

THE PRIESTHOOD OF ALL BELIEVERS

(Part 16 – series on Baptist Distinctives)

TEXT: 1 Peter 2:5,9
Hebrews 4:14-16

INTRODUCTION: One of the truths that we as Baptists cherish and share with many other believers is that of our **spiritual priesthood**. While we dare not usurp the place of our great High Priest, the Lord Jesus Christ, in His work of atonement and propitiation, we rejoice in the privilege of offering several other “spiritual sacrifices” (1 Pet. 2:5).

At least six of these spiritual sacrifices are listed in the new Testament. The highest and noblest is **intercessory prayer**. Yet this is probably the most neglected, even though it is a privilege available to all the saints (Ps. 149:9). Jesus told the woman of Samaria, “If you knew... you would ask...” (Jn. 4:10). Likewise, if believers only knew the authority that Christ has delegated to them through prayer as “priests unto God,” they would ask and receive great things from God!

OUTLINE: What kind of authority has been given to us to intercede for others?

I. The Meaning of New Testament Priesthood

II. The Qualifications of a New Testament Priest (Leviticus 8)

III. The Responsibilities of a Believer-Priest

A. To offer “spiritual sacrifices” (1 Pet. 2:5)

1. Our physical bodies (Rom. 12:1,2)
2. Our unstinting expenditure for others (Phil. 2:17)
3. Our proclaiming of the Gospel (Rom. 15:16)
4. Our sacrificial giving of our means (Phil. 4:15-19; Heb. 13:16).
5. Our praising God with our lips (Heb. 13:15; Hos. 14:2)

B. To boldly intercede (Heb. 4:14-16; 10:19-22)

1. A **delegated** authority (Matt. 28:18,19; Isa. 45:11)
 - a. Because of our union with Christ (Eph. 1:23; John 15:7)
 - b. Because of our unction from the Holy Spirit (Jn. 14:12,13)
2. A **discriminating** authority (given only to those qualified)
 - a. Holiness (Ex. 28:36-37, Lev. 8:13)
 - b. Faith (James 1:5-7)

- c. Humility (1 Cor. 10:12)
 - d. Boldness (1 Jn. 5:14,15; Heb. 10:19-22)
 - e. Fear (Heb. 5:7)
3. A **dynamic** authority
- a. Removing obstacles (Matt. 17:20; Ex. 14:15; 2 Kgs. 2:8,14)
 - b. Wrestling with unseen powers (Eph. 6:12; Mk. 9:29; 1 Thess. 5:17)

IV. The Repudiation of Unscriptural Hierarchy

V. The Implications of New Testament Priesthood

CONCLUSION: What great authority Christ has delegated to His earthly priests! Let us not shrink from wielding it either out of mock humility or from disillusionment with counterfeit priests – such as the purveyors of the “prosperity gospel.”

Are mountains being moved by our prayers? Are spiritual battles in the heavenlies being won by our wrestlings? If not, let us not blame the “secret will” of God. Let us earnestly examine ourselves to see wherein we “ask amiss” (James 4:3) or if we have “fainted” before receiving the answer.

Let us solemnly examine ourselves to make sure we meet the scriptural qualifications for priestly intercession, and then let us give ourselves to this blessed employment with all the boldness of divine authority. This is our spiritual birthright!