**Priesthood of the Believer**

**DIRECT ACCESS TO GOD**

**INTRODUCTION:**

The Bible declares that every believer is a priest of God and may enter into His presence in prayer directly through our Great High Priest, Jesus Christ. Today, we will look into this and explain what this means.

1. **PRIESTHOOD OF THE BELIEVER DEFINED**
   1. **The doctrine of the priesthood of the believer states that any believer has the same access to the Throne of Grace as any other believer.**
   2. **We have no human being between us and our Great High Priest, Jesus Christ.** *I Timothy 2:5*
   3. **As priests, Baptists believe the Bible teaches the following:**
2. All Christians can go to the Bible for spiritual guidance. *John 5:39*
3. The pastor is a leader and guide, but not to be considered infallible. *Acts 20:28*
4. All Christians can study the Bible for themselves and seek the Holy Spirit’s instruction to understand the Bible. *John 16:13*
5. All Christians can confess their sins directly to God and expect that God has forgiven them. *I John 1:9*
6. All Christians who are living in obedience to what they know to be God’s Word have as effective prayers as any preacher. *James 5:16*
7. **EXPLANATION OF PRIEST** 
   1. **The first priest was Melchizedek.** *Genesis 14:18*
      1. Abraham paid tithes to Him.
      2. He becomes the prototype for the priests that follow.
         1. He was “made like unto the Son of God.” *Hebrews 7:3*
         2. He was a representative, a servant of the Lord.
   2. **The family of priests – Levites.** 
      1. During the Mosaic period, God established a family of priests, which were known as the Levites.
      2. The Levites were set apart wholly for God.
      3. They owned no property.
      4. They were not counted as one of the twelve tribes of Israel.
      5. They did not serve in the military.
      6. They were God’s chosen of God’s chosen.
   3. **A priest is someone chosen of God and sacred to God.** 
      1. The priest’s function was to go before God on the behalf of men, while the prophet’s job was to go before men on the behalf of God.
      2. There are only two words in the Bible that are translated into the English word “priest.”
         1. The prime root of the Hebrew word is “mediator.”
         2. The prime root of the Greek word is “sacred.”
      3. All believers qualify as priests under the Old Testament conditions.
         1. We are sacred to God. *I Corinthians 6:20*
         2. We are no longer a part of this world. *II Corinthians 6:17*
         3. Our primary task on earth is to reconcile men and women to God.
8. **THE POSSESSORS OF THE PRIESTHOOD** 
   1. **Those who are loved of Christ and have been washed in His blood are the possessors of the priesthood.** *Revelation 1:5-6*
      1. Christ loves every individual that has ever been born, but only those that have been washed in His blood are priests!
      2. All who are saved are automatically priests.
   2. **The proclaimer of the priesthood is Jesus Christ.**
9. Jesus Christ washed us and made us kings and priests.
10. We are not self-proclaimed priests like those in Northern Israel were, but the Lord Himself has called us out, fitted us for the job, and proclaimed us to be priests.
11. **THE PATTERN OF THE PRIESTHOOD** 
    1. **The priests in the Old Testament were the ones who went before God on behalf of others.**
12. They were the ones who could go into the Holy Place of the tabernacle.
13. In that context, consider *Hebrews 4:16*. We can all come before God because we are all priests.
    1. **Notice what the priest could do, and the same is true with us.** 
       1. He was the mediator or intercessor. *I Timothy 2:1-3* tells us that we have the position of interceding to God for men.
       2. He was anointed or set apart for the ministry.
          1. One of the benefits of this anointing is the ability to be taught of God. Not only can we get to God and speak with Him, but we can go to God’s Word and He will speak with us! *I John 2:27*
          2. As priests, we can each hear God for ourselves. The Lord gives us pastors and teachers, but we are not totally dependent upon them. We can receive instruction from God ourselves from the Bible.
          3. This anointing also means that all believers are set apart for the work of the Lord today. *Ephesians 2:10*
14. **THE PERVERSIONS OF THIS DISTINCTIVE** 
    1. **This distinctive has been challenged and maligned by other groups.**
15. Along with the Catholic origination of a hierarchy over churches, there also came a separation between the hierarchy and the people.
16. The leadership of the Catholic Church began to be looked upon as more sacred than the membership.
    1. **The results were the following:**
       1. The priests were supposed to be the guides for spiritual affairs.
       2. A layman would have to get all direction spiritually from the priest.
       3. While the Lord gives us pastors and teachers to help us in our spiritual walk, they are not infallible directors of our walk with God!
       4. Only the priests were allowed to possess and study the Bible and other books concerning spiritual things.
       5. The practice of confessing sins to priests was instituted.
17. This was instituted on the grounds that the priest was the mediator between God and man. As a mediator, you would confess your sins to him, and he could forgive you.
18. History shows that these priests used information obtained through the confessionals to coerce their parishioners to do as they desired them.
    * 1. The priest’s prayers are considered more effective than the laymen’s prayer.
19. That doctrine is totally false!
20. Nowhere does the Bible say that one person’s prayers are more effective than another’s, except that a righteous man’s prayers are effectual. *James 5:16-18*

**CONCLUSION:**

The doctrine of the priesthood of the believer is something we shouldn’t take for granted. What a privilege we have as believers to be able to approach God personally through prayer! We don’t need a priest because God has made us priests. Praise be to God!