

Spiritual Growth Lessons

LESSON 19 of 32



"But ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people; that ye should shew forth the praises of him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvellous light:" (I Peter 2:9).

"And hath made us kings and priests unto God . . ." (Revelation 1:6).

In this lesson, we shall study two beautiful relationships we have with Jesus Christ. The above two verses of Scripture declare unto us that we are a royal priesthood; that is, we are spiritual priests, but we are also sons of the King of Kings, and share His throne!

SPIRITUAL PRIESTS

"Ye also, as lively stones, are built up a spiritual house, an holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God by Jesus Christ" (I Peter 2:5).

God had originally promised Israel: *"If ye will obey my voice indeed, and keep my covenant, then ye shall be a peculiar treasure unto me above all people: for all the earth is mine: And ye shall be unto me a kingdom of priests, and an holy nation"* (Exodus 19:5, 6).

Because the nation of Israel was disobedient to God, and did not keep His covenant, they never became a *"kingdom of priests, and an holy nation."* Instead, it was to the blood-washed, Spirit-filled believers that Peter wrote: *"Ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, and an holy nation."*

1. The duties of the priests under the Law.

The main duties of the priests under the Law was to offer sacrifices. There were many different kinds of sacrifices. Most of them were for the purpose of getting right with God. If a man sinned, an animal was slain and offered as a substitute for his own blood, because the Bible declares: *"the soul that sinneth, it shall die"* (Ezekiel 18:4), and *"the wages of sin is death"* (Romans 6:23). By the offering of these type of sacrifices, the priest interceded for the guilty person. The priest also offered *"thanksgiving offerings"* to the Lord (Leviticus 7:11-13)

2. The duties of the "spiritual priests."

"By him therefore let us offer the sacrifice of praise to God continually, that is, the fruit of our lips giving thanks to his name" (Hebrews 13:15).

"I exhort therefore, that, first of all, supplications, prayers, intercessions, and giving of thanks, be made for all men (I Timothy 2:1).

Peter tells us that we are to *"offer up spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God by Jesus Christ"* (I Peter 1:5). This we do when we worship Jesus with our praise and thanksgiving. How can we ensure our *"spiritual sacrifices"* (praise and thanksgiving) are acceptable to God? By making sure we have first offered ourselves as a living sacrifice: *"I beseech you therefore brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service"* (Romans 12:1).



Our worship must be sincere, and when we have first surrendered ourselves totally to Jesus, it will be. Someone has truthfully said, "Sincerity is when heart and tongue agree!"

OUR POSITION AS KINGS

Many Christians have the idea that we will reign as kings only in the future millenium. However, notice that Peter wrote "*Ye are . . . a royal priesthood*" (I Peter 2:9). Webster Dictionary tells us the meaning of "royal" is: "of kingly ancestry." That means an "outsider" cannot buy his way into the royal family. He must be born into it! When we are born into the kingdom of God by baptism in the name of Jesus Christ, and receiving the baptism of the Holy Spirit, we become joint heirs with Jesus Christ: "*The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God: And if children, then heirs; heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ; if so be that we suffer with him, that we may be also glorified together*" (Romans 8:16, 17).

This certainly does not mean that we are equal in all things with Jesus Christ. It does mean that as "kings," we have been given some authority, and we need to use it. Paul makes this clearer to us when we study his letter to the church at Ephesus: "*. . . making mention of you in my prayers; That the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give unto you the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of him: The eyes of your understanding being enlightened; that ye may know what is the hope of his calling, and what the riches of the glory of his inheritance in the saints, And what is the exceeding greatness of his power to us-ward who believe, according to the working of his mighty power. Which he wrought in Christ, when he raised him from the dead and set him at his own right hand in the heavenly places. Far above all principality, and power, and might, and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this world, but also in that which is to come: And hath put all things under his feet and gave him to be the head over all things to the church, Which is his body, the fulness of him that filleth all in all. And you hath he quickened (*made alive), who were dead in trespasses and sins; But God, who is rich in mercy, for his great love wherewith he loved us, Even we we were dead in sins, hath quickened (*made alive) us together with Christ, (by grace ye are saved;) And hath raised us up together, and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus"* (Ephesians 1:16-23; 2:1, 4-6). *(Bible Margin)

Herein is a beautiful truth that we must understand if we will live an overcoming and victorious life over the kingdom of Satan. Please notice what Paul wrote:

1. Jesus:

- a. died, and was raised from the dead.
- b. He was elevated to a place of authority "*in the heavenly places, far above all principality, and power, and might, and dominion.*"

2. We:

- a. were "dead in trespasses and sins."
- b. When we repented of our sins, and were filled with the Holy Ghost, we were quickened, or made alive. We were raised up together with Jesus to sit in heavenly places.

The reason many people do not understand this beautiful truth is because they don't

understand the meaning of the term used here "in heavenly places." The word "heavenly" used here comes from the Greek word "epouranios," which is translated: celestial, heaven, or high. The word "heavenly" often has the meaning: "the spiritual realm," and this is what Paul is referring to. He wrote about something that had already happened to the church at Ephesus: God *"hath raised us up together and made us sit together in heavenly places."*

This truth is so important that Paul prayed for the church at Ephesus that the eyes of their understanding would be opened, and they would realize *"what is the hope of his calling, and what the riches of the glory of his inheritance in the saints, and what is the exceeding greatness of his power to us-ward who believe."*

We do not rule and reign over each other, but we do share Christ's throne of authority over the Satanic kingdom.

The term "principalities, and powers" is used by Paul in several places in his writings, and refers to the spirit world, which consists of the angels of God, and also the Satanic kingdom (Satan and the fallen angels and demons below his authority. Satan's kingdom is highly divided, with demons of different rank and position). Read Ephesians 3:10; 6:12; Colossians 1:16; 2:15.

In the spiritual kingdom of God, we are seated on the throne with Jesus Christ--in the place of power, authority, and victory. But remember, we are little kings. He is the King of kings. We must make sure that we have made Him Lord and King over our total being. *ds*

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