

The Vision of the Priesthood Throughout the Bible

The four major items that the Lord has shown us are:

- the priesthood of the gospel in the New Testament,
- the organic building up of the Body of Christ,
- the perfecting of the saints by the gifts,
- and the prophesying for the building up of the church as the organic Body of Christ

Rom. 15:16 *That I might be a minister of Christ Jesus to the Gentiles, a laboring priest of the gospel of God, in order that the offering of the Gentiles might be acceptable, having been sanctified in the Holy Spirit.*

The New Testament teaches us clearly that all the believers are priests. We are not individualistic priests, but [we are priests in a corporation to become a priesthood](#). This is the teaching of the New Testament that the Brethren saw. From the very beginning of the Lord's recovery among us, we also saw this truth concerning the priesthood, but neither we nor the Brethren pointed out that the priesthood in the New Testament is the priesthood of the gospel. Yes, we all are priests, but what kind of priests are we? Today we see that [according to Romans 15:16 we are priests of the gospel of God](#). We all need to declare, "I am a priest of the gospel of God!"

The Meaning of Being a Priest

To say that a priest is a person who serves God is right, but this understanding is too shallow... God created man with four particular characteristics.

- First, He created man in His image that man might bear His likeness, [expressing Him](#).
- Second, He gave man His authority for His dominion, which indicates that man is His representative (Gen. 1:26). Man expresses and [represents God](#).
- Third, He created man with a spirit, and this spirit in Genesis 2:7 is called "the breath of life." The Hebrew word for breath is the same word for spirit in Proverbs 20:27, which says, "The spirit of man is the lamp of Jehovah." [Our God-created human spirit is an organ to contact God and to receive God](#).
- Fourth, God put man in front of the tree of life, indicating that God desired to have a man to [receive Him as the tree of life](#) so that man might [live God](#).

God created man to make man His expression and His representative, creating within man an organ so that man could contact Him and receive Him as life that man might live God... [A priest is a person who bears these four particular characteristics](#).

The Priesthood after Man's Fall

The biblical record does not tell us whether Adam did this or not, but the Bible does tell us that Adam's son Abel, the second generation of mankind, offered sacrifices to God for his acceptance by God (Gen. 4:4). [Abel was an individual priest](#). Although there was not the term priest at that time, Abel acted as a priest. A priest is a person who offers the sacrifices typifying Christ to God. Later, the Bible tells us that God judged the earth with a great flood, which issued in a new world. After the judgment of the flood, [Noah built an altar and offered sacrifices to God](#),

which became a satisfying fragrance to God (Gen. 8:20-21). Noah was also an individual priest. Through man's offering of these sacrifices, God could accept fallen man, and man could contact God.

Later in the history of mankind, the Bible tells us that God called Abraham out of the world of idols to a new land, the land of Canaan. In this land [Abraham built an altar and offered sacrifices to God](#) (Gen. 12:7-8). Genesis 22 tells us that God eventually asked Abraham to offer his son Isaac as a burnt offering (v. 2). When Abraham was about to offer his son, God stopped him and provided a ram as a replacement for Isaac (v. 13). That ram was a type of Christ as our burnt offering for our acceptance by God. From this fellowship we can see that [Abel, Noah, and Abraham were individual priests because they offered something to God. Before God ordained the formal, official priesthood at Mount Sinai, there were individuals offering sacrifices to God already.](#)

Abraham's descendants eventually became the nation of Israel, and God delivered them out of the tyranny of Egypt and brought them to Mount Sinai. There God revealed His intention for the children of Israel to be a kingdom of priests to Him (Exo. 19:6). God intended that the entire nation of Israel be a priesthood, but because of the worship of the golden calf (32:1-6), they lost the priesthood, and [only the tribe of Levi was chosen to replace the whole nation of Israel as priests to God](#) (vv. 5-29; Deut. 33:8-10). Out of the tribe of Levi, [God set apart the house of Aaron to be the priesthood.](#) The other Levites helped by serving the priesthood in practical affairs. The entire Old Testament is a record of the priesthood.

The Priesthood in the New Testament

The New Testament begins with John the Baptist. He was born in a miraculous way to Zachariah and Elizabeth. His father Zachariah was a priest, and John the Baptist was born a priest. Thus, [the New Testament begins with a priest.](#) We may think that the New Testament begins with Jesus Christ, but actually the record of the New Testament begins with a person who was born a priest.

Now we need to consider how the New Testament ends. The book of Revelation, a book of twenty-two chapters, is the concluding book of the New Testament. Revelation 1:5b-6 says, "To Him who loves us and has released us from our sins by His blood and made us a kingdom, priests to His God and Father, to Him be the glory and the might forever and ever. Amen." According to the grammar of these verses, kingdom and priests are in apposition to each other. Therefore, [the priests are the kingdom.](#) Revelation 5:9-10 says that we were purchased for God by the blood of Christ out of every tribe and tongue and people and nation, and [we were made priests to our God.](#) Revelation 20 tells us that in the millennium all the overcomers will be co-kings with Christ, and [these co-kings of Christ will be the priests of God and of Christ and will reign with Him for a thousand years](#) (v. 6). Eventually, all the believers will participate in the priesthood for eternity in the New Jerusalem, in which we will serve Him as priests (22:3). In the New Jerusalem, we shall also reign with Christ in the kingship (v. 5)... From this brief fellowship, I hope we can see that [the entire Bible talks about the priesthood.](#)