifice.

**And in Hebrews 13:15 (ESV) we are told...**

*Through him then let us continually offer up **a sacrifice of praise to God**, that is, the fruit of lips that acknowledge his name.*

Our praise is a sacrifice to God, the fruit of our lips, specifically mentioned here: acknowledging His name.

## Information generated by ChatGPT

**At this point I asked my research assistant, ChatGPT**

What are the duties and responsibilities of the royal priesthood.

NOTE

And I mention a word of caution here. I am careful how I utilize ChatGPT. It favors the "experts" and in the case of religious questions, it favors the theologians. And since my questions have been about the saints, ALL the saints, being a royal priesthood, ChatGPT has favored reformation theologians and not catholic theologians. I assume that's because every member being a priest isn't applicable to Catholicism since they have a clergy of priests. At any rate, ChatGPT will not offer a restoration explanation unless you ask it specifically. So be like the BEREANS and search the scriptures to see if what ChatGPT says is true.

**ChatGPT said**

The concept of Christians as a "royal priesthood" is rooted in 1 Peter 2:9, where believers are described as "a chosen people, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, God's special possession." This New Testament understanding of priesthood differs from the Old Testament Levitical priesthood, but it carries significant spiritual duties and responsibilities. Here's a look at what these priestly duties and responsibilities entail for Christians:

And Chat listed (I'll call ChatGPT, Chat for short) eight (8) things with biblical references for priestly duties of Christians. The first one is also what we came up with: *Spiritual Sacrifices*.

I had it also generate the duties and responsibilities of the Mosaic priesthood. Unsurprisingly, the 1<sup>st</sup> one mentioned is *Offering Sacrifices* These would be physical not spiritual sacrifices. Many duties are similar, some are specific and unique to each priesthood. One of the duties missing from the Royal priesthood that's in the Mosaic I think should be in the Christian Royal priesthood: *Maintaining the Tabernacle/Temple*. I added it to the list.

## • 2 (Mosaic) Maintaining the Tabernacle/Temple

- **Care of the Sacred Space:** The priests were responsible for the maintenance of the Tabernacle (and later the Temple), ensuring it remained a holy and sanctified place. They took care of the sacred vessels, the altar, the lampstand (Menorah), and the Ark of the Covenant (Numbers 4:5-16).
- **Lighting the Lampstand:** They were responsible for keeping the lampstand lit with pure olive oil, which was to burn continually before the Lord (Exodus 27:20-21).

### NOTE

Tom Freed & Jim Lokenbauer gave sermons on [Jesus is the Tabernacle HTML - and PDF](#) and [Yahweh Our Tabernacle HTML - and PDF](#) and [Part2 HTML - and PDF](#) which addresses Jesus and Jehovah/Yahweh and the Tabernacle/Temple. I have included links to their lessons here if you would like to see them.

The other Mosaic duties are not listed in this lesson.

## RETURNING TO ROYAL PRIESTHOOD LIST

### • 2. Interceding for Others

- **Prayer and Intercession:** Like the Old Testament priests who interceded for the people, Christians are called to intercede for others through prayer. This includes praying for the needs of fellow believers, for the salvation of others, and for the world at large (1 Timothy 2:1-2; James 5:16).
- **Standing in the Gap:** Believers are to "stand in the gap" spiritually, praying for God's mercy, guidance, and intervention in the lives of others (Ezekiel 22:30, though originally addressed to Israel, is often applied to the concept of intercession).

### • 3. Proclaiming God's Word

- **Sharing the Gospel:** Christians have the responsibility to proclaim the good news of Jesus Christ to others. This is part of the Great Commission (Matthew 28:18-20) and involves evangelism, teaching, and discipleship.
- **Teaching and Encouraging:** Believers are called to teach others, whether through formal roles or simply by sharing God's truth in daily life. They are to encourage one another with the Word of God, building each other up in faith (Colossians 3:16; Hebrews 10:24-25).

### • 4. Living a Holy and Set-Apart Life

- **Holiness:** Just as the priests in the Old Testament were to be holy, Christians are called to live lives of holiness and purity, set apart for God's purposes (1 Peter 1:15-16). This involves moral integrity, ethical behavior, and aligning one's life with God's standards.
- **Being Salt and Light:** Christians are to live in such a way that they reflect God's character to the world, being "the salt of the earth" and "the light of the world" (Matthew 5:13-16).

### • 5. Serving Others

- **Ministering to Needs:** The Christian priesthood involves serving others, particularly within the body of Christ but also extending to all people. This service can take many forms, including acts of kindness, hospitality, giving, and providing for the needs of the poor and marginalized (Galatians 6:10; Matthew 25:31-46).

- **6. Participating in the Ministry of Reconciliation**

- Ambassadors for Christ: Christians are called to be ambassadors for Christ, helping to reconcile others to God through the message of the gospel (2 Corinthians 5:18-20). This involves sharing the message of forgiveness and salvation and guiding others to peace with God.
- Promoting Peace and Unity: As part of their priestly role, Christians should work to maintain peace and unity within the church and promote reconciliation in all relationships (Ephesians 4:3).

- **7. Offering Thanksgiving and Gratitude**

- Continuous Thanksgiving: Christians are encouraged to maintain an attitude of thanksgiving, regularly expressing gratitude to God for His blessings and provisions (1 Thessalonians 5:18). This is a form of spiritual sacrifice and worship.

- **8. Participating in Corporate Worship**

- Gathering with the Church: Regular participation in corporate worship with other believers is part of the priestly role. This includes communal prayer, singing, reading of Scripture, and participating in the sacraments (Hebrews 10:24-25; Acts 2:42).
- Celebrating the Lord's Supper: Christians participate in the Lord's Supper (Communion) as a way of remembering Christ's sacrifice and proclaiming His death until He comes again (1 Corinthians 11:23-26).

## **Conclusion**

As a "royal priesthood," Christians are called to live lives dedicated to worship, service, and holiness. Their priestly duties involve offering spiritual sacrifices, interceding for others, proclaiming God's Word, serving those in need, living in holiness, participating in reconciliation, expressing gratitude, and engaging in corporate worship. These responsibilities are not limited to a select few but are the calling of all believers, reflecting their role as representatives of Christ on earth. This priesthood is not about performing rituals, but about living a life that honors God and reflects His love and truth to the world.