

'PORTRAITS OF CHRIST IN THE TABERNACLE' **(*'The Priesthood' / God's Biblical Plan for Servant Leaders*)** **Exodus & Leviticus**

'Holy Orders'

One of the Roman Catholic Church's more serious errors is their unbiblical view of priests. The so-called sacrament of *holy orders* not only sets up a religious caste system deplored by God in the New Testament (*Nicolaitism – Revelation 2:6, 15/ 'nik-ay' (power, authority) & 'la-os' (people), thus 'power or authority over the people – a system of religious leaders, not serving people like a shepherd, but ruling over them like a royal potentate*). In the Old Testament priesthood of Israel, priests DID NOT serve as vicars (*clergy in the place of God or Christ*). They had high standard prerequisites of high moral character, impeccable personal lives and *fear of God* reverence that is reflected in the NT requirements for spiritual leaders in a church (*1 Timothy 3, Titus 1 and 1 Peter 5*). All Roman Catholic priests are seen as superiors to the sheep, not servant-leaders who feed God's flock Spirit-filled teaching from the Bible, both in word and example. Furthermore, their superiority entitlement as *stand-ins* for Christ in *the confessional booth*, superstitious liturgy of the mass and enforcement of the sacraments as *the way of salvation* through the RCC church traditions, sacraments and rituals, instead of loyalty to Christ and the Bible alone. RCC's unholy orders negates all Scriptural teaching about the *priesthood of the believer*, which God wants all of His believers to know and experience as the normal Christian lifestyle (1 Peter 2:9-12).

The biblical Christian doctrine of *the priesthood of the believer* is clearly a basic NT teaching of Scripture, written to the Church in general by Apostle Peter: ***"But you (all Christians) 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; who once were not a people but now are the people of God, who had not obtained mercy but now have obtained mercy..." (1 Peter 2:9-12)***.

But in the medieval period of history (*middle or dark ages*) when Roman Catholicism developed their denominational hierarchy creating a religious caste system of *secular* and *spiritual* where ordained clergy (*bishops, priests, deacons*) were considered superior to the non-ordained *laity* under their jurisdiction. To highlight the superiority of priesthood, 'special orders' of clergy started; special garb (*robes, hats, notched collars, religious accessories and nun-habits, monasteries, etc.*) led to adoration by the *secular (non-clergy laity)* to the *spiritual (popes, priests, archbishops, bishops)*. Genuflecting to priests & bishops, kissing their hand or ring, etc. became expected in the dark ages and continues today. This blatant 'Nicolaitism' of the RCC is not only abhorrent sacrilege to God and His Word, but it has also diminished the believers' role to become a mere spectator of religious pageantry performed by a priest, expected of little more than paying for services rendered and unquestioning trust in the priesthood to stand in the place of the Lord Jesus Christ (*usually by means of idolatry, liturgy, relics and Mariolatry*) in all matters of confession, absolution of sin, penance, etc. The Reformation (primarily Martin Luther/ 1517) sought unsuccessfully to return to the biblical teaching of *the priesthood of all believers* and the High Priest mediation of the Lord Jesus Christ: ***"...there is one God and one Mediator between God and men, the Man Christ Jesus" (1 Timothy 2:5-6)***.

Returning to the biblical belief that all believers are given the responsibility to faithfully serve one another as priests under Christ, the Great High Priest (*Hebrews 8:1-2, 10:19-25*). The local church is the sphere where believers are to be zealously faithful in attendance, serving one another with our spiritual gifts in ministry, prayer, and fellowship. Christianity was never to be a *spectator religion!* Every believer is to be an active participant ministering the *bread of life (learning and serving the Word of God to the flock of God)*, lighting the candelabra through evangelism, dispelling spirit darkness by enlightening others to the true gospel message, and praying without ceasing at the altar of incense. Thus, turning our lives and our home church into a **holy place** of service this side of glory. A casual look at the tabernacle reveals that there were no chairs, pews, or seating in the tabernacle. This is an obvious message from God that the Christian life is not for sitting around watching others put on a religious show for us to watch! The Christian life is a *walk with Christ* in which we all are to serve God and one another all our earthly lives. We do this knowing

that our Savior is praying for us beyond ‘the veil’ of this life, in the Holiest of Holies in heaven. Until we join Him there, we are to do His work on earth here. All religious systems-- Catholic, Protestant, and world religions create unbiblical *clergy-priest* castes and denominations that become the exact opposite of the NT doctrine of *the priesthood of all believers*. Yes, there are spiritual leaders who equip, lead, feed, and protect God’s flock full time, but every believer is ordained as a spiritual priest the day we were saved (John 15:16). All believers are priests of God; this was never in question. The real question is, are you a good one or a bad one? That’s up to each one of us to answer – one of these days Jesus, the Great High Priest, will evaluate and reward each accordingly (2 Corinthians 5:9-11). PtL

The Believer Priest

(Department of Christ’s Priests & Kings)

Please read the following and discuss how it makes you feel about who you are in Christ right now and the future kingdom role you will have.

“To Him Who loved us and washed us from our sins in His own blood, and has made us kings and priests to His God and Father, to Him be glory and dominion forever and ever. Amen.” **Revelation 1:5-6**

“.....(You) have redeemed us to God by Your blood out of every tribe and tongue and people and nation, and have made us kings and priests to our God; and we shall reign on the earth.” **Revelation 5:9-10**

“...Well done, good servant; because you were faithful in a very little, have authority over ten cities...”
(Millennial Kingdom ministry) **Luke 19:11-19**

“Do you not know that the saints will judge (rule) the world?...Do you not know that we shall judge angels? How much more, things that pertain to this life?” **1 Corinthians 6:2-3**

“But hold fast what you have till I come. And he who overcomes and keeps My work until the end, to him I will give power over the nations ...” **Revelation 2:26**

“To him who overcomes I will grant to sit with Me on My throne, as I also overcame and sat down with My Father on His throne.” **Revelation 3:21**

“...the time (has come) that You should reward Your servants the prophets and saints and those who fear Your Name, small and great...” **Revelation 11:18**

Priestly Apparel

(Exodus 39)

God wanted priests to have an outer appearance of grace, dignity and modesty becoming of someone serving in an important spiritual capacity. In light of this OT principle, what do you think about believers today and how they dress or appear in church & the world? Does it matter what you look like when ministering to others in church or a class? (Why?) (*Ephesians 5:8-12*)

Priestly Appearance

(Leviticus 21)

God wanted priests to have an admirable and blameless lifestyle. This passage implies that a servant of the Lord needed to not only look nice and respectable, but that the lifestyle of spouse, family, physical appearance, etc. was important. In the NT, we have standards for ministry leaders in *1 Timothy 3:1-13*, *Titus 1:5-9* & *1 Peter 5:1-4* (*ladies/ Titus 2:3-5*) and young adults (*Titus 2:6-8*). Why is this important to remember as NT ‘believer priests’?

Priestly Approval

(Leviticus 10)

This passage is a warning that serving God in ministry is an honor and privilege that isn’t to be taken for granted or done sloppily. Apparently, Aaron’s sons were reckless in serving the Lord and God destroyed them on the spot. God doesn’t usually execute those who are guilty of ministry without personal godliness as they do it, the point is clear that we ought to serve the Lord in humility and reverence. What do you do to be sure you are ready to minister prior to doing it? (*1 Timothy 1:19-20*, *2 Timothy 4:14-15*, *3 John 9-11*)