



## The Priesthood of All Believers

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Most Catholic churches view the Priest as the one who does ministry, and most Evangelical churches view the Pastor as the one who does ministry. Many from both Catholic and Evangelical congregations don't see themselves as an army; rather, they see themselves as an audience.

If there is a new convert, they call someone on church staff to disciple them. If someone needs counseling, they call the church office for a professional counselor.

Church members often view the leadership as those doing the ministry. "Ministry" belongs to priests and pastors. But that is not the truth!

*Revelation 1:5-6 — "and from Jesus Christ, the faithful witness, the firstborn of the dead, and the ruler of the kings of the earth. To Him who loves us and released us from our sins by His blood—and He has made us to be a kingdom, priests to His God and Father—to Him be the glory and the dominion forever and ever. Amen."*

Jesus made all believers to be an army of priests, not an audience.

Since the 3rd century, church leaders have worn certain clothes to confirm this lie of a dichotomy between the clergy and the laity.

There is no true division because we are a kingdom of priests.

This is not just God's plan for the New Testament church. This has been God's plan from the time that the Israelites stood before God at Mt Sinai.

*Exodus 19:3-6 — "Moses went up to God, and the Lord called to him from the mountain, saying, 'Thus you shall say to the house of Jacob and tell the sons of Israel: 'You yourselves have seen what I did to the Egyptians, and how I bore you on eagles' wings, and brought you to Myself. Now then, if you will indeed obey My voice and keep My covenant, then you shall be My own possession among all the peoples, for all the earth is Mine; and you shall be to Me a kingdom of priests and a holy nation.' These are the words that you shall speak to the sons of Israel.'"*

### **God has always desired that all His people, not just a few select leaders, be priests, representing Him among the nations.**

God speaks directly to His priestly people from the mountain. In terror, they reject His unmediated voice and come up with a new plan. They elect Moses to hear from Yahweh directly.

*Deuteronomy 5:24-27 — "You said, 'Behold, the Lord our God has shown us His glory and His greatness, and we have heard His voice from the midst of the fire; we have seen today that God speaks with man, yet he lives. Now then why should we die? For this great fire will consume us; if we hear the voice of the Lord our God any longer, then we will die. For who is there of all flesh who has heard the voice of the living God speaking from the midst of the fire, as we have, and lived? Go near and hear all that the Lord our God says; then speak to us all that the Lord our God speaks to you, and we will hear and do it.'"*

The Israelites rejected God's desire for them to be a kingdom of priests.

Later, God establishes Aaron's line as priests to Israel, temporarily putting His plan of commissioning a kingdom of priests on hold.

*Jeremiah 31:31-33 — "'Behold, days are coming,' declares the Lord, 'when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah, not like the covenant which I made with their fathers in the day I took them by the hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt, My covenant which they broke, although I was a husband to them,' declares the Lord. 'But this is the covenant which I will make with the house of Israel after those days,' declares the Lord, 'I will put My law within them and on their heart I will write it; and I will be their God, and they shall be My people.'"*

In this new covenant, by writing the law on the hearts of his people, God would fulfill the plan laid out in Exodus 19.

This New Covenant was inaugurated by Jesus Christ when He died on the cross, rose from the dead, ascended to heaven, and then poured out the Holy Spirit on the church.

*1 Peter 2:4-5, 9 — "And coming to Him as to a living stone which has been rejected by men, but is choice and precious in the sight of God, you also, as living stones, are being built up as a spiritual house for a holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ....But you are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for God's own possession, so that you may proclaim the excellencies of Him who has called you out of darkness into His marvelous light;"*

Peter tells us in verse 5 that we are being built up as a “spiritual house for a holy priesthood,” and then in verse 9, he quotes directly the Greek translation of Exodus 19:6.

We are (present tense) a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for God's own possession. God's plan expressed at Mt. Sinai and prophesied through Jeremiah has been fulfilled: Now God has a kingdom of priests.

Note he did not say: “He has made SOME of us.” or “He has selected from among us certain ones to be priests to God.” **All** of us are priests.

First-century Christianity had no leaders called clergy or specialized priests, and nowhere in the New Testament is the word used to describe a leader in Christian service. They understood that all were priests now.

### **If you are saved by the blood of Jesus, you are a priest!**

The Apostle Paul gives us another metaphor for understanding how the church is supposed to work.

*Ephesians 4:7, 11 – But to each one of us grace was given according to the measure of Christ's gift. And He gave some as apostles, and some as prophets, and some as evangelists, and some as pastors and teachers...*

*Romans 12:4-8 – “For just as we have many members in one body and all the members do not have the same function, so we, who are many, are one body in Christ, and individually members one of another. Since we have gifts that differ according to the grace given to us, each of us is to exercise them accordingly: if prophecy, according to the proportion of his faith; if service, in his serving; or he who teaches, in his teaching; or he who exhorts, in his exhortation; he who gives, with liberality; he who leads, with diligence; he who shows mercy, with cheerfulness.”*

**You are a priest. You are supernaturally gifted to serve as a priest in a specific way.**