

KINGS AND PRIESTS

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Hebrews 8:1 reminds us that Jesus Christ occupies both the position of High Priest and also that of King: “Now of the things which we have spoken this is the sum: We have such a high priest, who is set on the right hand of the throne of the Majesty in the heavens.” He is a High Priest after the order of Melchizedek (Heb 5:10), which is an eternal, unchangeable priesthood (Heb 7:24). His reign as King on the throne of David will also have no end (Luke 1:32-33). As followers of him, we have been blessed “with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ” (Eph 1:3). A portion of these blessings is mentioned in Revelation 1:5-6, which describes Jesus Christ as “him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood, and *hath made us kings and priests* unto God and his Father.” Each of these positions, as a king and a priest, has particular meaning and is important for each Christian to understand and appreciate.

The royal priesthood

In Jeremiah 33:22, this great prophecy is given: “As the host of heaven cannot be numbered, neither the sand of the sea measured: *so will I multiply the seed of David my servant, and the Levites that minister unto me.*” The context of this passage and a comparison with other scriptures reveals this to be a New Testament prophecy, exactly as Revelation 1:5-6 fulfills. The number of Christians continues to be multiplied over time, and we are this spiritual seed of David (kings), and these ministering Levites (priests). For now, as we consider our position as priests, we recall that Malachi 3:3 also prophesied that Christians would be spiritual “sons of Levi.” Jacob’s son Levi is described as a man who feared the Lord (Mal 2:5), and “the law of truth was in his mouth, and iniquity was not found in his lips: he walked with me in peace and equity, and did turn many away from iniquity” (Mal 2:6). This is why God made the covenant of Priesthood with Levi under the Law of Moses, as his descendants were to be exactly like he was. This was the essence of the job of the Levitical priesthood (Mal 2:7). We are not physical Levites today, and we do not occupy an earthly or physical priesthood. Yet Christians are very much the spiritual descendants of Levi and heirs of his spiritual tradition. As Christians, it is necessary for us to fear the Lord, for our lips to keep knowledge, for us to seek God’s law and to be His messengers in this world, to turn many away from iniquity. Ezekiel 44:23 also foretold that Christians would carry on the priestly work of teaching the difference between what is holy and profane, clean and unclean. Jesus described our job as being the salt of the earth and the light of the world, that will cause men to glorify God for the good works that they see us do (Matt 5:13-16).

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(continued)

We truly are “built up a spiritual house, *a holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God by Jesus Christ*” (1 Pet 2:5).

Verse 9 of this same passage says, “But ye are a chosen generation, *a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a peculiar people; that ye should show forth the praises of him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvelous light.*”

Reigning with Christ

Jeremiah 33:17 prophesied that “David shall never want a man to sit upon the throne of the house of Israel.” We know that this ultimately refers to Christ, as the angel Gabriel spoke to Mary of his impending birth: “He shall be great, and shall be called the Son of the Highest: and the Lord God shall give unto him the throne of his father David: and he shall reign over the house of Jacob for ever; and of his kingdom there shall be no end” (Luke 1:32-33). Indeed, God has made His Son Jesus “both Lord *and Christ*” (Acts 2:36). Yet we also have seen that Jeremiah 33:22 foretold that under Christ, the seed of David would be *multiplied*. Again, this is a reference to the fact that Christians are made kings with Christ. Revelation 5:10 says that Jesus Christ “hath made us unto our God kings and priests: and we shall reign on the earth.” The Apostle John connects our royal position to the fact that we are currently “in the kingdom and patience of Jesus Christ” (Rev 1:5-9). Colossians 1:13 also speaks of the fact that God “hath delivered us from the power of darkness, and hath translated us into the kingdom of his dear Son.” Without question, we must be in Christ, in his kingdom (his church), to be made kings unto God by him. We also must possess that *endurance* (patience) that John referred to in Revelation 1:9). In Revelation 2:26-27, Jesus promised, “And *he that overcometh, and keepeth my works unto the end*, to him will I give power over the nations: and he shall rule them with a rod of iron; as the vessels of a potter shall they be broken to shivers: even as I received of my Father.” Revelation 7:13-17 similarly describes those who “came out of great tribulation, and have washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb” as the ones who will be before God’s throne in eternity serving him day and night in his temple. Interestingly, in Luke 19:11-27, Christ taught his parable of the talents in connection with the coming of his kingdom and his own heavenly reign. That parable also teaches about the positions of responsibility and authority that Christ’s servants will be given under his reign. Revelation 22:3-5 speaks of heaven, where the Lord’s servants will be busy serving Him, where “*they shall reign for ever and ever.*”