

Bible Studies

Royal Priesthood

But you are a chosen people, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people belonging to God, that you may declare the praises of him who called you out of darkness into his wonderful light. 1 Peter 2:9

In 1517 Luther nailed a list of 95 'propositions' to the door of a church in Wittenberg, Germany. These propositions were areas where he felt the Catholic Church's teachings deviated from Scripture. The most controversial of these was his view of the 'Priesthood of the Saints'. This doctrine is now a cornerstone of our church practice.

The Catholic Church was the only established Church in Europe, it had a monopoly on worship. It taught that the only way to approach God was through the Church, its seven sacraments and its priests, who exclusively administered the sacraments. Ordinary Christians were not holy enough to know God for themselves, they were even discouraged from reading the scriptures. Luther saw that this was not what the Bible taught. His actions in Wittenberg are considered the start of the Reformation, which eventually led to the formation of Churches like ours.

Why was this such a controversial teaching?



What is a priest?

A priest ministers to God on behalf of man, for example in the Tabernacle or the Temple. A priest represents man to God and God to man. He is an intermediary or go between.



Who could be priests?

In the days of the Patriarchs (Adam to Joseph), it was the head of the family who acted as the priest. So Abraham interceded for Abimelech *Gen 20v17*, Job sacrificed for his family *Job 1v5*, etc.

Later under Moses, Aaron and his descendants (the tribe of Levi) were appointed as priests, for the whole nation. Israel itself was to be a priestly nation on behalf of all people.

Could anyone be a priest?

Numbers 3v10
1 Kings 13v33-34
Hebrews 5v4

How did you become a priest?

The patriarchs became priests because they were the head of their family, the Levites by descent. But as Hebrews 5 points out a priest is a priest because of God's call.



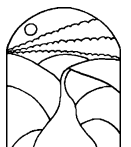
What did a priest do?

- They served at the altar**
- They judged religious and civil law** Lev 27v14, Deut 17v8
- They declared people clean** Luke 17v14
- They pronounced on contamination & cleansing.** Lev 13v9
- They taught the Law** Malachi 2v7
- They mediated between God and Man** Deut 17v12
- The priests made sacrifices.** Lev 5v8
- They prayed for the people.** 2 Chro 30v27

They worked in Tabernacle/Temple offering sacrifices. Because there were so many they did this in shifts. There were 24 sections of priests who ministered for a few weeks then returned to their homes in the villages around Jerusalem. Eg Luke 1 (birth of John the Baptist foretold) Zechariah entered the holy place, he was chosen by lot, it was a great privilege that may never be repeated, some priests never got to enter the Holy place.

The priests were required to live by a higher standard of purity than the ordinary people. Leviticus 21-22. To this day in Israel Jews with the name Cohen (=priest) or Levi are restricted to whom they can marry.

It was required that they were sanctified and consecrated. They were given special clothes to wear which symbolised their purity.





Jesus our Priest

<i>Selected from among men</i>	<i>Hebrews 5v1</i>
<i>Represents Men</i>	
<i>Sympathises with our weakness</i>	
<i>Appointed by God</i>	<i>Hebrews 5v4</i>
<i>In a new order after Melchizedek</i>	<i>Hebrews 5v9</i>
<i>He is a permanent priest</i>	<i>Hebrews 7v23</i>
<i>He makes intercession for us</i>	<i>Hebrews 7v25</i>
<i>Did not have to offer sacrifices for his own sin</i>	<i>Hebrews 7v26</i>
<i>A perfect priest who meets our needs</i>	
<i>Entered the heavenly Tabernacle</i>	<i>Hebrews 8v3</i>
<i>Offered Himself</i>	<i>Hebrews 10v5</i>
<i>With His own Blood</i>	<i>Hebrews 9v17</i>
<i>Mediates a New Covenant</i>	<i>Hebrews 9v15</i>
<i>Made one sacrifice for ever</i>	<i>Hebrews 9v25</i>

Jesus is our Great High Priest. He represented God and Man perfectly and was therefore the perfect substitutional sacrifice. **Why was this?**

Christ opened the way for us to approach God. *Hebrews 9v8*. Our priesthood relies on His High Priesthood.



Our Priesthood

1 Peter 2v5 & 9
Revelation 1v6, 5v10, 20v6

Each of us including women is a priest, this was God's intention, '*you will be for me a kingdom of priests and a holy nation.*' Exodus 19v6

We are called *1 Pet 1v2, 2v9* Jesus said *You did not choose me, but I chose you* John 15v16

We are to be Holy Colossians 3v12

We have a higher standard, Romans 12v2, 1 Peter 4v17

We have special clothes (Put on Christ) Romans 13v14

Garments of Salvation, Robe of Righteousness *Isaiah 61v10*



**If we are all priests, what does this say about the role of a pastor?
In what way does our priesthood differ from Jesus?
How do the higher standard and the special clothes, relate to us?**



Our Job as Priests

The patriarchs were priests for their families, does this have an implication for us?

To minister to God in worship *that you may declare the praises of him who called you out of darkness into his wonderful light.* 1 Peter 2v9

To bring a sacrifice of praise *Through Jesus, therefore, let us continually offer to God a sacrifice of praise—the fruit of lips that confess his name.* Hebrews 13v15

To offer spiritual sacrifices *be a holy priesthood, offering spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ.* 1 Peter 2v5

To come near to God *let us draw near to God* Hebrews 10v22, 7v19, James 4, Eph 2v13. This is an obligation not an option what good is a priest who cannot come near to God.

To bring requests Revelation 5v8

What kind of requests?

To intercede for the people The High priest had a breastplate on which the names of the tribes were engraved, he carried their names before the Lord, we do the same

Who should we intercede for?

To serve God *to be a minister of Christ Jesus to the Gentiles with the priestly duty of proclaiming the gospel of God,* Rom 15v16

To reign with Christ Revelation 5v10



Who else do we function as priests towards?

Not only are we priests as individuals, we are also a kingdom of priests. cf Exodus 19v6. This means we have a responsibility to the world around us.

What kind of responsibilities do we have as priests to the world?